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Editorial

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Die Herausgeber

Dedicated to the memory of

- Mark Martelly (Grand Recorder of the IUOM, † 23 April 2008)
- Tony Lever (Curator of the Hallamshire College Library and Museum at the Tapton Masonic Hall in Sheffield, † 17 July 2008)
- George Watkins († 22 September 2008)

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Preface

Researching “secret societies” in general, and their rituals in particular, is always to a certain degree problematical, since traditionally these rituals are precisely what they try to keep secret. Yet, the possibly oldest and largest one still flourishing, and definitely the one which most influenced Western culture, namely that of the Freemasons, has over time grown less and less secretive about its rituals,¹ and today it forms the subject of academic research with even some institutes and chairs dedicated explicitly to it.² Therefore it seemed a proper subject for research about ritual dynamics as well. Consequently, I embarked on such a research project in the context of the first phase of the Special Research Program (*Sonderforschungsbereich* - SFB) 619 on Ritual Dynamics at the University of Heidelberg, sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG).³ The committee which judged the projects for this program advised, however, on the long term not to restrict the project to Freemasonry, but to extend it to other “secret societies”. But since virtually no other one is as open to scholarly research, this was easier said than done. Yet, there seemed at least one option: Johan Strijk, one of the Executive Grand Councillors of the Independent United Order of Mechanics (IUOM), aware of my research about the Freemasons, had asked me already years ago if I might be interested in researching the IUOM as well. Since this request had come from one of the highest ranking members of that Order, I assumed that it would be possible for me to get access to the texts I would need, and so I decided to work on this Order in the context of the second phase of the SFB 619.

This was truly a challenging task, since there is no substantial secondary literature about this Order at all. I am actually aware of only two to some extent scholarly texts by non-members about the Mechanics, both restricted to the District Grand Lodge of Suriname. In 1993 Roselien M. Rotgans wrote an MA dissertation for the Theological Seminar of the Moravian Church in Suriname on secret societies in that country, part of which concerns the Order of Mechanics.⁴ And recently Jannes H. Mulder (oncologist, later policy advisor at the Ministry of Public Health in Suriname) wrote an article about the Mechanics in the same country.⁵ All other literature I found about this Order is written by its members. There is no reason why such internal publications could not be at a high level, but it soon turned out that these texts are more often than not rather uncritical towards the quality of their sources, mingling facts with myths without their authors apparently being aware of the mythical character of part of their story. Furthermore I was warned from the start that the Mechanics, being traditionally predominantly working class people, have never systematically collected and kept their archives in any way comparable to the Freemasons.

When I then started my research, the situation proved to be even more difficult than I had expected. In the first place, although the majority of the members of the IUOM with whom I spoke were quite happy with my project and would have liked to support it, at least one of the Grand Councillors did not like it at all, and he reminded the other members of the Board of the Order, that they had taken an oath not to divulge the texts of their rituals to outsiders. Indeed, a small ritual of an Order which probably at an early time split off from the IUOM (see Appendix A) gives the oath which a candidate must take before being accepted as a member, which contains the following:

¹ Snoek 2003a, 2003b.

² Snoek 2008.

³ I wish to thank here the DFG for its support of this research project.

⁴ Rotgans 1993.

⁵ Mulder 2008.

Will you solemnly and sincerely declare ... that you will not give, lend, or in any other manner improperly dispose of, or improperly appropriate any book, writing, or other document or thing of a secret nature, of or belonging to the said Order, that may in anywise come into your possession, or cause or suffer the same to be done if it lies in your power to prevent it. ...

It also gives the oath which a member must take before being installed as Master of his lodge, which states:

I, *A. B.*, do solemnly and sincerely declare ... that I will deliver up all books, writings, papers, and other things belonging to the said Order, when I am requested to do so by my successor or by the proper authorities of the F.U.O. of Mechanics.

Such an oath, not to show any ritual texts to outsiders and to hand down all documents concerning rituals to one's successor, is apparently also today taken by a member of the IUOM who is about to be installed as Master of his lodge. And even the most liberal thinking members turned out to regard this oath as binding. However, when I showed them that the rituals for the first six degrees of their Rite have been made available in the Internet by a moderately anti-masonic organization in the Netherlands,⁶ many of them felt that this oath is today outdated. Since changes to the rituals are in fact quite normal within the IUOM, the highest ranking members of the two District Grand Lodges in Suriname suggested that they would prepare a proposal to abolish this particular part of this oath for the triennial world conference of the Order in 2007. However, at that conference the IUOM was too much occupied with other things, and thus this proposal will not be decided upon before the next such conference in 2010. Yet, in itself this is a striking example of "ritual dynamics", confirming again how flexible rituals in fact are.

As a result, however, only a few rituals of the IUOM were in the end made available to me. Yet, those which I had access to turned out to be quite revealing concerning their development, and thus I can still give a preliminary version of the historical evolution of the rituals of at least some of the degrees of the Rite of the IUOM.

No such story, however, can make sense if it is not placed against the background of the historical development of the organization concerned. At the moment, what I can say about that is also restricted by the limited access I have up to now been granted to the archives of the IUOM bodies themselves,⁷ and the limited amount of material on the Mechanics Orders available in public archives and libraries. That I did not get easily access to the archives in possession of the IUOM or its members probably has two reasons. On the one hand they clearly feared that I would find rituals there among other kinds of documents, and on the other, there seemed to exist at least in some cases some embarrassment about the state of these archives (actually a problem common to almost all private voluntary societies). That the public archives and libraries have only little about this Order is not surprising: "secret societies" almost always and everywhere try to keep as low a profile as possible, and don't gener-

⁶ The foundation Argus. The website is: <http://www.stelling.nl/vrijmetselarij/mechanics.html> (last visited 25/8/2008). In 2002 the Grand Secretary of the IUOM, Maurice F. King, wrote a letter to the Dutch Executive Grand Councillor, Johan D.C. Strijk, to ask him to "investigate this matter and make every attempt to have these sensitive materials removed from the Internet" (letter of April 19, 2002, Ref. No. 21-061-02), which shows that at that time the Executive Committee of Grand Council was already aware of the existence of this web-site.

⁷ I wish to express my great gratitude to those individuals and District Grand Lodges (especially in Suriname and The Netherlands) who did give me access to (at least part of) the archives in their possession. Without their help, this research would have been impossible. Should anyone reading this be willing to provide me with additional material, then please send that to: Prof.Dr. J.A.M. Snoek, Institut für Religionswissenschaft, Akademiestr. 4-8, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany or write to me at <jan.snoek@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de>.

ally deposit their internal publications in publicly accessible collections. Still, I managed to collect at least some material, which allows me for the first time to write a first version of a scholarly history of this organization. Yet, I am convinced that having an even better version is of importance, not only to the scholarly community but also to the IUOM itself, and thus that it is in their own interest to give either me or some other scholar sometime in the future more access to their archives in order to accomplish that. I also have not given up the hope of finding yet more archival material pertaining to the English IUOM in its pre-1950 period of existence.

Acknowledgement in a project like this is always due to many people who helped in many ways. I can name here only those who played an especially significant role, viz. Johan Strijk and Jack Uden for their support and friendship, and for stimulating me time and again not to give up, despite the many difficulties; Mark Martelly (†) and George Watkins (†), each for their own very special kind of help; and Michael Taylor, who did the language correction.

Kind permission to use illustrations was given by: J. Uden for fig. 1 & 11; Manchester Archives & Local Studies for fig. 2; Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Services (by kind permission of the Duke of Bedford and the Trustees of the Bedford Estates) for fig. 3; the SRIA Hallamshire College Library and Museum, Tapton Masonic Hall, Sheffield for fig. 4 & 5; Lancashire Record Office, Preston for fig. 6; The British Library Board for fig. 7; Cumbria Record Office (Kendal) for fig. 9 and pages 7 & 8 of Appendix-A; Cumbria Record Office (Barrow-in-Furness) (by kind permission of Thomas Butler & Son) for fig. 14; and Lodge “De Volharding No. 6”, Paramaribo (Suriname) for fig. 16.

Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
Bro.	Brother
DG / DGM	District Grandmaster
DM	Deputy Master (of a lodge)
FIUOM	Free and Independent United Order of Mechanics
FUOM	Friendly United Order of Mechanics
FS	Friendly Society
GC	Grand Council
GM	Grand Master
GMS	Grand Masters
GON	Groot Oosten der Nederlanden (Cultural Masonic Centre “Prins Frederik” of the Grand East of the Netherlands, The Hague)
GS	Grand Secretary
IG	Illustrative Grand (= Master of a lodge)
IOM PU	Independent Order of Mechanics, Preston Unity (either USA or Trinidad)
IUOM	Independent United Order of Mechanics
IUOSM	Independent United Order of Scottish Mechanics
KM	Knight(s) [of] Malta
KT	Knight(s) Templar
LP	Lodge President
LUFM	Loyal United Free Mechanics
MWGM	Most Worshipful Grand Master
NA	National Archive, Kew, London
PGM	Past Grand Master
PIG	Past Illustrative Grand
RWGM	Right Worshipful Grand Master
UGLE	United Grand Lodge of England (Freemasonry)
VP	Vice President

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Introduction

In 2007 the Independent United Order of Mechanics (IUOM) celebrated its 250th anniversary. It has today ca. 30 District Grand Lodges with ca. 6000 members all over the world. Yet, nobody whom I spoke about it had ever heard of it. Researching such a society was for me, as a scholar, specialised in ritual studies, probably about as exciting as researching a hitherto undiscovered tribe in the Amazon area would be for an anthropologist. The results of this research can be summarised as follows.

The earliest document I found about the IUOM dates from 1833. Yet, this book of regulations does not at all give the impression of having been produced by a new, or even a young society. My analysis of the rituals of the IUOM shows that beneath the predominantly 19th century layer, an 18th century one is still visible for the trained eye. Therefore, the traditional claim of the IUOM that it was founded in 1757 may be more than pure legend after all.

The other claim of the Order, that it was founded in Lancashire, is well supported by the available evidence. Until 1877 the Order existed only in the north of England and to a lesser degree in the south of Scotland. It was not until then that the first lodge was created in South Africa. From then on the IUOM developed into an international Order.

In 1878, while at the summit of its power with almost 18000 members, the IUOM registered for the first time officially as a Friendly Society. Although it had always been one, it had so far—like many other Friendly Societies—chosen to remain unregistered. The National Insurance Act of 1911 brought about the end of most Friendly Societies in the UK, and the Great War asked a large toll of the British people, reducing also the number of members of such societies, but the IUOM survived for the moment. A new National Insurance scheme, introduced in the UK in 1936 by the then Prime Minister, Lloyd George, killed off almost all surviving Friendly Societies. The IUOM in the UK seems to have suffered the same fate as many others. It declined rapidly, and when the Second World War broke out, this was taken as an excuse to transfer the seat of the Order to New York, where the IUOM had been introduced in 1910. In 1947 the Order in the UK was dissolved.

The new government of the Order in New York began its work with much enthusiasm, making many changes, and although as a result a number of District Grand Lodges decided to split-off and to continue as independent Orders, the IUOM survived and today counts ca. 6000 members all over the world again. In 1957 it was even re-introduced in England (this time for the first time in London), and in 1973 a lodge was founded in a second European country, The Netherlands. These European District Grand Lodges were founded by immigrants from the West Indies, and from Suriname.

The IUOM, like most Friendly Societies, is not only a mutual help organisation, but also a Fraternal Society, practising initiation rituals in a number of degrees, much like (and in fact to a large extent copied from) the Freemasons. The repeated processes of transfer of ritual(s) from among others the Freemasons to the Mechanics under different circumstances turn out to illustrate very clearly the relations between changing circumstances, transfer of ritual(s), and changes made in the rituals concerned. Both migration to new countries and incorporation of women turn out to have been occasions for such transfers and changes.

I shall now offer an overview of the history of the Mechanics and their different Orders which evolved in the course of time (Chapter-I). Since the Mechanics' Orders are from the start first and foremost 'Friendly Societies', I will then briefly review them from that perspective (Chapter-II). Next comes the analysis of the development of their rituals (Chapter-III). This booklet finally ends with a review of the material presented from the perspective of 'Ritual Dynamics' in general, and the theory about 'Transfer of Ritual' in particular (Chapter-IV).

Chapter I: History

History, as handed down to us, is often garbled, confused, or slanted by prejudice. We must try to know the truth, and to correct false representations. (*Nathaniel A. Houghton in his Grand Master's Address to the Convention of the IUOM in 1956.*)

1. The eighteenth century

According to several authors, the Order was founded in 1757 “in the County of Lancaster”,¹ whereas according to others “the I.U.O.M. was organised in Lancashire, England, in 1757, and received its authority by Act of [the British] Parliament”.²

The year 1757, though uncontested in the literature of the Order itself, is not supported by any documentary evidence whatsoever found so far. When writing this, the earliest reference I found to this year is in the short text on the history of the Order, written by Pearson in 1922.

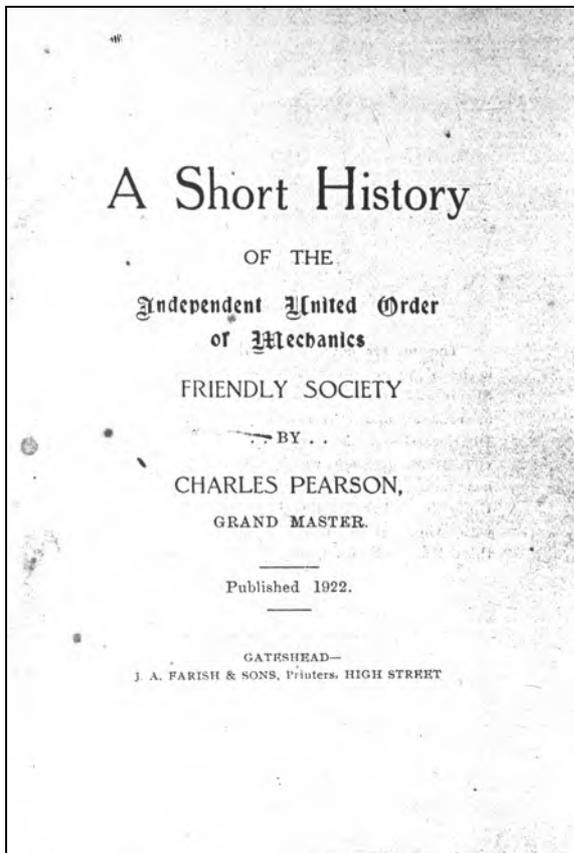


Fig. 1: Cover of Pearson's booklet of 8 pages (including the cover) from 1922.

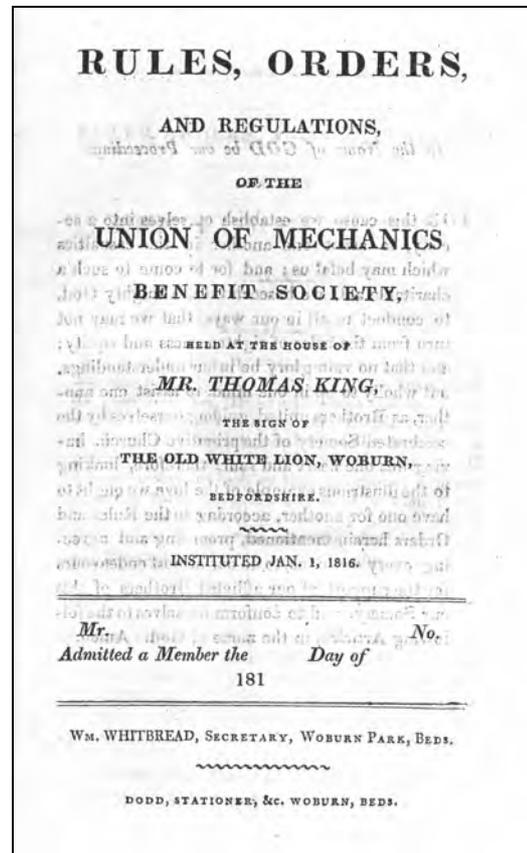


Fig. 3: “Rules, Orders, and Regulations” of the “Union of Mechanics Benefit Society” in Woburn [© the Duke of Bedford and the Trustees of the Bedford Estates]

¹ Pearson 1922, 3; Baarn & Julen 1987, 6.

² Vassall 1952, 14; Fraser 1973, 10; Anon. (ed.) 1973, 5; Anon. (ed.) 1989, 3; Uden 1999, [1]. Actually, “the County of Lancaster” is the more official name of what more popular is referred to as “Lancashire”, so that there is no essential difference between the two statements. Only after the Second World War, the area has been reorganised administratively; since then Lancashire is significantly smaller than it used to be.

Regrettably, Pearson does not mention his sources for anything he writes. Yet, his publication seems to form the starting point for most later authors writing about the history of the Order. Apart from the question whether the year 1757 is correct, it is also unclear what exactly is claimed to have happened in that year. The word “United” in the name of the Order, furthermore, suggests that two or more “Mechanics Orders” at a certain point in time united in order to create that which they from then on would call the I.U.O.M. It seems unlikely that 1757 would be the date of this Union. Rather, if that year turns out to be correct, I would expect that in that year for the first time a society was founded which gave itself a name in which the words “Order” and “Mechanics” appeared, and which Order later was one of those that merged to form the I.U.O.M. That would parallel the masonic “United Grand Lodge of England”, founded in 1813 through the merger of two older Grand Lodges, one of which claimed to have been founded in 1717, which is why the UGLE claims to date from 1717.

The formulation “the I.U.O.M. was organized ... in 1757, and received its authority by Act of [the British] Parliament” is also problematic in that it suggests that the registration under the Act of Parliament which gave it its authority took place in 1757 as well,³ but it is much more likely that this happened only after the first Friendly Societies Act of 1793 and the Unlawful Societies Act of Parliament in 1799. Still in 1852 the Order voted down a proposal to register itself. The first time that it did register itself seems to have been in 1878, after a new Friendly Societies Act had been introduced in 1875 (see below).

Even worse, therefore, is the formulation: “The Independent United Order of Mechanics, Western Hemisphere, Incorporated, Friendly Society, was founded in the year 1757 in Lancashire, England by the Authority of an Act of English Parliament. The Order wa[s] subsequently registered under the Friendly Society Act of British Parliament in the year 1896. The Registration No. is 849, in the County of Durham, London, England, as Fraternal Organization”.⁴ Although we know absolutely nothing about how the IUOM was founded, we may, of course, be quite sure that it was *not* founded “by the Authority of an Act of English Parliament”. It *was* registered as a Friendly Society in 1896, but *not* for the first time. When the IUOM was registered for the first time, in 1878, its address was in Morpeth, Northumberland, thus *not* in the County of Durham. And it had *never* had a lodge in London before the English IUOM was dissolved in 1947; only when an English District Grand Lodge was re-founded ten years later, did it have any connection with London. Also, the IUOM was *never* registered in England as a “Fraternal Organization”, but only as a “Friendly Society”. This is only a selection of such statements, based on re-copying unreliable information.

In fact, I found no independent evidence of any “Mechanics Order” from the 18th century so far. Which is not to say that such evidence never existed. Friendly Societies existed in England from the 16th century onwards. The claim may well be correct, but it just cannot be substantiated at the moment.

Further more, although the usual meaning of “mechanic” in the 18th century is just: schooled labourer, there are some intriguing old references to “Mechanics”. A few examples have to suffice here.

Matthew Scanlan pointed out to me that in a letter of 29 October 1714 from George Mackenzie (the new British Minister in St. Petersburg) to the Earl of Mar (St. Petersburg) the former writes: “... as he is to have several other matters given him in charge, whereof, wtout [= without] breaking throw the Masson Word, I hope, as to a Bro[the]r Mechanick of his

³ Just one example of this reading: “The I.U.O.M., F.S., W.H., is a fraternal organization founded in Lancashire, England, and was registered under the Friendly Societies Act of the British Parliament in 1757.” (“Synopsis of the Past Illustrative Matron’s Conclave” in *Past Illustrative Matron’s Conclave under the jurisdiction of Alpha District Grand Lodge #1, 1st Women’s Day, Sunday September 16, 2001*, New York, no page number).

⁴ King 1997, 3.

Czarian Ma[jes]ty, it will as yet be allow'd me to acquaint you so far, that he [i.e. the Emisary of the Tsar] is to carry, say they, a sea Compass to our King...".⁵

Also, Scanlan writes that in 1738, Hugo O'Kelly, an Irish-born Infantry Colonel and the master of a masonic lodge in Lisbon, declared when interrogated by the Inquisition, that in his lodge there were usually discussions about—among other things—architectural theory. He then added that there were usually two or three practising “Free Mason Mechanics” in the lodge so that the others might receive instruction in architectural theory from them, and these others O'Kelly termed “the Noble and Gentlemen Free Masons”. Scanlan concludes, that “it therefore follows that if the ‘Free Mason Mechanics’ were the ones imparting theoretical knowledge about building in the lodges, they were the true speculative masons; the gentlemen or noble members were merely students of the art”.⁶

And in 1778, Antony Shepherd, Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge University, signed a receipt as Master of Mechanics to George III.⁷

2. Early references to “Mechanics” Orders

The earliest Order which has the word “Mechanics” in its name, of which I found documentary evidence so far, is “The Agreeable Society of Smiths, and other Mechanics, in the Towns of Manchester and Salford”, which had its “Articles, to be observed” printed in Manchester in 1798, claiming to have “Begun the first Day of March, 1754”.⁸ Here, however, the “Mechanics” seem to be marginal, rather than central.

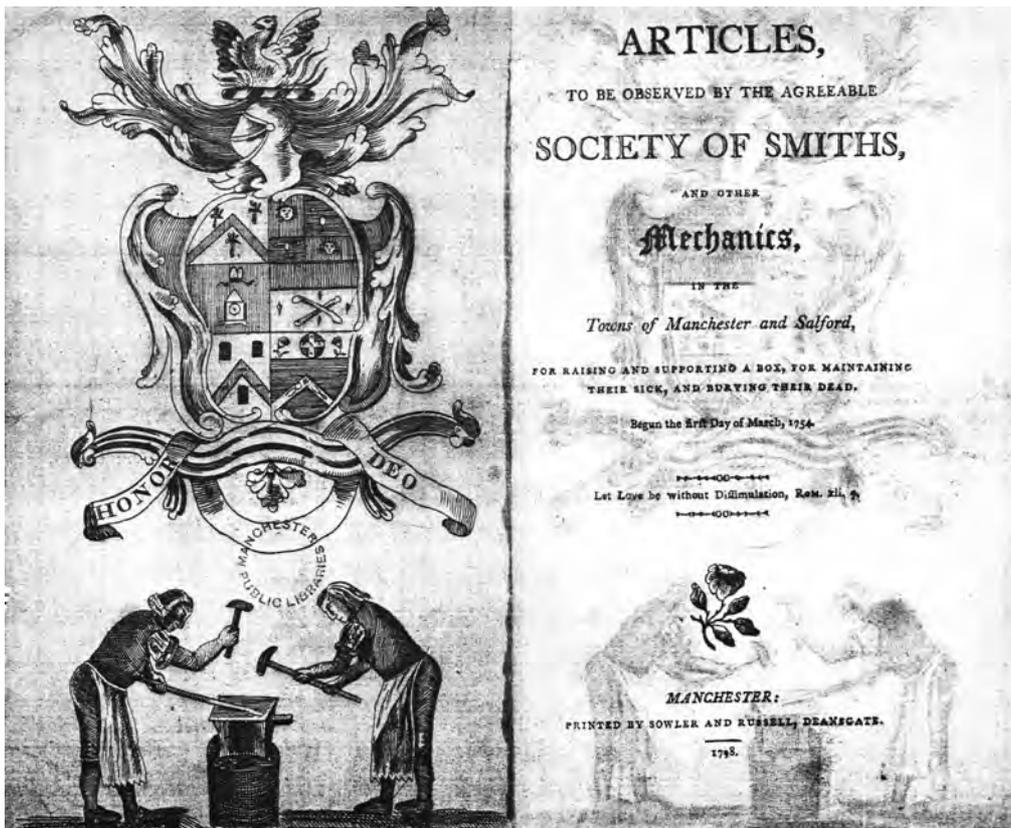


Fig. 2: The Agreeable Society of Smiths, and other Mechanics [© Manchester Archives & Local Studies]

⁵ This is the ninth letter (pp. 408-411) in Paul 1904, the quoted text is on p. 408.

⁶ Scanlan 2004, 31.

⁷ British Library Add. 52486, f. 85.

⁸ Anon. 1798.

This is different in the case of the “[Union of Mechanics Benefit Society](#)” in Woburn, Bedfordshire, which claimed to be “instituted Jan[uary] 1, 1816” (see Fig. 3). The title-page of its “Rules, Orders, and Regulations” mentions, probably as the author, “Wm. Whitbread, Secretary, Woburn Park, Bed[ford]s[hire]”.⁹ This William Whitbread was not a labourer, but an overseer of works and a contractor. He was “to carry on the works on the Hill South of the Abbey, the road to Ridgmont, and the waters – He is directed to employ additional hands”; he was to be paid by Edmund Cartwright, “and Mr. Cartwright is to be reimbursed by application to His Grace the Duke of Bedford ... by order of His Grace, Hn. Holland”.¹⁰ He worked first under Henry Holland and then under Humphry Repton¹¹ on the garden of the Duke of Bedford in Woburn, at least from 1803 onwards,¹² probably at least until 1831.¹³ On “Jan. 1, 1816” he worked on the park with a team of 42 labourers employed by him.¹⁴ The librarian of the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Services, Mr. Collett-White, is of the opinion that Whitbread could not possibly have been secretary of the “Union of Mechanics” if he had not had the consent of the Duke.

We should not confuse “Mechanics” *Orders* with the “Mechanics *Institutes*”, which started to appear about the year 1824.¹⁵ These had “for their object the instruction of working men in the scientific principles upon which the industrial arts are based”.¹⁶ I will exclude these from this account. But anyone looking for archival material about “Mechanics” Orders should be aware that what he is looking for is hidden in a much larger mass of documents about these Institutes or Institutions.

One of the many “Mechanics” Orders which pop up in the 19th century is the Order of the “[Loyal United Free Mechanics](#)”. According to Law,

On 26 April 1851 the Prince of Wales Friendly Society Lodge No. 85 was formed with headquarters at the Sportsman’s Arms, Westleigh Mill, Leigh, Lancashire. By 1862 when they registered their rules they had adopted a new name, the Loyal United Free Mechanics. As lodge number 85 they must have been part of some sort of affiliated order; whether this was the case after the change of name is not apparent.¹⁷

This story, however, cannot be a correct interpretation of the facts, because there exists a “New Set of Sacred Songs, for the use of the Loyal, United, Free Mechanics”, which was published in 1834.¹⁸ Its author, John Mitchell, “Master of the L.U.F.M.’s lodge, No. 25, Todmore”, writes that these songs “have been composed at the request, and urgent desire of a Meeting of Delegates, held at our Grand Lodge, in the beginning of the Year 1833”.¹⁹ Therefore I assume, that the “Prince of Wales Friendly Society Lodge No. 85” was lodge No. 85 *of the LUFM* both in 1851 *and* in 1862, even though they may have described themselves differently in the two documents. The National Archives have a folder on the “Duke of Wellington

⁹ Whitbread 1816.

¹⁰ Letter from Holland to Cartwright of March 18th, 1803, Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Services (Bedford Estates collection) R3/2114/522.

¹¹ See: Daniels 1999, esp. 170-180.

¹² Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Services (Bedford Estates collection) R3/2114/536, 546, 547, 548.

¹³ Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Services (Bedford Estates collection) R3/2416, 2419, 2431.

¹⁴ Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Services (Bedford Estates collection) R429, bundle 1.

¹⁵ Tylecote 1957.

¹⁶ Tylecote 1957, 1.

¹⁷ Law 2001, 1.

¹⁸ Mitchell 1834.

¹⁹ Mitchell 1834, 4. But as in the case of the IUOM, so also for the LUFM it is clear that the term “United” suggests that this Order was composed of two or more older ones.

Lodge No. 88, 6380 Lancaster, Lancashire”²⁰ of the LUFM, which registered 6/8/1873. It contains a.o. their *Rules*, printed in 1873. The registration of this lodge was cancelled 21/1/1915 because no annual returns were received from 1912 onwards.²¹

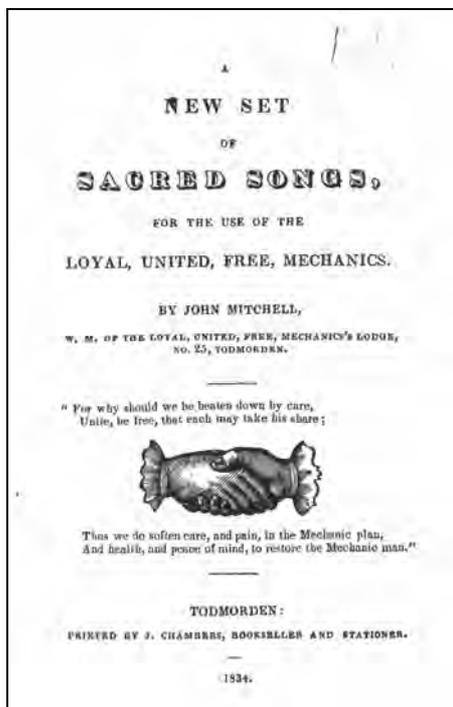


Fig. 4: New Set of Sacred Songs, for the use of the Loyal, United, Free Mechanics [© The SRIA Hallamshire College Library and Museum, Tapton Masonic Hall, Sheffield]



Fig. 5: Banner or apron of the LUFM [© The SRIA Hallamshire College Library and Museum, Tapton Masonic Hall, Sheffield]

The relationship between the LUFM and the IUOM (if any) is at the moment still unclear. The LUFM is interesting, however, because there exist a number of copies of what is sometimes called a banner (for which it is rather small) and sometimes an apron (for which it is very large) of this Order, which is heavily decorated with symbols printed on it, most of which can be easily recognised as also usual within the IUOM.²² There are more or less three columns of images. The top of the central column shows an all-seeing eye surrounded by a glory. Below it are two Cherubs holding scrolls with the texts “United we stand” and “Divided we fall”. The centre of the banner/apron shows Eve offering Adam a fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. It also shows the tree with the snake in it. On both sides stand two pillars with two allegorical figures on top of them, representing Faith (with a book = Bible)²³ and Hope (with an anchor), both pointing upwards to an arch with the name of the Order. In the grass before Adam and Eve are from left to right depicted: square and compasses, globe, and beehive (symbol of a lodge). Below these, two hands hold a chain (the

²⁰ NA: folder FS 15/331.

²¹ NB! The year 1912 is significant, since in 1911 the National Insurance Act passed in Parliament.

²² Copies can be seen at www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/banners_01.shtml and <http://homepage.eircom.net/~lawedd/FREEMCHANICS.htm> (both last visited 25/8/2008), while also the SRIA Hallamshire College Library and Museum, Tapton Masonic Hall, Sheffield owns a copy. This last mentioned copy has nine red and two white rosettes added to it, which points in the direction of it being an apron, the rosettes indicating an elevated status of its bearer. Large aprons were in use in early 18th century Freemasonry as well.

²³ In her other hand she holds a cup, so she might be a double symbol, representing Charity as well.

Chain of Brotherhood), in the centre of which a heart (Charity = Brotherly Love) is included. Finally, at the bottom, there is a coffin with a skull and crossbones (mortality). Above the two columns of images on the outsides are the sun (left, i.e. on the symbolic North side), and the moon which is surrounded by seven stars. Below the sun we see Noah's Ark on the waters and a dove with an olive branch in its beak, then an archer (?), then Jacob sleeping and dreaming of the ladder with angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth, and finally Moses hitting the rock from which springs water. Below the moon are depicted a cock, two men of which one is kneeling for the other (Jesus?), a person (Joseph?) laying down under a tree with 11 sheaves of corn (?) around him, and finally two kneeling persons holding a heart, one (Peter?) holding also a key, the other a cross. Especially the representations of particular stories from Genesis (Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Jacob's ladder) are reminiscent of a particular brand of Freemasonry, other than the main-stream form found with the so called 'Premier Grand Lodge' and the Grand Lodge of the 'Antients'. It concerns a third tradition, often associated with the so called 'Harodim', which was especially active in the North of England. I will come back to this later.

3. The English IUOM from 1833 to 1877

We can be certain that in 1833 not only the LUFM, but also the IUOM existed, since in that year were published *The General Rules, of the Independent United Order of Mechanics Grand Lodge, Blackburn*.²⁴ These contain 79 "General Rules" (3-14), an index (15-17), a short poem on the title page, and two songs: "Origin of Mechanism" composed June 21st, 1833, and "Parting Song", from July 3rd, 1833, both by "J.F."



Fig. 6: The General Rules of the IUOM Grand Lodge, Blackburn.

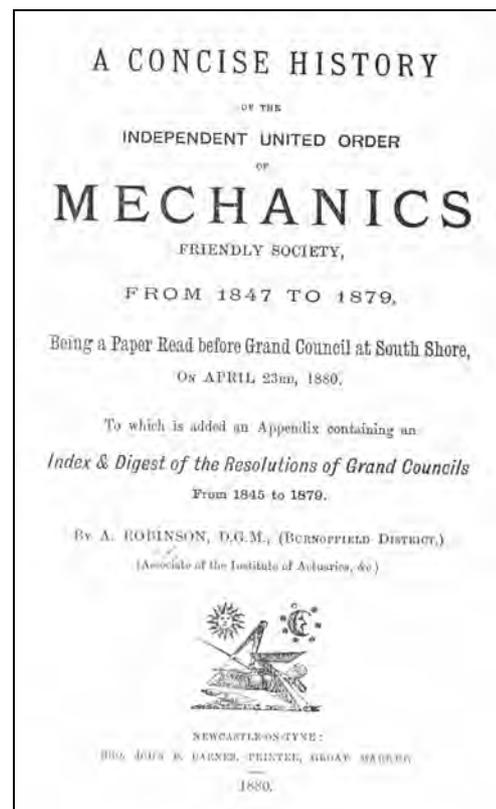


Fig. 7: Robinson's *History and Resolutions* [© British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. 8277.c.8]

²⁴ Anon. 1833.

Regrettably, the first of these songs only gives a mythical account, leading the origins of Mechanism back to the creation of the earth by God, referred to as the “Supreme Grand”, who thus was the first Mechanic. No information about the history of the Order is to be found here. However, from the contents of the rules it is perfectly clear that these were not conceived for a newly founded Order, but rather were those of one already in existence for a long time. There is frequent reference to the “code of constitutional laws”, which must have been a different publication, probably functioning as statutes of the whole Order. Several rules mention “the half-yearly District Council” and the (probably yearly) “Grand Council”, as well as such functions as “P.G.” (Puissant Grandmaster? In any case apparently the Grand Master of the IUOM), “G.S.” (Grand Secretary), and “D.G.” (District Grandmaster), thus showing that the “Grand Lodge, Blackburn” is in fact one of the District Grand Lodges of which the IUOM was composed. Within a normal lodge those offices mentioned are the “I.G.” (Illustrative Grand = Master of the lodge), the “D.M.” (Deputy Master), the “P.S.” (Privy Secretary), the “P.T.” (Privy Treasurer), the “tiler” (sic!), and the “No. 1, council-man” (rules 2 and 11).²⁵ Some phrases are reminiscent of masonic terminology or praxis, for example “the half-yearly pass-word” (Rule 30), the interdiction to “introduce any religious or political subject” (Rule 38), and “sickness or distress” (Rule 54), while the “Parting Song” seems to indicate that at the end of a lodge night the “Chain of Brotherhood” was formed:

Let us before we part,
Join every hand and heart,
Fraternal band;

The later literature about the next period in the history of the IUOM is apparently always based on one publication: Robinson’s *History and Resolutions of the Independent United Order of Mechanics, from 1845 to 1879*, published in 1880.²⁶ As Robinson states explicitly in his “Preface”, “The matter contained in the following pages is based on Papers emanating from Grand Council ... they are inserted in order that the members may be fully acquainted with the many vicissitudes the Mechanics Order has undergone in the course of its career, and in its general development” (3). However, Robinson is D[istrict] G[rand] M[aster] of Burnopfield District when he writes this, which means that he can’t be a junior member of the Order. It is thus likely that he has also seen much of the history of the ca. 35 years he describes personally. After this preface follows the text of “a paper read before Grand Council at South Shore, on April 23rd, 1880” (title-page), which takes up pages 5 to 15. Then follow six appendices or tables (16-21), the first one of which lists the Grand Council Officers from 1845 to 1879, the “Digest of Resolutions of Grand Council” which run from April 1845 to April 1879 (22-47, 264 numbered resolutions), “Extracts from G[rand] C[ouncil] Proceedings, Ex[ecutive] Com[mittee] Addresses, &c.” running from May 1847 to June 1870 (47-49, num-

²⁵ Later regulations for individual lodges, such as those of the ‘Northumberland Star Lodge’ under the District Grand Lodge of Newcastle on Tyne, of which the ‘Rules’ of 1865, 1878 (adapted to the Friendly Societies Act of 1875), and 1893 (based on the same Friendly Societies Act of 1875) have been preserved (NA FS 10/39), mention, besides the District Grand Master, the lodge offices of Illustrative Grand, Deputy Master, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Tyler, Secretary and Privy Treasurer (1865, 6 & 7). In the ‘Rules for Lodges’ of 1878 and 1893 (which are standard rules for all lodges of the IUOM, wherein only the name of the lodge and the District Grand Lodge have been added manually) the addition ‘Privy’ has disappeared. The title “Illustrative Grand” for the Master of a lodge seems to be specific for the IUOM. The *Rules of the Duke of Wellington Lodge No. 88, of the Loyal United Free Mechanics, held at Treacle Row, in Pickup Bank, in the County of Lancaster*, Darwen 1873, for example, specify the following lodge functions: *Master*, Deputy Master, Treasurer, Secretary, two Deacons, two Stewards, and two Guardians or Tylers, (apart from or including?) an “out door Tyler” (rules 3 and 15, my italics JS) (NA FS 15/331).

²⁶ Robinson 1880. This is the title on the cover of the booklet. For the title on the title-page see the bibliography below.

bered 265 – 291), fifteen “Notes” to some resolutions, giving the text of the articles of the Regulations of the Order referred to in these resolutions (50-52), and an “Index” (53-54). This booklet thus not only gives us Robinson’s story of the history of the Order in this period, but also a massive amount of facts.

Regrettably, he does not give any factual information about the history of the Order, prior to 1845. All he writes about that period is this:

The Independent United Order of Mechanics Friendly Benefit Society is one of no recent formation, the date of its original organization being lost in its antiquity. Since its commencement, there have been many and important changes, both in regard to legal enactments affecting such Societies as we have the honour of being connected with, and also with respect to the internal affairs of individual ones, conducted, as they generally are, by councils of representatives similar to that assembled here. (5)

Apparently, in 1880, there is already a severe lack of knowledge about the earliest period of the Order. Robinson explicitly starts his history of the Order “in the year 1847, that is, the succeeding year to that in which the Order’s Half-yearly Reports were for the first time printed in their present pamphlet form. This form, is, without doubt, a decided improvement upon the old sheets previously in vogue” (5/6). It should be noted that Robinson does not state that the Reports were previously not printed; they were printed on “sheets”, though we don’t know since when. The first resolution that Robinson reports, from April 1845, reads: “That the *Lectures* in future be printed on a larger type” (No. 1, p. 22, my emphasis), but I doubt that this refers to the printed “*Resolutions*”. The “*Resolutions*” of June 1846 (No. 4 - 10) don’t mention anything of this kind. The “*Extracts from G[rand] C[ouncil] Proceedings*” of May 1847 (No. 265 - 274), as opposed to the “*Resolutions*” from that meeting (No. 11-12) state that the “*Exec[ecutive] Com[mittee]* recommended a new method of making out the *reports*” (No. 270, my emphasis), but that too may refer to something else. Robinson then states:

I find from G[rand] C[ouncil] Reports in that year [i.e. 1847], that the Order consisted of 10 districts, extending over the six northern counties of England, and also the south of Scotland; beyond which it does not appear to have penetrated except in one or two isolated cases, which ultimately have unfortunately proved abortive attempts to establish the banner of the Order in new quarters. The largest of these 10 districts was that of Blackburn, with 23 lodges and 744 members, and the next approaching to it was Lancaster with 22 lodges and 661 members. Others followed in succession, until we had Newcastle with 213 members, and Kendal, least of all, comprising 4 lodges and 117 members. The aggregate number of members at that time, was but 4152. (6)

This pattern, that the IUOM was, until then, a phenomenon restricted to the North of England and the South of Scotland, should be kept in mind, since it seems to have remained the same for a long time after. But, compared to the present day, the size of the Order was astonishing. And this was by no means the peak of its prosperity. Robinson continues:

... for two years the Mechanics Order decreased in number, at the end of which time, it lost, what had formerly been its most influential district, for at the Kendal G[rand] C[ouncil] in 1849 the Blackburn district was suspended for a year on account of its not complying with the rule relating to Funeral Money; and at G.C. in the following year, an attempt at reconciliation proved to be unsuccessful; so that the Order was reduced to a lower numerical state than has ever been the case since.

Still, though deserted by such a powerful district, those remaining progressed steadily, the annual increase being about 100 members. In 1850, two lodges in Liverpool were formed into a district bearing that name, thus filling up the vacancy in the number of districts, caused by the secession of the Blackburn district. In this state, all seems to have gone well with the Order for six years, when the Liverpool district, the least in the Order, (with the exception of Kendal, which has retained its original position during the 32 years under observation), dissatisfied with the proceedings of Grand Council; printed, and circulated (what was termed by G.C.) an “inflammatory document” among the members, for which they were fined by G.C. The fines imposed they refused to pay, and so shut themselves out from the Order for two years. In 1858, they were re-admitted, but at the same time, a dispute arose in the Lancaster district, which resulted in a secession of about 500 members from the Mechanics ranks.

From this period, there appears for a long time to have been, comparatively speaking, very little dissatisfaction, the Order made considerable progress, and in 1862, it was deemed prudent by G.C. to sanction the division of the Preston district, the new one assuming the old name of Blackburn district. Later on, in 1866, Preston district was again reduced, by the formation from it, of the Fylde District, under D.G.M. HALL, our present worthy GRAND MASTER. At this time, there were 12 districts in the Order, with a total number of 8346 members, or more than double the number of Mechanics there had been 20 years previous.

After this year the number of members increased very rapidly, insomuch that in 1871, the Newcastle district, then the most powerful of the twelve, was broken into, and Morpeth and Blackhill Districts were established from lodges lately belonging to the District of Newcastle. The year 1876 was that in which the Order attained its highest numerical status, it having under its standard, no fewer than 14 districts, 194 lodges, and 17373 members. Here indeed had been rapid growth ... (6/7).

In short: in 1876 the IUOM was almost thrice as large as it is today,²⁷ while then it was still restricted to the North of England and the South of Scotland, whereas today it is spread over the surface of the earth. That is astonishing indeed!

Then follows the year 1876/77. This shows two contrasting events. On the one hand, in 1877 the Order established its first lodge abroad (viz. in Cape Town) (7),²⁸ whereas on the other, when—in 1876—the Order voted to be registered under the new Friendly Societies Act of 1875,²⁹ a large part of the IUOM broke away. Robinson describes the event as follows:

The Government had taken the trouble to interest themselves in the Friendly Societies of the country, and had framed and passed a Bill in Parliament, for the protection of such organizations as ours [i.e. the Friendly Societies Act of 1875]. [A reorganization of the Order so that it could be registered] as an actual unity [was prepared and received] the consent of the majority of the members, [but] more than one third of the 17000 failed to agree to the proposed federation, and were consequently counted among the “secessionists” ... [T]he seceding districts were Preston, Coniston, and Blackburn, with portions of Wigan, Lancaster and Carlisle. In the year following, the remainder of the Wigan district unanimously resolved to “withdraw from the Order until the Friendly Societies Act, 1875 had been some time in force, and its usefulness felt and appreciated.” [A new district Burnopfield was established, but] the Blackhill

²⁷ In 2001, the IUOM had ca. 6000 members (Strijk 2001, 9).

²⁸ The Resolution concerned is 230 of June, 1877 in Robinson 1880, 44.

²⁹ Resolution 223 of June, 1876 in Robinson 1880, 43. The result of the vote in appendix 5, 20.

district saw fit to add to the party who had separated from the Unity ... and endeavoured to carry on an Order, suitable to their own taste. (8)

Registration had been voted down once before, viz. in 1852 by 2383 votes to 2088 (13, 20). This time (1876) it had majority support of 52%: 3348 votes for, 3045 against (20),³⁰ but its opponents apparently had strong feelings about the issue. This description of the events, following the new Friendly Societies Act of 1875, explains why the number of different “Mechanics” Orders in England is so large. Not only were there different ones already in the early 19th century, but as a result of the disagreement over registration or not under the new Act, their number increased considerably.

The actual application of the IUOM to be registered as a Friendly Society is dated 3/5/1878, and its registration took place on 14/5/1878.³¹ The application had to be signed by eight members. These were William Rochester for the District Morpeth, John T. Kendall for Liverpool, Laurence Hall for Fylde, W.B. Stainton for Kendal, Joseph Beck for Wigton, Robert Sewell for Longtown, Alexander Laing for Newcastle on Tyne, and Robert Walton as Secretary. As “Office” of the Order was mentioned: Union Place, Morpeth, Northumberland. After “The Society carries [*or intends to carry*] on business in more than one country, viz.,” was filled in “in Great Britain and Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man”, which was rather ambitious if one compares it with the suggested “in England and Scotland [*or England and Ireland, or England, Scotland, and Ireland, as the case may be.*]” It is unclear to me if at this point in time it had already received its Registration Number 849, but this number is printed on its amended *General Rules* of 1893.³²

In June 1879, the IUOM had 9798 members, 122 lodges and 12 districts (13). And in 1880, Robinson tells, the “Blackburn and Blackhill Districts have applied for, and been granted re-admission to the Order” (Robinson 1880, 14).

The majority of the resolutions mentioned by Robinson concern the solving by the Grand Council of conflicts between two parties within the Order, usually over financial matters. These don’t concern us here. However, a number of resolutions not mentioned so far are interesting enough to warrant quoting, but will remain without comment.

June, 1846.

4.—That in future the affairs of the Order shall be carried on by the G[rand] M[aster], G[rand] C[ouncil] S[ecretary], and Executive Committee, in the district wherein the G[rand] C[ouncil] meeting is to be held ...

7.—That an engraving on steel be got, representing the Arms of the Order.

10.—That Bro[ther]s Quittenton and Bentley, for good services rendered to the Order, receive the honorary title P[ast] D[istrict] G[rand] M[aster], and be entitled to wear an extra colour in their rosettes.

May, 1847.

265.—The D[istrict] G[rand] M[aster]’s at G[rand] C[ouncil] joined a procession, (which took place at Lancaster on that day) on its coming out of church, and dined at the Assembly Room, at a public dinner held there in honour of Grand Council, to which they were presented with a free ticket. Thomas Greene, Esq., M.P. for Lancaster was chairman, and gave £5 to the Order, which was appropriated to the Widow and Orphan’s Fund in the Lancaster District.

³⁰ “... in 1876 [should be 1875] the Friendly Societies Act was passed in the British Parliament, but because of its teaching, purpose and function the Order of Mechanics applied and was immediately registered without the slightest objection and with a unanimous decision” (Fraser 1973, 10/11).

³¹ NA: folder FS 10/103.

³² All this from NA: folder FS 10/103.

- 274.—The mortality was large on account of Cholera.
June, 1854.
- 279.—The Executive Committee's address on Mechanism is exceptionally good.
June, 1855.
- 47.—That 20s be offered for the most suitable design for a new Dispensation, on the principle of the Arch and Column.
June, 1857.
- 57.—That the initiation money for members entering the Order, between the ages of 18 and 25 years, be reduced from 5s. to 2s. 6d., as G[rand] C[ouncil] considers it would be a means of obtaining a large increase of members.
June, 1859.
- 82.—That a new form of dispensation be produced and lithographed; and further, that we now resolve ourselves into a committee for the purpose of drawing a plan, and reconstructing the declaration to be contained therein.
June, 1868.
- 132.—That there be a new box made for the Order, large enough to contain the property of the Order, and to be made according to the instructions of the G[rand] M[aster]
- 138.—That there be designs got for new Emblems, and that the same be submitted for approval at next G[rand] C[ouncil].
June, 1869.
- 152.—That arrangements be left in the hands of the Carlisle Executive Committee, for supplying a new Emblem for the Order ...
- 289.—That a member, no matter how dissolute, is entitled to draw the funeral money at his wife's death, but G[rand] C[ouncil] recommend that a friendly communication with the husband might induce him to inter his wife decently, and thus accomplish what was desired.
June, 1870.
- 154.—That fifty photographs of the new design for the Emblem be struck off and given to the D[istrict] G[rand] M[aster]'s, to allow the lodges and members an opportunity of seeing them.
June, 1871.
- 167.—That A. J. Waudby, of London, supply the Order with a Steel Plate Engraving, at the price of 250 guineas, as per his offer in writing, dated June, 1870.
- 169.—That, on completion of the plate, a sufficient number of impressions be printed, so that each brother in the Order at that date may have a copy—such copy to be presented to him gratis. All subsequent impressions to be paid for by members, as wanted, and, the cost of the plate, and first number of impressions to be included in the levies half-yearly.
June, 1877.
- 237.—That, whilst thanking the members of the Dahlia Lodge of the United Order of Free Gardeners for their preference shown to our honourable Order, by their application now before this Council, we most respectfully decline to accede to their request to be admitted into our fraternity, on the ground that, by the rules of our Order, we are precluded from admitting members above the age of 40 years.
- 240.—That an official seal be got for the Order, on the model sketched by G[rand] M[aster] Rochester.
- 241.—That D[istrict] G[rand] M[aster] Hall be empowered to obtain the stamping machines for the Districts, and also the Order's stamp.

242.—That the stamp for the Order be of brass, and stamps for Districts of india rubber.

April, 1879.

256.—That a member who emigrates to America cannot be allowed to pay into his lodge, and remain a member of the Order, as our jurisdiction does not exist further than in Great Britain, Ireland, Channel Isles, and Isle of Man.



Fig. 8: Emblem of the IUOM.

4. *The FIUOM 1877-1951*

The branch of the Cumbria Record Office, situated in Kendal, holds a large part of the archives of the Free and Independent United Order of Mechanics (FIUOM), registered as Friendly Society 4073.³³ The oldest document in this archive is a huge ledger, which registers the finances of this Order from April 1880 to the end of 1892. The Order has its Central Office in “Ship Inn, Coniston, Lancashire”. It has at that time 15 lodges and over these years its number of members grows from 2138 to 2445 by the end of 1891, to drop for the first time to 2384 during the last year of this period. On 31/12/1903 there were still 1997 members.³⁴ In 1989, John Holmes Jr., a past Master and past Secretary of the Happy Home Lodge, wrote a one-page note³⁵ about the FIUOM in which we read i.a.:

There were about fifteen or sixteen Lodges within the Order ranging from Cleator Moor in Cumberland, Threlkeld, Corney, Vale of Esthwaite, Borrowdale, and our own local Lodge ‘Happy Home’, which was the largest numerically but not the wealthiest on a per capita basis. My grandfather the late Joseph Holmes, 1855-1942 was the Order’s Secretary until the start of the thirties when my father the late John Holmes [Sr. 1881-1969] took over ... Langdale Gala was wholly run by the Lodge Members and what a fantastic day was the Whit Friday of each year. From the Old White Lion (Miss Woods) the Brass Band followed by Lodge Members with their diagonal blue sashes, proudly bearing the Banner of the Happy Home Lodge of the F.I.U.O.M. ... and thence back to the Old White Lion where a wonderful cold lunch ... was awaiting to be at-

³³ All the documents have the same (dossier) number: Cumbria Record Office (Kendal), WDB / 125 / Acc 2647. Two further letters relating to the Happy Home Lodge of this Order, from 1933, pertaining to a mortgage, are kept in the Cumbria Record Office (Carlisle), DRGL 13/53.

³⁴ Minute Book of the Order, minutes of 30/7/1904.

³⁵ Just entitled “Free and Independent United Order of Mechanics”.

tacked. Wonderful people who gave their everything on a voluntary basis, each to his own best ...

The yearly “Club Walk and Gala” on Whit Friday (the Friday after Pentecost)—organised to raise money for the “Widows and Orphans Fund” from which each of the usually ca. 30 widows used to get some amount (usually one Pound) per year—are confirmed in the minutes book of the Happy Home Lodge.³⁶ From this quote we also learn something about the regalia of the Order (diagonal blue sashes).³⁷ There still exists a photograph with the description “Gala Precursor 1922,³⁸ Parade of Happy Home Lodge of Mechanics; outside Old White Lion Hotel, Chapel Style (beside west gate of church)”. It shows the ‘Happy Home’ lodge (62 members visible), posing near the Old White Lion Hotel in Chapel Style (where the lodge had its lodge room),³⁹ the members wearing their sashes and “proudly bearing the Banner” of, in fact not only the ‘Happy Home’ lodge, but also the ‘Blencathra’ lodge. The banner shows a grave, surrounded by three angels, and a mother and two children (widow and orphans?) in

³⁶ Only in 1925 “owing to the very rough night there was not a gala” (5/3/1926), and some years during the Second World War they were not organised. The assumption that the minute book of a lodge, in these archives, which has no title, is in fact that of the Happy Home Lodge, is confirmed both by the names of the members, and by the fact that the name of the lodge is mentioned a few times in the minutes (19/2/1932, 7/10/1933, 11/3/1948). It runs from 1922 to 1949. At the annual meetings of 13/3/1947 and 11/3/1948 there were only 7 resp. 4 members present, so that it does not come as a surprise that 10/3/1949 “the question of disbanding the Lodge” was discussed. From 1938 onwards the lodge was also sometimes referred to as “the Club” (29/10/1938, 24/12/1938, 18/11/1946, 13/3/1947).

³⁷ The minutes of the lodge hardly ever report any ritual activities at all, these being probably assumed under the expression “Ordinary Lodge Business” which is always mentioned to have been “transacted” first. There are two exceptions: 29/5/1932 “A special Committee meeting was held ... for the purpose of Initiation of 3 gentlemen as Honorary Members. ... The gentlemen having read themselves in were Rev. George Cameron Dunning, Harry Pierce Esqr. & Richard L. Hall Esq.” and 13/5/1933 “the Lodge meeting was opened by Bro[ther] Joseph Thwaites in the usual way, after which 1 adult & 7 Juveniles (Admitted) were initiated as members of the Lodge, after which Bro[ther] Wilson thanked the members [and said that he hoped] that another Lodge night he would have some more members to make”. The minutes also hardly ever tell anything about what happened in the outside world. Exceptions are the mention of an unusual large number of members being sick, due to “influenza” (5/2/1927, 5/3/1927, 2/1/1932), the “depression in trade” (18/3/1932, 17/5/1932), and an increasing number of members being absent for serving in his Majesties Forces (27/12/1939, 20/1/1940, 27/3/1940, 11/5/1940, 5/3/1942, 12/4/1943 (“45 members were serving in the Forces”), 27/3/1944 (“In the absence of the majority of the Committee—called to the Forces”)).

³⁸ In fact, according to the minutes of the lodge, the picture was taken in 1927: “Bro[ther] Joseph Holmes ... said that he had been in conversation with a gentleman who kindly offered to have the members of the Lodge photograph[ed] on the gala day after the Club Walk. This being the 50th Anniversary of the Club Walk & gala, and to present the same to the Lodge and to be hung up in the Lodge Room as a memento of same” (9/6/1927), and “The Secretary was also instructed to write to Mr Harry Peirce & thank him on behalf of the Lodge Committee for his splendid gift to the Lodge re the Photograph taken on gala day” (15/10/1927).

³⁹ The meetings are often explicitly stated to be held “in the Lodge Room Chapel Stile”. On 22/12/1931 “Mr. Smith [of the] White Lion Hotel met the committee & explained to them that there was a possibility of having to look out for another Lodge Room, as he was expecting to leave the White Lion sometime in the summer, the Lodge could have the use of the Lodge Room until he left to go to his new Hotel”. Only on 25/2/1933 it was reported that “Mr. Smith had sold the premisses to Miss Barrow (Lancaster) ... having interviewed Miss Barrow he said that she was willing to let the Committee have the use of [the] small room across the road for the meetings ... the rent of the room to be £2 per annum, the same as the old room ...”. So, the lodge stayed there. Only 27/10/1941 the lodge decides that “notice [is] to be given to the Landlord of the Lodge room that we would not require the use of the room after Dec. 31st 1941”, but there is no mention of renting another room, though 5/3/1942 the annual general meeting is reported to have been held “in the Lodge Room” and 27/3/1944 “in the Institute”, 12/3/1945 “in the Lodge room”, etc. On 18/11/1946 the “Secretary was instructed to approach the Committee of the Social Centre with the object of reducing the rent paid by the Lodge”.

the foreground. The text on the banner reads: “Free and Independent United Order [of] Mechanics[,] Coniston District[,] Happy Home and Blencathra Lodges”.⁴⁰



Fig. 9: Photograph of the Happy Home Lodge from 1927. On the right side the White Lion Hotel, Chapel Style (beside the west gate of the church). Note the sashes and the banner.



Fig. 10: The Old White Lion Hotel, Chapel Style, today.

⁴⁰ In 1928, a new banner was ordered: “The question of purchasing a new Banner was discussed & it was left in the hands of the Lodge Committee & the gala Committee to arrange this buy” (2/3/1928); “... after a good deal of discussion as to the design &c. on the new Banner it was proposed that we purchase a new Banner ... the same to be 7 ft. with by 6 ft. deep as per catalogue from Bro[ther] G. Tutill London [See fig. 11 below, JS] the cost being near £25. ... The designs on both sides of the new Banner to be the same as on the old Banner except that the word Blencathra would have to be struck of, they having got one of their own” (13/3/1928); “The Secretary also reported to the meeting that the new Banner was completed & was on the way from London & it was hoped that it would arrive in good time [i.e. before Whit Friday]” (26/5/1928); “The account for the new Banner was paid ... £31-19-9” (13/6/1928). On 22/8/1929 it was proposed to “hang it up in the Church Porch[,] permission having been given by the Vicar the Rev. L. Argyle”.

Now, the indication “Coniston District” is surprising. The minutes book of the Happy Home Lodge constantly refers to the “District Council”, but sometimes equates that with the “Order” or the “Grand Council”,⁴¹ i.e. the Grand Council of the FIUOM. Indeed, an Order of only 15 lodges does not need any districts. I would rather assume that this reflects an old memory of the times when this Order still *was* the Coniston District of the *IUOM*. We saw already that Robinson reports that Coniston was one of the districts which split-off from the *IUOM* in 1877. And in 1927 the Happy Home Lodge celebrated that “this years Club Walk & Gala ... was the 50th Anniversary” (16/3/1927), which counts back to 1877 as well. Furthermore, the minutes of the Happy Home Lodge always refer to its Master as the I[llustrative] G[rand], which terminology seems to be specific for the *IUOM* and the Orders which spilt-off from it. Finally, the fact that the FIUOM has its Central Office in Coniston and has its Grand Council meetings there, also supports the assumption that the FIUOM is in fact the independent continuation of what used to be the Coniston District of the *IUOM*.

But probably the clearest proof that the FIUOM is indeed the former Coniston District of the *IUOM* is the fact that Robinson mentions the Happy Home Lodge as a lodge in the Coniston District of the *IUOM*,⁴² and E. Redhead as District Grand Master of that Coniston District and Grand Master of the *IUOM* in 1864 and 1873, and also as Deputy Grand Master in 1872 and Grand Council Secretary already in 1853.⁴³ Now, the “Minute Book of the Order”, i.e. of the FIUOM, runs from 30/7/1904 to the dissolution of that Order in 1951,⁴⁴ and the very first day recorded in these minutes, the Grand Secretary, Brother John Bell, reported the death of the Grand Master (of the FIUOM), Brother Matthew Edward Redhead—no doubt the E. Redhead mentioned by Robinson—and states: “we have been firm colleagues in Lodge and Orders matters for over 30 years and in the dark days of the Order (known only to the older brethren among you) we worked almost night and day for a long period, in our endeavour to bring prosperity to the Other”. This means that “the Order” he refers to did exist in some form already in at least 1874, after which a period came that is here referred to as “the dark days of the Order”, which is in line with the assumption that in 1874 the Order still was the Coniston District of the *IUOM* which split off as an independent Order in 1877. May 11th, 1910, the death is reported of John Bell, who is now succeeded as Grand Secretary by Joseph Holmes.

On the 29th of July, 1911, “the secretary read letters from E.J. Farnworth re National Insurance Bill, also a letter from the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds Society on the same, and offering amalgamation with their Society”. The issue is discussed, and it is decided that the secretary should make contact with other societies, including “the Ancient Order of Mechanics, Preston”, and report next time. At the next meeting, on March 9th, 1912, the National Insurance Act is again subject of discussion: “the Secretary read letters from various Societies from which he had received offers of affiliation and amalgamation viz Independent Druids, Royal Oak Benefit Society, Independent Order of Oddfellows, Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, Independent United Order of Mechanics, Independent Order of Mechanics (Preston Unity), the Friendly Benevolent United Order of Mechanics, Imperial United Order of Mechanics Friendly Society”. It was agreed to unanimously “that we become an approved section”, but also “Bro[ther] Williamson moved that the Secretary write to Societies under the

⁴¹ E.g. in the minutes of 21/7/1928, 20/3/1930, 14/7/1934, 10/3/1949.

⁴² Robinson 1880, 19 (Table of “Grants to Embarrassed Lodges, from the Tribute Fund”).

⁴³ Robinson 1880, 16 (Table of “Grand Council Officers, 1845 to 1879”).

⁴⁴ Besides this and the minutes book of the Happy Home Lodge, there exists a third manuscript book: *F.I.U.O.M. / Lodge Permanent Sick / Receipt & Expenditure Book*. This manuscript book contains mainly the financial transactions of the Grand Council, including from the end backwards (36-87) the lists of those present at the Grand Council meetings with the amounts they paid or received (either for being there or as representatives of their lodges or both) and their signatures. Furthermore it contains also several draft minutes, some of which (25/7/1908 (3-4), 23/1/1909 (8), and 29/1/1910 (18)) were not transferred to the minute book of the Order.

banner of Mechanics and that we join with some under [the] old name of Mechanics". Furthermore it was proposed "that the Secretary sign papers received from Insurance Commissioners on behalf of admitting women which was agreed to". During the next meeting, on July 13th, 1912

the Secretary reported what had been done by himself + Bro[ther] Satterthwaite [the Grand Master] and also stated that when he received notice of the first meeting in connection with the formation of a Mechanics Association and not having time to summon an executive meeting at such short notice he asked Bro[ther] Satterthwaite to attend (as one of the Executive) and together they attended a meeting at Blackpool on Saturday Mai 30th, at which meeting it was resolved to form an Association of Mechanics for the purpose of working the Insurance Act and becoming an Approved Society. They again attended another meeting on Saturday 27th April at Preston a report of which each delegate had already received from the Secretary of the new Order which was then founded under the name of 'The Ancient United Order of Mechanics'. A third meeting was held on Saturday 29th June at Preston to pass rules &c. and appoint a Committee of Management &c.

That is the last thing reported in these minutes about this issue. The 'Ancient United Order of Mechanics' was never registered as a Friendly Society. Apparently not only the FIUOM decided after all to continue independently and to become an "Approved Society" under the Insurance Act itself, while others will have closed down. Nevertheless, these minutes provide unique information—also pertaining to the IUOM, but which I did not find with any other Mechanics Order—about the anxiety which the new Act provoked within the Friendly Societies generally. And rightly so, because this Act would turn out to be the end of most of them. In the years which followed, within the FIUOM lodge after lodge either amalgamated with another or just dissolved.

The Great War left only few traces in the Order's minute book: July 31st, 1915 the issue was discussed if for "a member who had been killed on active service" (in the Forces) funeral money should be paid or not. On July 23rd, 1932, "The Secretary Bro[ther] Joseph Holmes who has held the Office for 21 years tendered his resignation as Secretary for the Order" and Brother John Holmes Sr., who was a Trustee of the Order and in that position a member of Grand Council for many years already, was appointed as the Order's Secretary "in Place of his Father", and Joseph Holmes was now appointed Trustee in stead of his son. April 18th, 1942, the death of Joseph Holmes was reported.

In his one-page note mentioned above, John Holmes Jr. wrote: "With the advent of the present Nat[ional] Health scheme interest waned in the immediate post war years and in 1949 I personally undertook the winding up of the whole Order". The FIUOM was dissolved in 1951, apparently as a combination of a decline in membership and as a reaction to the new Friendly Societies Act of 1948. Officially, in 1948 there were only 7 lodges left with a total membership of 684, and in 1949 this had even gone down to only 5 lodges with 527 members, but internally one counted in 1949 with even lower numbers: "at a meeting held on 30th July, 1949, the three Branches [= lodges] left in the Order decided to sent to each member a ballot card for him to sign, for or against dissolution. As the three Branches are only 300 members strong, we cannot see any hope of recovery, and it is useless to try and carry on after 31st December, 1949".⁴⁵ One of the answers sent to John Holmes Jr. was by Ernest Strickland, apparently on behalf of one of the lodges: "At a special meeting of members last Saturday, after I had explained the working of the new Act, it was agreed to dissolve". This shows

⁴⁵ Undated printed letter by Ellis Allen, Secretary of "Ullswater Lodge of Mechanics", apparently to all its members.

that there was also something in the new Friendly Societies Act of 1948 which scared them. As Brother Ellis Allen, secretary, explained it to the members of the Ullswater lodge:

If you decide for the Lodge to continue, then we must at once engage a Registered Accountant-Valuer to draw up a complete new set of Sick Benefits and Levies, with no Members' Funeral, or Widows, or Juvenile Benefits, and have them registered by the Ministry and printed in book form. Study the cost of a Valuer and Printing. [Follows a calculation of the initial and yearly costs.]

Where are we to get this from? Only by Levy [i.e. contributions from the members]; ... it is over five years since we got a new member, and it seems hopeless for us to get new members.⁴⁶

With declining membership these costs could not be borne. Probably this gives a good idea of the effect this new Act had on the majority of the Friendly Societies then still in existence in the UK, including most of the Mechanics Orders: those which were declining anyway now shut down at once.

5. The International IUOM under England from 1877 to 1941

There is little we know about what happened in the IUOM in this period. When, in 1896, a new Friendly Societies Act was passed, the IUOM was registered under that Act.⁴⁷ Vassall adds that “[i]ts registration number was 849” but, as mentioned above, the Order had this registration number already at least in 1893.

The year of the oldest document I found so far of the IUOM, 1833, is remarkable in another respect as well, since it was in that year that in England the Abolition of Slavery Act was passed. It may well be that the explosive growth of the IUOM in the middle of the 19th century, described in the previous section, was related to this event. After all, oral tradition within the IUOM has it that its first members, after its foundation in 1757, were Irish day-labourers and free blacks, but that these free blacks hired themselves out to plantations in The West, thus exporting the Order to the Caribbean area. The assumption that the first members of the IUOM were working class people seems plausible enough. Also, today the Order is almost exclusively black (although it certainly does admit non-black members), so that the assumption that free blacks were admitted seems well founded too.⁴⁸ However, this exporting of the Order to the West cannot have taken place in the 18th, or even in the first half of the 19th century, since, as we saw, the expansion of the Order beyond the UK only started in 1877.

It was in that year that the Order established its first lodge abroad, namely in Cape Town.⁴⁹ In 1922, Pearson quoted literally what Robinson had written about this event (though without any acknowledgement of its source) and then added: “Since that time [i.e. between 1877 and 1922, JS.] the activity displayed by the Brethren abroad has resulted in Lodges being founded in Jamaica, Demerara [= British Guiana = Guyana], Trinidad, Cuba, [the] United States of America, [the] Republic of Panama and Canada”,⁵⁰ which is confirmed by the “List of Foreign Lodges” in the Half-Yearly Report of 1922.⁵¹ In the “Historical Notes” in the *Constitution and General Laws* of the Order from 1973 that list was extended by “Barbados, Grenada,

⁴⁶ Circular of one page, added to a letter of 23/8/1949 by Ellis Allen to John Holmes Jr., which letter states: “This is how we circulized all our members, (57 of them) and 57 replied dissolution. ... How’s that for going on to get a decision”.

⁴⁷ Vassall 1952, 14.

⁴⁸ However, there exists a photo of the “Happy Home Lodge” of the FIUOM (see fig. 9, section 4 above) from 1927 which shows white members only.

⁴⁹ Robinson 1880, 7.

⁵⁰ Pearson 1922, 5.

⁵¹ Hills et al. (eds) 1922, 12-16.

Dutch Guiana [= Suriname], Dutch West Indies, Spanish Honduras, British Honduras and Guatemala”.⁵² Only in a few cases I am aware of the precise year in which the Order started in a particular country.

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Artistic and Durable
REGALIA
 HAS MANY IMITATORS
BUT NO EQUAL
 BEST QUALITY ONLY.
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BANNERS, BANNERETTES, AND FLAGS,
SASHES, APRONS, BADGES, STARS,
JEWELS, COLLARS, MEDALS, HORNS,
GAUNTLETS, GLOVES, HATS, CAPS,
NECK RIBBONS, TASSELS.
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 FOR ALL SOCIETIES. WOVEN ON THE PREMISES.

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 The Board of Management of the Order of Druids.
 The Executive Council of the Ancient Order of Foresters.
 The Board of Directors of the Manchester Unity.
 The Board of Management of the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds.
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 The Executive Committee of the Nottingham Order of Oddfellows.
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HALF-YEARLY REPORT
 OF THE
Independent United
Order of
MECHANICS'
Friendly Society.

CARLISLE, SEPTEMBER 1922.

LIVERPOOL:
 CHAS. PEARSON & Co., PRINTERS, 122 DERBY RD., BOOTLE.
 1922.

Fig. 11: Half-Yearly Report of 1922.

According to Skevelair, it was “in the year 1880, ... [that] Mechanism extended itself to the West Indies, and the first British Colony [where it was] to be established was Barbados, with brother James E. Fields as the first elected District Grand Master of the West Indies. In the year 1895, ... he opened branches in Grenada, Trinidad and Jamaica”.⁵³ However, according to Smiet, the first lodges in the West Indies were established in “St. George, Grenada (1882), Barbados, Trinidad [and] Jamaica (1895)”.⁵⁴

In 1892⁵⁵ or 1894⁵⁶ “[t]he English Order of Mechanics” was introduced into the Colony Demerara, i.e. British Guiana, when the first Mechanics lodge, “Rose of the Summer No. 1”, was established there.

On January 3, 1910, the Order was established in the U.S.A. under a warrant granted to Emanuel Davis, Edward Taylor and R. Rodger Melbourne; Star of the North Lodge No. 1 was formed. On May 7, 1910, Ben Hur Grand Lodge, District No. 3 of the Foreign Section, was

⁵² Anon. (ed.) 1973, 5; the same list is found in the 1989 edition: Anon. (ed.) 1989, 3.

⁵³ Skevelair 1978, 7.

⁵⁴ Smiet 1983, 14. The year 1882 for the first lodge in St. George (Grenada) is confirmed in Liew A Len 1983, 17.

⁵⁵ Cruickshank 2003, no page number.

⁵⁶ Leubin (ed.) 1943, 1.

instituted, and on September 18, 1910, the Order was incorporated under the Laws of the State of New York.⁵⁷

In Suriname, a lodge “Perseverance” existed in the last quarter of the 19th and the first years of the 20th century.⁵⁸ March 17th, 1922 a new lodge “Volharding No. 6” was founded, which still exists.⁵⁹

The first lodge in the Netherlands West Indies was founded in 1929.⁶⁰

However, at the same time that lodges and District Grand Lodges were formed abroad, the Order started to decline in England. To begin with, there were several significant groups breaking away. Already before 1887 the Independent United Order of *Scottish Mechanics* must have been created, since in that year Talbot mentions this Order.⁶¹ In 1892, the “Independent Order of Mechanics, Newcastle Unity” was formed.⁶²

Furthermore, “discontentment arose in Lodges in the West Indies concerning maladministration in England”.⁶³ The point was that the foreign corresponding secretary of the Order, Brother D.M. Pearson, issued “dispensations” (i.e. letters of constitution) for new lodges in the West Indies, while there existed a proper District Grand Lodge of the West Indies, which had the power to do so.⁶⁴ The “Preston District took up the case of the West Indies Lodges in Grand Council in 1903 and caused the Council to remove brother Pearson from the post of foreign corresponding secretary of the Order”.⁶⁵

During the latter part of 1903, brother Pearson who held Dispensations in his possession in spite of the fact that he had been deposed, issued one of them to a new lodge in Panama, to wit, Loyal Nelson. This matter was again represented by the Preston District on behalf of the West Indies Lodges [especially Brother [Thomas H.] St. Hill of Trinidad]⁶⁶ and forcibly put forward at Grand Council by brother Hollinghurst, the Preston District Grand Master. The Grand Council in England, however, took no action to withdraw the dispensation which was illegally issued and the Preston District in disgust petitioned the Grand Council to withdraw from the United Grand Lodge [sic! Intended is: the IUOM. JS] and established a new Grand Lodge to be known as the Independent Order of Mechanics Friendly Society, Preston Unity.⁶⁷

The lodges in the West Indies decided to join this new body, and so, “in November 1906 the Independent Order of Mechanics, Preston Unity, West Indies, Central, South and North America was established”,⁶⁸ and registered in Preston, England with John Hollinghurst as its first Grand Master. In 1921 a District Grand Lodge of the Preston Unity was formed in the USA under James Lynch as Grand Master.⁶⁹ As a result of a new National Insurance scheme, introduced in the UK in 1936 by the then Prime Minister, Lloyd George, the Preston Unity

⁵⁷ Anon. (ed.) 1973, 5; Anon. (ed.) 1989, 3; Sampson 2003, [1].

⁵⁸ Slavery was abolished in Suriname in 1863.

⁵⁹ Baarn & Julen et al. (eds) 1987, 9.

⁶⁰ Uden 1999, [1].

⁶¹ Talbot 1887, 7 & 11; contra Smiet 1992, who claims that the IUOSM was founded only in 1897 (20).

⁶² NA, FS 5/101 & 102.

⁶³ James 1976, 10.

⁶⁴ Smiet 1983, 14/15.

⁶⁵ James 1976, 10.

⁶⁶ Skevelair 1978, 7.

⁶⁷ James 1976, 11/12, see also Smiet 1983, 15.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*. See also Uden 1999, [1] and NA, FS 10/33.

⁶⁹ James 1976, 10.

was forced to close down there,⁷⁰ and transferred its power to act as a Grand Lodge to the District Grand Lodge of Trinidad, which, however, transferred it again to the District Grand Lodge of the USA.⁷¹ Today this is the Independent Order of Mechanics, Preston Unity Inc. (USA). In 1960 the Trinidad District Grand Lodge severed its connection from the Preston Unity Grand Lodge in the USA and established its own Grand Lodge, the Independent Order of Mechanics, Preston Unity (Trinidad).⁷² In 1967 a lodge of the Preston Unity (USA) was established in England again, this time in London,⁷³ and in 1974 a District Grand Lodge was established there.⁷⁴ In 1977 a first lodge, and later a District Grand Lodge of the Preston Unity (USA) was founded in Suriname. Also in the 1970s the Preston Unity (USA) established a District Grand Lodge in The Netherlands.⁷⁵

In 1911 the National Insurance Act “virtually ends the history of the independent Friendly Society movement, for it introduced public social security, and though it associated the Friendly Societies with the new scheme of health insurance, their functions obviously now changed very greatly”.⁷⁶ The resulting fall in membership, experienced by Friendly Societies generally, did not pass by the IUOM, although it also led to attempts to merge some or even all of the Mechanics Orders (see also section I.4 above), in which context the “Independent Order of Mechanics, Newcastle Unity” merged in 1912 again with the IUOM.⁷⁷ Also, the Great War of 1914-1918, which caused so many British casualties, will have influenced the membership numbers of the IUOM.

A “General Report on the Valuation of the Lodges in the Order as at 31st December, 1922” was produced by two “Fellows of the Institute of Actuaries; Public Valuers under the Friendly Societies Act” on 11 December 1925.⁷⁸ This reported a.o. that “[t]he number of Lodges for which data have been supplied was 24, these being divided into 5 Districts [Newcastle-on-Tyne, 9 lodges, 235 members; Border Union, 5 lodges, 120 members; Kendall, 5 lodges, 186 members; Upholland, 3 lodges, 24 members; Liverpool, 2 lodges, 41 members], and the total membership of the Order, excluding widows, was 606”.

The next report is from 16th August, 1933. The numbers have again dramatically declined. Now, there are only 4 Districts left: Kendal with three lodges, Liverpool and Border Union with two each, and Newcastle with one, i.e. a total of 8 lodges. The report concludes: “The memberships of the Lodges are very small, and show a decline. Increased efforts should be made to obtain a satisfactory influx of new Members. Having regard to the small total membership of the Order it is again suggested that the whole of the Lodges should be amalgamated to form a single unit”.

As mentioned before, a new National Insurance scheme was introduced in the UK in 1936 by the then Prime Minister, Lloyd George. It killed almost all still surviving Friendly Societies. A third and last report about the already very much weakened IUOM dates from the 20th October, 1938. Now there seem to be only three Districts left: Kendal, Border Union and Newcastle. There are 9 lodges, only six of which are “valued”, the other three “with very small membership were granted exemption”. “The total membership of the six Lodges valued

⁷⁰ This timing may or may not be correct. The “United Brotherhood Lodge” No. 3, founded 1910, existed until 1917, while the lodges “Good Intent” No. 1, “Noahs Ark” No. 2 and “Juvenile” No. 4 ceased to exist per 1/1/1913 (NA, FS 10/33). It is unclear if any other lodges of the Preston Unity existed in England at that time.

⁷¹ Skevelair 1978, 7/8. See also Smiet 1983, 15/16.

⁷² James 1976, 10; Uden 1999, [1].

⁷³ Smiet 1983, 13.

⁷⁴ Smiet 1992, 20.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁶ Hobsbawm 1957, 96.

⁷⁷ NA, FS 5/101.

⁷⁸ This and the following reports in NA, FS 10/103.

fell during the five years 1933 to 1937 inclusive to 118. The membership of the Lodges range from 28 to 9 ... I strongly recommend you to consider merging the lodges into one body...”.

According to Sampson, “[t]he late Joseph M. Richardson was the last Grand Master of the Grand Council of England. He presided at the final session of Grand Council of England, on December 31, 1939. ... [The] Executive Council ceased to exist from December 31, 1938. The proximate cause was jealousy and distrust. Lodges were withholding levies due to the Executive Council against new death claims”.⁷⁹ Whether or not this is true, I cannot verify at the moment. Fact is, that the yearly returns of the Order to the administrative body of the Friendly Societies continued until 1947. It was only December 3rd, 1947 that the Order was abolished in England.⁸⁰

From 1937 onwards, the team which, according to the yearly returns, officially represented the Order remained constant. It was composed of Stephen Pattison, Thomas H. Watson, and Thomas Wilson, Trustees; Joseph M. Richardson, Treasurer; Edward Paterson, Secretary; Thomas H. Watson (again), 1st Auditor; and J. Simpson, 2nd Auditor.⁸¹ All of them lived in or near Low Fell, Gateshead, near Newcastle. It was this team which still performed a last significant act in 1940/41.

At the end of 1940 the English Grand Masters notified the other G.M.’s that because of war conditions it was not possible to retain the headquarters of the Order in Britain, and suggested its removal to New York. The N.Y. Grand Masters consulted with all the other G.M.’s, and there was not a single objection to this change. The Grand Council thereupon issued a dispensation authorizing the transfer of the Order’s headquarters to New York. This dispensation was dated Sept. 1, 1941, and was signed by Joseph M. Richardson, G.M. of the Order and G.M. of Newcastle District; Stephen Pattison, G.M. of Border Union District; Thomas Wilson, G.M. of Kendal District; William Whitwell, P.G.M. of Kendal District; Thomas Watson, Auditor of the G.C.; and Edward Paterson, Sec’y of G.C.; -- that is to say, by all of the Grand Councillors resident in England. As required by the Friendly Societies’ Act, (Sec. 14 - 1), the British Government was notified of the change of jurisdiction, and in October, 1941, the British Consul in New York inaugurated and established the first Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere, located in New York.⁸²

This representation of the events by Vassall is in almost perfect conformity with my findings in the National Archive in Kew. Only one name I found there—J. Simpson—is lacking in Vassall’s letter, while I did not find William Whitwell mentioned in the archives I inspected. Also the three districts he mentioned—Newcastle, Border Union, and Kendal—are the same ones still named in the report from 1938. Vassall furthermore gives support to his story by claiming that “[a] letter from Mrs. Maude Watson of Gateshead, England, to the N.Y. Grand Council, dated April 24, 1950, acknowledges the above facts. Mrs. Watson is the daughter of the late Joseph M. Richardson and wife of Thomas Watson, both mentioned above” (*ibidem*). Nevertheless, there are two aspects to this story which seem questionable at least: the *motive* for moving the seat of the Order, and the *year* in which the event took place.

From the decline of the Order in England, described above, it is clear that the English part of the Order was dying out at the period concerned. That in itself seems a logical *motive* to move the seat of the Order elsewhere. The war conditions may thus well have been an excuse,

⁷⁹ Sampson 2003, [1].

⁸⁰ Documents in NA, FS 10/103.

⁸¹ For the names, functions and addresses of the Grand Officers as published in the Semi-Annual Report of 1935, see King 1997, 5/6.

⁸² Vassall 1952, 15. See also Anon. (ed.) 1973, 5; Anon. (ed.) 1989, 3; Baarn & Julen 1987, 7.

rather than the real reason for it. Indeed, “The Historical Committee, New York” writes: “In 1940, the Governors [of the Grand Council in England] *persuaded by socio-economic conditions* and the effects of war, agreed to transfer the administrative power and the seat of Government to the U.S.A.”⁸³ The uncertainty about the *year* in which the moving of the seat of the Order took place arises from the fact that in the same collection of texts by Vassall from which the above description of these events was taken, the next text by him, first published in 1957, claims it to have occurred one year earlier:

On October 28, 1956, six brothers of our Order were sentenced to three years of hard labor for the sixth consecutive time without any time off for good behavior. Their names are: Nathaniel A. Haughton, Walter C. Robinson, Clayton C. Stanford, James E. Lashley, Charles King, and William F. Vassall. With such a record, it is fitting that we consider what these brothers and their associates have done.

The Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics in the Western Hemisphere was instituted Oct. 16, 1940, under the auspices of the British vice-consul in New York and a distinguished group of visitors; but for some months before that date the brothers had been busily working on the various inaugural, procedural and constitutional phases of the transfer, as well as in consulting with, and obtaining the views of, Mechanics throughout the hemisphere. A dispensation from the Grand Council in England was obtained, and under this authority the first officers of the Council were installed on Jan. 26, 1941, by the Rt. Rev. Francis H. Lashley, assisted by Rev. E. A. Gayle and Rev. A. D. Cranston. The officers installed in 1941 were, in addition to the six named above, Bros. Joseph F. Blades, Oscar W. de Florimonte, George. E. Barzey, and Winston Gibbons. The Alpha District Grand Lodge, Ben Hur Grand Lodge and Composite District Grand Lodge, the A B C of the Order, each contributed six dollars for stationery and postage, and the Grand Council was on its own.⁸⁴

So, whereas the two versions of the story are in agreement about what happened, the first one dates the fact that “the British Consul in New York inaugurated and established the first Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere, located in New York” in “October, 1941”, the second version claims that this took place “Oct. 16, 1940, under the auspices of the British vice-consul in New York and a distinguished group of visitors” (my italics). Apart from these differences, at least one author, Sampson, suggests that there was no transfer from England to the USA at all. After having mentioned that the final session of the Grand Council of England took place on December 31, 1939, he immediately continues:

At the end of the year of 1940, the three District Grand Lodges, Alpha, Ben Hur and Composite in New York, U.S.A had a common agreement to institute a new Grand Council in the State of New York. ... D.G.M. Blades founded the Independent United Order of Mechanics, Friendly Society, Western Hemisphere, Incorporated.⁸⁵

The agreement between Vassall’s claims and the documents I found in the National Archives in Kew, UK, suggests that Vassall’s version is in this respect more likely than Sampson’s. Regrettably, however, the Executive Committee of the Grand Council in New York has not given me access to its archives, so I could not verify which of these three versions of this story is correct. Indeed, why did Vassall need to refer to the letter by Mrs. Maude Watson at all, if the “Dispensation” from the English Order had been in the possession of “New York”?

⁸³ Anon 1991, [1]. My italics.

⁸⁴ Vassall 1957, 9 [= 1964, 16].

⁸⁵ Sampson 2003, [1].

And did this letter really exist? If Sampson is right, then both documents were invented by Vassall. Such “origin myths” are quite common in organisations like these. Therefore, as long as these documents have not been produced, we cannot be sure whether this story is history or mythology.

All the more relevant, therefore, are three letters in the archives of Lodge “Volharding No. 6” in Suriname, which may well be representative of the correspondence which took place at that time between the New York based Grand Lodges and the lodges in the rest of the world. The first is from the Ben Hur Grand Lodge, New York, to the above mentioned lodge in Paramaribo, Suriname. Very likely, just about every IUOM lodge in existence in the world was sent a copy of this text, and therefore I regard it of sufficient relevance to quote it *in extenso*. It is dated September 1st, 1940 and reads thus:

Dear Brethren:

On behalf of the Officers and Members of the above Grand Lodge, please permit me to extend to you our sincerest fraternal greetings.

We have taken this opportunity of communicating with you in regard to the chaotic condition in which the present European conflict has catapulted us. As you are by now aware of the decision of Grand Council in England to break the fraternal cable which moored our ships to its wharf. We are quite aware of the circumstances which motivated this action, but be that as it may, we are left without contact, one with the other, since the only links, the Financial Words for the year and the half-yearly Reports, are now severed[.] This decision, though regrettable under the circumstances, is a God-sent opportunity, in that it will demonstrate to us whether we have properly absorbed our Mechanic teachings. We must not permit it to escape us. We must put our shoulders to the wheel, and exert every effort to keep brightly burning the blessed light of Mechanism. We can only do this by binding ourselves into one indissoluble whole, and this too can only be done by sacrificing individualities for a tangible whole. Mechanism primarily teaches sacrifice coupled with cooperative efforts.

Therefore, in view of, the above facts, which are indisputable, we exhort you to give this matter your most serious consideration towards an affiliation with us. This action will not only serve to keep the Order intact in this hemisphere, but will also serve to make us know each other better. We are quite sure, that whatever difficulties may present themselves, that we, as men and true Mechanics, can find a solution to such a problem. We must have a Financial Password which is known to all, so that should our members have to depart from their home for some other land, they could immediately find a haven. Such requirements as books, dispensations, certificates, etc. can very easily be arranged. Hoping most sincerely that you will take this matter up very seriously with your members, and give us a very early reply:

We are

Fraternally yours,

Ben Hur Grand Lodge & Grand Jurisdiction, Inc.

[Signed] Oscar W. deFlorimonte, Grand Secretary

[Signed] Bro. M.A. Haughton, Gr. Master

Brother J. Ch. Uden, the Secretary of lodge “Volharding No. 6”, replied on April 30th, 1941 to the “Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere of the I. U. O. M.” (which implies that (1) that body must have been created by then, and (2) that Uden must by now have received information about that, since no such body is named in the above letter):

Dear Brethren:

Your letter of 21st November 1940 in connection with a possible affiliation of Lodge Volharding N^o.6 with “Ben Hur” Grand Lodge, was received March 28, 1941 therefore we are sorry we were unable to reply before.

We thank you for the interest you took in passing on the information you did.

Your letter has aroused a desire in us towards such affiliation, England having, through war conditions, as appeared in Re half-yearly Reports, given us the freedom so to do if we desire; however[,] before taking a definite step we should like to understand fully, the terms and conditions. [etc.]

This letter shows, that on April 30th, 1941, this lodge knew that “England [had], through war conditions, as appeared in Re half-yearly Reports, given us the freedom” to affiliate with the New York Grand Lodges. This supports Vassall’s claim, that the transfer of Grand Council from England to New York took place in co-operation between the two, and was not a one-sided act by “New York”, as Sampson suggests. The third letter, also from J. Ch. Uden as Secretary of lodge “Volharding No. 6” to “The Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere” in New York, names more precisely which half-yearly Report was concerned. This letter was written November 20th, 1941:

Dear Brethren:

In connection with the Report of 1940 from England, and the favoured letter from “BEN HUR” Grand Lodge dated 1st September 1940 in which the desire was expressed that we affiliate, and also the letter and Report of the GRAND COUNCIL of the WESTERN HEMISPHERE, I am happy to inform you that at a special General Meeting convened on the 13th November, instant, it was unanimously decided to affiliate with the “GRAND COUNCIL of the WESTERN HEMISPHERE”, [etc.]

So, this letter shows on the one hand that the half-yearly report, mentioned in the previous letter already, was of 1940, and on the other that the lodge had indeed also received a “letter and Report of the GRAND COUNCIL of the WESTERN HEMISPHERE”.

If we compare these facts with Vassall’s two versions and Sampson’s version of the story, then the most significant fact revealed by these letters is, that on September 1st, 1940, the letter received from New York was still sent by “Ben Hur” Grand Lodge, New York, but that when Uden replied on April 30th, 1941, he had also received a letter from the “Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere”, which, thus, had been founded between these two dates. The surprising thing, however, is, that this is not in contradiction with any of the three versions of the story, because its *founding* is not the same as its *inauguration* / *institution*. Let me for the sake of clarity summarise the events from all these versions:

End 1940: “the English Grand Masters notified the other GMS that because of war conditions it was not possible to retain the headquarters of the Order in Britain, and suggested its removal to New York.” (Vassall-1)

———: the English Grand Masters also published this in their half-yearly Report of 1940. (Uden)

———: “The N.Y. Grand Masters consulted with all the other GMS and there was not a single objection to this change.” (Vassall-1; letter from “Ben Hur”)

Between 1/9/1940 and 30/4/1941: The Grand Council for the Western Hemisphere was *founded* (letters of these days to and from Uden; Sampson)

- (*) 16/10/1940: “The Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics in the Western Hemisphere was *instituted* Oct. 16, 1940, under the auspices of the British vice-consul in New York...” (Vassall-2)
- 26/1/1941: “A dispensation from the Grand Council in England was obtained, and under this authority the first officers of the Council were installed on Jan. 26, 1941 ...” (Vassall-2)
- 1/9/1941: “The Grand Council thereupon issued a dispensation authorizing the transfer of the Order’s headquarters to New York. This dispensation was dated Sept. 1, 1941 ...” (Vassall-1)
- (*) October, 1941: “the British Consul in New York *inaugurated* and established the first Grand Council of the Western Hemisphere, located in New York.” (Vassall-1)

The main problem which remains is the fact that the two events marked (*) are in fact clearly the same. It was argued above, that Vassall’s first version seems more likely trustworthy than his second version. The above summary confirms this, for, if “Ben Hur” Grand Lodge sent out letters to the lodges on September 1st, 1940, then—especially during war time, when (as the first letter by Uden shows) communication world-wide was slow—it would hardly have given the lodges time to respond, had they not only *founded*, but indeed *instituted* the Grand Council for the Western Hemisphere only six weeks later. The conclusion that Vassall’s first version is the more reliable one is confirmed also by the ‘Historic Committee, New York’ which wrote in 1991: “The historic presentation of the Dispensation was made on the second Sunday in September 1941, by the British Consul in New York, Sir James Wilshire. The ceremony was conducted by Bishop Manning and witnessed by many members of the Order and public officials”.⁸⁶

6. The International IUOM under the USA from 1941 to the present

We saw above that, according to the second version of Vassall’s story, “the first officers of the Council were installed on Jan. 26, 1941, by the Rt. Rev. Francis H. Lashley, assisted by Rev. E. A. Gayle and Rev. A. D. Cranston. The officers installed in 1941 were, in addition to the six named above, Bros. Joseph F. Blades, Oscar W. de Florimonte, George. E. Barzey, and Winston Gibbons”. Sampson, again, gives a different version:

A new Pioneer emerged[.] Bro. Joseph Francis Blades P.G.M. a native of Barbados, was the first District Grand Master of Composite District Grand Lodge No. 2. He was inaugurated [as such] on Sunday January 15, 1939 at 3, Troy Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. D.G.M. Blades founded the Independent United Order of Mechanics, Friendly Society, Western Hemisphere, Incorporated.

Hon. Joseph Blades was th[e] first Rt. Worshipful Grand Master of the Western Hemisphere Inc. He was inaugurated [in that function] on February 22, 1942 in New York City, New York.⁸⁷

That Blades was indeed the first Grand Master of the new Grand Council is implicitly confirmed by Vassall when he writes that “[e]ight days after his re-election [at the Convention of 1944] as Grand Master, Bro. Blades died suddenly of a heart attack”.⁸⁸ What matters here,

⁸⁶ Anon. 1991, [1]. The difference between this version (“the second Sunday in September 1941”) and Vassall-1 (“in October, 1941”) seems of little importance.

⁸⁷ Sampson 2003, [1].

⁸⁸ Vassall 1957, 9 [= 1964, 16]. According to “The Historical Committee, New York”: “Grand Master Blades died of a heart attack within six month of taking office” (Anon. 1991, [1]), so that Haughton’s reign started already in 1942. But this not only contradicts Vassall, but also Sampson: “[Blades] presided at the first Triennial

however, is the difference between the two accounts concerning the date of the first installation. This time Vassall's second version of the story not only has it one year earlier than Sampson's (1941 vs. 1942), but also the dates within these years are reported differently (26/1/1941 vs. 22/2/1942). Since Sampson's version fits well to Vassall's first version (of 1952), these two versions corroborate each other with respect to the time that they claim the events took place, while both suggest that Vassall's second version (probably of 1956) cannot be correct in this respect. I assume that Vassall reconstructed in 1956 the year 1941 by subtracting three years from the year of the first triennial Convention, which took place in 1944. The solution to this dilemma is provided by Sampson's information that this Convention took place "in New York, on Sunday, October 29, 1944".⁸⁹ From 22/2/1942 to 29/10/1944 is indeed almost, though not yet quite, three years.

According to Vassall, in 1941, "only nine Branches [= Lodges and Chapters] paid any capitation tax ... for 730 members". In 1942 the number of Branches that had joined the new Grand Council rose to 34, which together had 1320 members. By 1956, 202 Branches had joined the Grand Council in New York.⁹⁰

"The Friendly Societies' Act not being operative in the United States, the same objective was attained under American Law by having the Order incorporated at Albany, N.Y., on May 4, 1942".⁹¹ Since that date, the official name of the Order is: "The Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics of the Western Hemisphere, Incorporated".⁹² Sampson enumerates the Right/Most Worshipful Grand Masters of this Grand Council as follows:

1. 1942-1944 Joseph Francis Blades RWGM
2. 1944-1962 Nathaniel A. Haughton RWGM
3. 1962-1974 Clement Lancelot Glasgow MWGM
4. 1974-1986 Ralph Weeks MWGM
5. 1986-2001 Winston Anthony Jones MWGM
6. 2001-present Horace Mills MWGM



Fig. 12: Headquarters of the IUOM, 65 Putnam Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.



Fig. 13: Horace Mills, present Grand Master of the IUOM.

Convention in New York, on Sunday, October 29, 1944. He was unanimously re-elected to serve a three year term. However, on November 5, 1944 he died of a sudden heart attack" (Sampson 2003, [1]).

⁸⁹ Sampson 2003, [1].

⁹⁰ Vassall 1957, 10 [= 1964, 17].

⁹¹ Vassall 1952, 15. See also Anon. (ed.) 1973, 4, 5; Anon. (ed.) 1989, 3.

⁹² Baarn & Julen 1987, 7.

Also in this period, many new Districts were formed, while some old ones split off from the Order. The ones of which I found explicit evidence are the following.

In the first place, two Districts were formed again in England: Londinium District and Aurora District. Fraser writes:

... for some inexplicable reason the Order became defunct in England even though it was growing in strength in other countries, including the West Indies. It was not surprising, therefore, that (with the influx of West Indian immigrants in the early 1950s, many of whom were members of the Order of Mechanics) in 1957, exactly 200 years after its formation, it was resuscitated in London by West Indians, who are now endeavouring to restore it to its normal pristine prestige.⁹³

According to Sampson, however, the Londinium District Grand Lodge was inaugurated in London by the MWGM Glasgow on December 5th, 1963.⁹⁴ So, what happened in 1957 may well have been the inauguration of the first IUOM lodge (rather than District Grand Lodge) in London.

Less than ten years later, on March 9th, 1966, the United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England interdicted simultaneous membership of both that Order and the IUOM. It is interesting to see, that the members of the Board discussing the matter apparently had no idea about the English background of the Mechanics. According to the report concerned, the IUOM “appears to have originated principally in the West Indies”, but “[i]t now appears that this Order has settled in England on a wider and more permanent basis than heretofore”.⁹⁵ This ignorance may well be the result of the fact that the pre-1947 IUOM in England always remained restricted to the north of the country, and never established itself in London, while Grand Lodge Freemasonry, on the contrary, is very much London based. The new IUOM District, however, being located in London, was noticed at once.

In 1963 the Brooklyn District Grand Lodge was inaugurated in the USA.⁹⁶

In 1966, Suriname District Grand Lodge No. 1 was formed with R.J. Clumper as its first District Grand Master. In 1990, Suriname District Grand Lodge No. 2 followed.⁹⁷

Under Grand Master Weeks (1974-1986) many new District Grand Lodges were established: Holland (The Netherlands), Nassau, Aurora (Connecticut, New England), Ontario, Quebec, and Jamaica District Grand Lodge No. [3 & ?] 4.⁹⁸

When in 1975 Suriname became an independent state, a stream of migrants had already for several years been finding its way to The Netherlands, no doubt partly for economical reasons, but also because many Surinam people had no confidence in an independent Suriname. Many of these immigrants were members of the IUOM. They formed a first lodge in the Netherlands in 1973, and a District Grand Lodge in 1982. This turned The Netherlands into the only European country besides the UK where the IUOM is active. Its first District Grand Master was Harry L. Putto.⁹⁹ Today this District is composed of five Lodges, four Chapters

⁹³ Fraser 1973, 11.

⁹⁴ Sampson 2003, [2].

⁹⁵ *Quarterly Communication ... Wednesday, the 9th day of March, 1966*, 100/101.

⁹⁶ Anon. 1991, [1].

⁹⁷ Baarn & Julen 1987, 18; Uden 1999, [2].

⁹⁸ Anon. 1991, [2], Sampson 2003, [2],

⁹⁹ Seymor 1997, 5-7.

(for women), three Grand Christian Encampments and two Conclaves. It has almost 400 members.¹⁰⁰

In 1985, the first lodge was founded in French Guyana, with support from Suriname.

According to Sampson, Winston Jones, the MWGM from 1986 to 2001, uplifted “the embargo for the Independent Order of Preston unity Mechanics, U.S.A. Inc. after 36 years of separation”,¹⁰¹ but it remains unclear what he meant by this and when it would have taken place. As far as I know, negotiations between the IUOM and the IOM Preston Unity (USA) are even to day still going on at an informal level only. There are today no formal inter-visiting relations between the IUOM and any other Mechanics Order, the “only exemption being members of the Scottish Mechanic Rite/Order [sic!]”.¹⁰²

In 2000, the District Grand Lodge of Guyana, which had worked 108 years under the English and USA Grand Councils, split-off and created the I.U.O.M. F.S. Southern Hemisphere Inc. with its own Grand Council, of which Donald A. Cruickshank was elected the first Most Worshipful Grand Master. On 1/6/2002, the former Guyana District Grand Lodge No. 1 was replaced by three new District Grand Lodges: El Dorado, Kaiteur and Roraima, while in 2003 Keystone District Grand Lodge No. 4 was founded in Brooklyn, New York, USA.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Annual Report of this District for 2006. According to Smiet, the Preston Unity (USA) formed in the same period a District Grand Lodge in the Netherlands as well (Smiet 1992, 20). And the Preston Unity (Trinidad) seems to be in The Netherlands as well.

¹⁰¹ Sampson 2003, [2].

¹⁰² Circular letter of the Grand Secretary, Maurice F. King, of 22/12/2003, ref. no. 21-234-03.

¹⁰³ Sampson 2003, [3].

Chapter II: The IUOM as a Friendly Society

Although the IUOM was registered as a Friendly Society only on the 14th of May 1878, there can be no doubt that it was one, right from the start of its existence. Friendly Societies in the strict sense are today distinguished from Fraternal Societies “the latter being societies from which the element of mutual saving is absent, but this distinction would not necessarily have been clear to the members of such societies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and all these societies have many aspects in common”.¹⁰⁴ Members of Friendly Societies in the strict sense “paid a subscription into a common fund from which they were entitled to claim for sickness, burial costs and so on”.¹⁰⁵ According to Dennis, such mutual benefit societies are “probably as old as urban civilisation” and at least known from classical Greece and Rome.

In the Middle Ages in Europe these needs were catered for by the guilds, which typically had a charitable fund for infirm members and members’ dependants. Medieval guilds are often thought of as bodies set up to regulate craft trades, and indeed many guilds were craft-based, but many were lay religious fraternities, taking members from a variety of occupations. Whether craft-based or not, the medieval guild or fraternity was a highly social body. As the name ‘fraternity’ implies, it felt itself to be a symbolic family; fellow members were often called ‘brothers’ or ‘sisters’ (it was quite normal for guilds to have women members) and care was taken to foster a feeling of relationship. Guilds held collective religious observances, feasts and public processions, and members had a duty not merely to pay their dues but to attend such events, and fellow members’ funerals. (*Ibidem*)

The guilds received their death-blow by the Chantry Act of 1547 of Edward VI,¹⁰⁶ but already in 1555 the ‘Incorporation of Carters in Leith’ was founded, and “it would appear that from this society the idea of benevolent organisations originated”.¹⁰⁷ When Daniel Defoe published in 1697 his *Essay Upon Projects*, there were already “quite a number of friendly organisations formed in London”,¹⁰⁸ so that he cannot be regarded as having invented them, but on the contrary was probably inspired by them. Defoe

suggested the creation of a nationwide friendly society that all working people would be obliged to join in order to provide for themselves in times of sickness or unemployment and thus take the strain off the parish authorities, which were responsible for Poor Relief. (In effect Defoe had invented the concept of National Insurance more than two centuries before it was adopted by Lloyd George’s government [in 1936, JS].) Nothing came of Defoe’s idea, but a number of economic and political thinkers noted the phenomenon and discussed ways in which mutual benefit societies might be encouraged in order to induce the working classes to practise self-help. This impulse led eventually to the Rose Act of 1793, which gave legal recognition to friendly societies.¹⁰⁹

The Rose Act defined a ‘friendly’ as “a society of good fellowship for the purpose of raising from time to time, by voluntary contributions, a stock or fund for the mutual relief and main-

¹⁰⁴ Dennis 2005, 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*. See on Friendly Societies also Maltby 1931 and Hobsbawm 1957.

¹⁰⁶ Duffy 1992, esp. Ch. 13 “The Attack on Traditional Religion III: The Reign of Edward VI” 448-477.

¹⁰⁷ Maltby 1931, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Maltby 1931, 34.

¹⁰⁹ Dennis 2005, 4.

tenance of all and every the members thereof, in old age, sickness, and infirmity, or for the relief of widows and children of deceased members”. By this Act “aid was given to new organisations in the form of safeguards as to management and supervision; but in 1795 the Act was extended to societies which had previously existed”.¹¹⁰ It is only from this time onwards that mutual benefit societies could register officially as ‘Friendly Societies’.

There are many Rules in *The General Rules, of the Independent United Order of Mechanics Grand Lodge, Blackburn* of 1833 which show that the IUOM was such a Friendly Society in the strict sense,¹¹¹ even though it would still take 45 years yet before they would register themselves as such, for example:

2. That a box shall be provided with three outside locks, and two inside ones, all of different sorts; which box shall be kept at the house where the lodge is held, under such security for its safety, as a majority of the lodge may think proper; the I. G., the D. M., and No. 1, council-man, each to hold one of the outside keys; and the P. S., and P. T., each to hold one of the inside keys; ... The box shall contain the regalia, books, papers, and securities of the lodge, together with the non-appropriated accumulation of the fund.
5. That no candidate shall be admitted under eighteen years of age, nor more than thirty-five; ...
6. That should any candidate at the time of his being made a member of the order, knowingly conceal his age, or any kind of disorder or infirmity, he may be labouring under, he shall be expelled, if such concealment be considered an objection, and forfeit all money he may have paid.
47. That when it pleases God to summon a worthy brother hence, there shall be given to his widow, or some brother or brothers duly authorized by his lodge, a funeral gift specified in the *6th constitutional law*; ...
48. That every brother shall, at the decease of his wife, receive a gift according to the *7th constitutional law*.
50. That no brother shall be entitled to the benefit of the order, until he has been initiated the time stated in the *8th constitutional law*, nor unless he has paid up the whole of his initiating money; nor any one who is three months in arrears, or under any fine of three months standing.
51. That should any brother who has neglected to pay his lodge fee or colour money, or any fine or other arrears, for three months; fall sick, or lame, and then come forward and pay all demands, he shall not be entitled to the benefit of the order until he has been a paying member three months from such time.

These examples suffice to show that “the benefit of the order”—i.e. some payment from the lodge’s fund, kept in the box—was granted not only for burials, but also in case of sickness or permanent injury (“lameness”). In fact, a large number of the Rules in this collection are concerned with either the penalties which have to be paid to the fund in cases of misbehaviour, or the conditions under which one is or is not entitled to “the benefit of the order”. In order to qualify for future payments members had to be between 18 and 35 years old and in good health at the time of joining: children were too often ill, whereas old people and those who were ill already could not save enough money anymore to pay for “the benefit of the order” before they got ill or died.

The last rule quoted, stating that one should not be more than three months in arrears, or otherwise one would lose the right to the benefits of the Order, was found in the regulations of

¹¹⁰ Maltby 1931, 35.

¹¹¹ Anon. 1833.

virtually all Friendly societies and their lodges. It resulted in the phenomenon that the minute books of the Happy Home lodge of the FIUOM (see section I.4 above) show that the meetings in March, June, September and December usually had quite a good attendance: “a fair number of Members being present it being quarter end”, while at the meetings in the other months there was often “only a very poor attendance of members present”. This is also reflected in the only membership card of any Mechanic I have come across, namely that of William Park, member of the Millom Castle Lodge of the IUOM, for the years 1885 to 1890.¹¹² It shows that William paid only on 9 meetings during these four years, which means that he often took quite a risk by being in arrears.

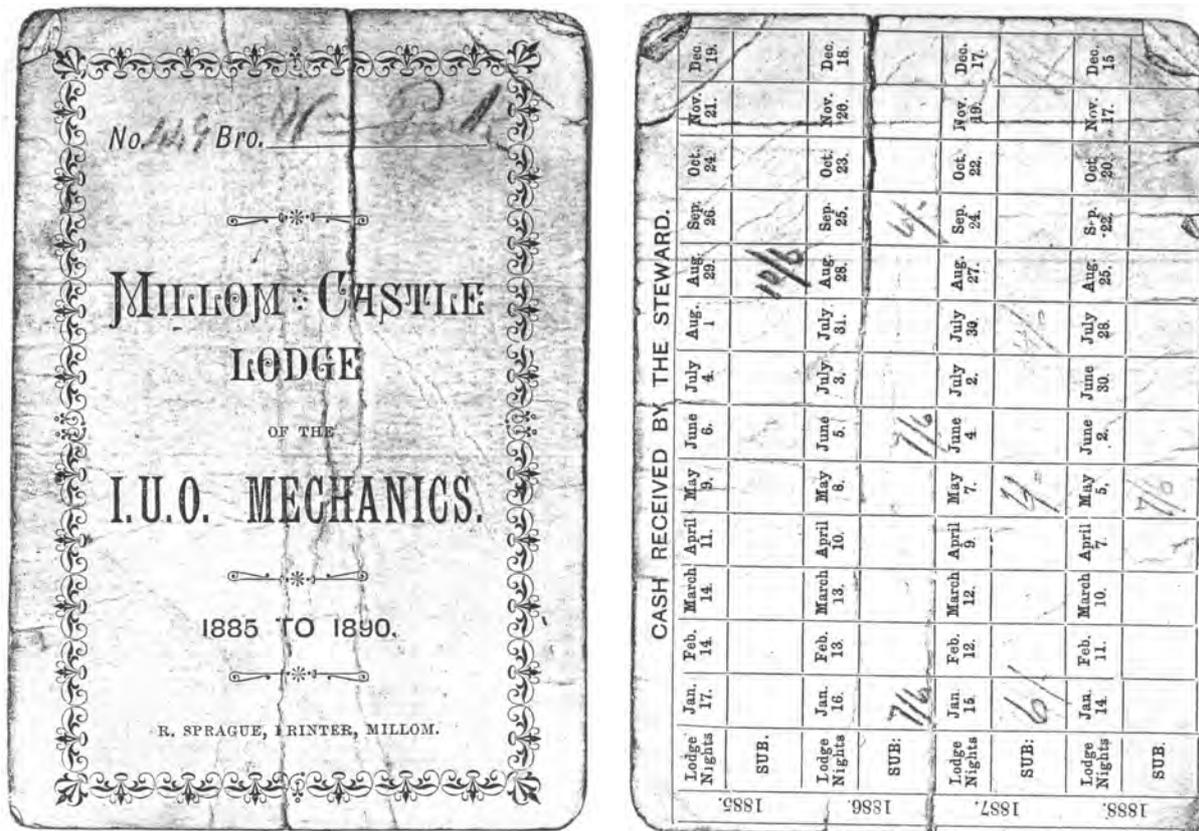


Fig. 14: Membership card of William Park.

When in 1911 the National Insurance Act passed in Parliament, most of the Friendly Societies were abolished. And, as was shown above, also the membership of the IUOM in England declined so drastically that it was eventually dissolved in 1947. This confirms the extent to which the IUOM retained its old social security function for its members. The shift of emphasis from primarily Friendly Society (with its social security function) to primarily Fraternal Society (with its ritual activities), which was successfully made abroad, did apparently not succeed in England at that time. Yet, it was in England that the basis for this change was laid. According to Robinson, the Grand Council resolved in June, 1862 “that honorary members be admitted on payment of entrance money, and approval of the members, the same as any other member; and may give any donation they think proper, but not be entitled to any benefit from the Order, neither Sick nor Funeral money”.¹¹³ Accordingly, the ‘Rules of the Northumberland Star Lodge’ under the District Grand Lodge of Newcastle on Tyne of 1865 mention the

¹¹² Cumbria Record Office (Barrow-in-Furness), in BDTB 331.

¹¹³ Robinson 1880, 33 (Resolution 102).

possibility that a lodge could have ‘honorary members’.¹¹⁴ Their next ‘Rules’ from 1878 (which are standard rules for all lodges of the IUOM, wherein only the name of the lodge and the District Grand Lodge have been added manually) specify what that are:

48. Any person of good character may be admitted as an honorary member of this lodge on payment of at least ten shillings per annum to the management fund thereof, and he may take part in the proceedings of the lodge, hold office therein, and shall to all intents and purposes be a member of this lodge, saving and excepting that he shall not participate in the sick or funeral benefits provided for members by the rules herein contained.¹¹⁵

This rule was maintained in 1893.¹¹⁶ It opens the possibility to attract members who are not interested primarily in the social security function of the Order, but rather in its fraternal and ritual activities. Today the IUOM seems to me indeed primarily a Fraternal Society,¹¹⁷ although it never gave up completely its Friendly Society character and the regulations in use since the transfer of the Order to New York have actually abolished the rule about honorary members. In fact, the “Laws” VI to XIV of the “General Laws Part III” currently in use,¹¹⁸ describe much the same as the quoted and related “Rules” from 1833. And, of course, social security is not everywhere in the world organised equally well by the state, so that it has its function in that respect in some countries.

¹¹⁴ *Rules of the Northumberland Star Lodge*, 1865, rule 18, page 8 (in NA, FS 10/39).

¹¹⁵ *Rules for Lodges of the Independent United Order of Mechanics, Friendly Society*, 1878, rule 48, page 69 (in NA, FS 10/39).

¹¹⁶ *Rules for Lodges of the Independent United Order of Mechanics, Friendly Society*, 1893, rule 49, page 65 (in NA, FS 10/39).

¹¹⁷ “[The IUOM] is a Fraternal Order” (King 1997, 2).

¹¹⁸ Anon. 1989, 37-42.

Chapter III: The IUOM as an Initiation Society

1. *Historical development of the system (Rite)*

Friendly Societies general would not only practice mutual financial support in case of illness and death, they also had their ceremonial aspects. According to Hobsbawm:

besides its financial function the Friendly Societies had another, which is generally forgotten: they were important centres of collective life, whose colour and ceremonial was often at least as valued by the members as their money. Consider the “Rules and Orders to be observed and kept by a Society of the inhabitants of the parish of Bromham, held at the Greyhound Inn,” published in Devizes, 1849. It provided not only for the meetings (at which the stewards were to “serve out the beer that every man shall have his right”) and for the contributions and benefits, but for the annual feast on Whit Thursday, and, if music was available, for the procession:

“Every member is to wear the colours on the feast day: purple first and the hat, next Blue Pink in the middle,—this is to be made up in a Cocka[r]de and not tied loose round the hat,—and if any member is absent from home ten miles, and if he do not attend himself he may send a friend to partake of the feast ...”

Such rules were widespread, and in fact the ceremonial side of Friendly Societies is always important.¹¹⁹

The first thing which this may recall is the celebration of Whit Friday by the Happy Home lodge, mentioned above (section I.4). Also, lodges of some Mechanics Orders did celebrate their anniversary and had an annual procession,¹²⁰ but I did not find this in the IUOM. On the other hand, this rule quoted by Hobsbawm is not unlike rule 31 in *The General Rules, of the Independent United Order of Mechanics Grand Lodge, Blackburn* of 1833:

31. That the tiler shall see that every brother wears the colours he is entitled to, in the lodge room; any brother found without his qantity, shall for each one he is deficient of, be fined one penny.¹²¹

But it seems significant to me that the tone of these rules is generally much more “serious” than that of the one quoted by Hobsbawm. Certainly there were processions, but the rule mentioning them does not state the *right* of the members to participate therein, but rather:

55. That should there be a procession, either public or funeral, in any lodge, every brother thereof shall attend, except sickness or *very* urgent business prevent him, and even then, he shall send in a written notice, to show cause why he cannot attend, or be fined one shilling in addition to the expence of the day.¹²²

I have so far not found any printed or manuscript ritual of any “Mechanics” Order, dating from before the crisis year 1877. However, there are some scraps of evidence in the “Digest of Resolutions of Grand Council” in Robinson’s 1880 booklet:

¹¹⁹ Hobsbawm 1957, 96.

¹²⁰ *Rules of the Duke of Wellington Lodge No. 88, of the Loyal United Free Mechanics, held at Treacle Row, in Pickup Bank, in the County of Lancaster*, Darwen 1873, rules 8 & 9 (NA, FS 15/331).

¹²¹ Anon. 1833, 6.

¹²² Anon. 1833, 10. Emphasis in the original.

April, 1845.

1.—That the Lectures in future be printed on a larger type. (22)

May, 1847.

271.—Exec[utive] Com[mittee] revised Lectures, and partially revised Rules. (47)

June, 1849.

16.—That an edition of the lectures, as revised by Bro. Thompson be printed. (23)

June, 1864.

114.—That ... the charge to be as follows:—Ceremonies and Lectures 6d. each; ... (35)

June, 1868.

133.—That the opening and closing ceremony of the Whitehaven Mutual Lodge be continued according to Rule; and that the G[rand] M[aster] write to the I[llustrative] G[rands]¹²³ from this G[rand] C[ouncil], that, unless they are in compliance with rule, they will be suspended from the Order. (36)

June, 1869.

151.—That any district may be allowed to alter the Ceremonies, as the members may think proper; subject to the sanction of such alterations by the Executive Committee, for the time being. (37)

The term “Ceremonies” in plural, used in the last three of these six resolutions, does not inform us about anything we did not know already, since virtually every Friendly Society has at least two ceremonies: one for the adoption of new members, and one for funerals.

The term “lectures” used in the first four of these six resolutions, is the term used in certain masonic traditions for the standardised sets of questions and answers, known in other traditions as “Catechisms” or “Instructions”. The resolutions of 1847 and 1849, therefore, document in the first place the fact that—at least these parts of—the rituals of the IUOM were sometimes “revised”. A lecture, if long, can be subdivided into sections, and sections into clauses, but as a rule, there is only one lecture per degree. Therefore, secondly, the consistent plural: “lectures” indeed suggests that right from the first resolution of April 1845 onwards, there was more than one degree in use in the IUOM. This presumption is supported by two further resolutions, which, however, are only of significant later dates:

June, 1874.

190.—That the officers of a lodge, according to Rule 23, had no right to take any payment from any member for degrees, during sickness. (41) [Rule 23: That no brother shall be entitled to any sick relief, who has not been initiated 12 months, ... nor shall he pay for any degree during the time he is sick. (50, note 1)]

June, 1875.

215.—That a brother may take up his degrees all at once, if convenient to him, after 12 months’ initiation, and that one month after doing so, he is entitled to 9s. per week sick relief. (42)

Here we quite clearly find the term “degrees” used in plural, in such a way, that there can be no doubt that, by 1874, a multiple degree system was in use in the IUOM. The texts indeed seem to suggest the existence of more than one degree *after* the first degree of initiation (through which one becomes a member), thus, at least three in the total system. We can, however, be more sure, even at a significantly earlier date, because *The General Rules, of the In-*

¹²³ I.e. the reigning Masters of the lodges.

dependent United Order of Mechanics Grand Lodge, Blackburn of 1833 include such rules as:¹²⁴

9. That no person shall be initiated in a state of intoxication; ... (4)
10. That no person shall be initiated into the order, who has been a member of any other secret order, ... (4)
19. That in each lodge there shall be kept an order book, in which shall be entered the age, and name of all candidates proposed, the proposers and seconds' names; also the dates of makings and taking up of degrees; ... (5)
69. ... and the brothers so disposed of, shall receive the benefit of the degrees they have merited, ... (12)
72. That no brother shall stand a poll for I. G.¹²⁵ who has not attained the sixth order, ... (13)
76. That no brother shall be entitled to a copy of these rules who has not attained the second order. (13)

From these rules it is quite clear that normal lodges 'initiated' new members (rules 9 and 10), that this was, like in the early 18th century in the Premier Grand Lodge of the Freemasons, called 'making' (19), that the Rite worked consisted of more than one 'degree' (19 and 69) or 'order' (72 and 73), and that even in 1833 this Rite was already at least a six-degree system (72).

A first ritual which I would like to mention here is that which according to its title was printed for the Friendly United Order of Mechanics.¹²⁶ It has no title page and no indication whatsoever of an author, place or date, but its appearance—for example the use of a large first capital for the two prayers, each of these capitals in a black square, illustrated with a flower—suggests that it was printed in the last quarter of the 19th century. This ritual was found in the archives of the "Free and Independent United Order of Mechanics" (see section I.4 above) and indeed, in its title, the word "Friendly" has in pencil been struck out and replaced by "Free and". Although that leaves a discrepancy between this title and that of the FIUOM in that the word "Independent" is still missing, the fact that it is part of the archive of the FIUOM strongly suggests that it was one time used by that Order. The ritual, which is only 8 pages large, has the following contents:

- [Initiation ceremony: – 1-3] (*)
 - Ceremony of Opening a Lodge. – 1
 - Prayer – 1
 - Initiation of a Candidate – 1-2
 - Qualification, Necessary to become a Member ... – 2-3
 - Ceremony of Closing a Lodge – 3
 - Prayer. – 3
- L[odge] P[resident]'s Declaration [at his installation]. – 4 (*)
- Officers' Declaration [at their installation]. – 4 (*)
- Address After a Funeral Service ... – 4-5
- Explanation of Lodge Emblems. – 6
- Order of Festival Processions. – 7
- Order of Funeral Processions. – 8

¹²⁴ Anon. 1833.

¹²⁵ I.G. = Illustrative Grand = Master of the lodge.

¹²⁶ See appendix A.

The Candidate is just initiated as a “Member”; no further degrees are mentioned. Also, the ritual used is extremely simple, in no way comparable with the rituals practised by the IUOM today, but much more like that what one might expect from Friendly Societies generally. Through the texts marked (*), a vertical line in pencil has been drawn in the middle of the pages 1-4, whereas the remaining texts have such a line in their left margin. Also, in the texts on pp. 2-4, the name of the Order has not been modified. This seems to suggest, that only the texts on the pages 4-8 were actually used by the FIUOM.

But the Friendly United Order of Mechanics which had this ritual printed may well have been just another of the many Orders which split-off from the IUOM at some time, though it existed already in 1874, witness a date stone in the wall of a cottage on Hala Road, Lancaster, with a circle around a square and compass around a letter S (= “Supreme” for “Supreme Grand”¹²⁷ = God), below which figure is the text “F.U.O.M. 1874.”. Robinson mentions that in 1858 “a dispute arose in the Lancaster district, which resulted in a secession of about 500 members” from the IUOM.¹²⁸ Quite possibly, they formed themselves into the FUOM. If that was the case, than it is remarkable that they returned to this extremely simple one degree system, after leaving the IUOM which, as we just saw, had a multiple degree system already in 1833. But maybe they did not. The correspondence between “Arthur Heath Sykes, Solicitor” and the “Working Man’s Friend Lodge” states that this lodge belonged to the “Friendly United Order of Mechanics”,¹²⁹ and the “Rules” of that lodge from 1883 refer definitely to “degrees”.¹³⁰ It is therefore perfectly possible that what we have here is in fact very similar to the ritual for the first degree as practised also by the IUOM until at least 1858.



Fig. 15: Date stone of the F.U.O.M.

¹²⁷ For “Supreme Grand” see the song “Origin of Mechanism” in Anon. 1833.

¹²⁸ Robinson 1880, 6.

¹²⁹ Letter of 6/3/1889 re Isaac Benson (Cumbria Record Office (Barrow-in-Furness) from BDHJ 312/6/1).

¹³⁰ *Rules of the Working Man’s Friend Lodge* [FS No. 4815] of *Friendly Mechanics Friendly Society*, Ulverston, Printed by Weeks and Fletcher, Queen Street, 1883, Rule 21, page 9 (Cumbria Record Office (Barrow-in-Furness) from BDHJ 312/6/1).

The fact that the IUOM practised a multiple degree system already in the 19th century (as shown above), is confirmed by the second ritual which I have before me. It is: *Manual C of the Independent United Order of Mechanics as used with the small ceremony books by the officers in their respective lodges. By L.L. Talbot, M.A.G.M. 19. Congress Street, Boston. March, 1887.*¹³¹ Since the IUOM was founded in the USA only in 1910 (see above, section I.5), the “Boston” where this ritual was printed must perforce be Boston in England. This publication contains a much larger and much more complex set of rituals than the previous one. Its contents are as follows:

- Emblems of the Order – 3-5
- Initiation Ceremony of the I.U.O.M. – “Pink Order” – 6-11
- Obligation for a Fellow Craft – 11-12
- Questions to a Fellow Craft before the 6th Degree (Master Mechanic) – 12-13
- Sixth or White Order (Master Mechanic) 13-26
- Charge to a Fellow Mechanic – 26
- Installation of Officers – 27-33
- Dedication of a Mechanic Lodge – 33-37
- Mechanics Order of Chivalry – 38-53

Not only do we here have a system of at least 7 degrees (or rather “Orders”, the first six degrees as today plus the “Order of Chivalry”),¹³² but also the rituals for the several degrees are much more elaborate than the one from the Friendly United Order of Mechanics. However, although the title of this booklet explicitly ascribes it to the IUOM, the text of the first degree refers three times to the “Independent United Order of *Scottish* Mechanics” or “I.U.O.S.M.” (my emphasis)!¹³³ Clearly, then, this ritual for this degree was transferred from the IUOSM to the IUOM. And had this transfer taken place earlier than 1887, then no doubt, this text would have been corrected to remove the word “Scottish” where it should go. In other words, this publication seems to be the first edition (or even a draft edition)¹³⁴ of this ritual, documenting very precisely the moment when this ritual for the first degree was adopted by the IUOM, as well as from where Talbot copied it. Now, this, of course, raises the questions: Did Talbot copy the other rituals also from the IUOSM or not, and: Where did either the IUOSM or Talbot get these rituals from? The last question seems, at least in part, not too difficult to answer.

In 1813, the two rivalling, at that time dominant, masonic Grand Lodges in England, the “Premier Grand Lodge” and the Grand Lodge of the “Antients”, merged into the “United Grand Lodge of England”. Since one of the controversies between the two had been precisely the rituals each one of them practised, obviously none of their lodges was prepared to now start working with those of the others. So, after the Union, new rituals were designed, which were significantly different from the previously used ones. The new rituals were approved in 1816, and in 1825 appeared their first exposure, by Richard Carlile, in feuilleton-form.¹³⁵ In 1831 Carlile bound them together, re-issuing them as a small booklet: *An Exposure of Freemasonry: or, a Mason’s Printed Manual*. Ca. 1835 another version, by Peter Gilkes, of the same rituals was published.¹³⁶ Carlile responded in 1836 with not only a second edition of his

¹³¹ I thank the person who owns this ritual, for making it available to me.

¹³² NB! The “Order of Chivalry” is apparently the 7th degree, following immediately after the 6th, since the candidate for the 7th enters as a “Master Mechanic”.

¹³³ At pp. 7 (once) and 11 (twice).

¹³⁴ The large number of spelling and/or printing errors supports the idea that it may be a draft edition.

¹³⁵ Carlile 1825.

¹³⁶ [Peter William Gilkes]: *The Whole of the Lodge Ceremonies and Lectures in Craft Masonry; as taught by the late P. Gilkes* [no place, ca. 1835].

version,¹³⁷ but also with a second part “Containing the Royal Arch and the Knight Templar degrees”,¹³⁸ and a third part,¹³⁹ containing short descriptions of a large number of further degrees. In 1838, George Claret published a further version of Gilkes’ rituals for the “Craft” degrees,¹⁴⁰ but eventually it was Carlile’s version which became the popular one. In 1843, the year Richard Carlile died, N. Bruce re-published (probably unauthorised) Part I of Carlile’s manual, but the real popularity was apparently caused by W. Dugdale’s publication of the three parts in one volume in 1845. This was the official third edition.¹⁴¹ In this form it saw many later editions, a.o. in 1850, 1853, 1855, 1858, 1861, ca. 1870, ca. 1875, ca. 1885, ca. 1890, ca. 1895, ca. 1918, ca. 1930, and ca. 1947. It is clear, then, that this booklet was used as a ritual book in many lodges, probably not only in England, but in all English speaking countries in the world, including Scotland. Not only was it the most readily available text of the rituals of the “Craft” degrees, it was for a long time in the 19th century also almost the only publication containing the rituals of the “higher” degrees in English. For the “Order of Chivalry”, the only alternative were the official rituals, as promulgated on 10 April 1851, by the Grand Conclave for England and Wales. These were printed for the first time in 1876 (40 years after Carlile’s version) by ‘A Lewis’ (today called ‘Lewis Masonic’), “the firm, owned by John Hogg, which from 1870 onwards produced rituals for the Craft and other degrees”.¹⁴² These Grand Conclave rituals were very different from those printed in Carlile. A.o. they had split the available ritual material into two degrees: the “Royal, Exalted, Religious, and Military Order of Masonic Knights Templar” (KT) and the “Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta, including the Knight of St Paul; or, the Mediterranean Pass” (KM). Since there seems to have always been a certain amount of dual memberships between Freemasonry and the several Mechanics Orders, there was no technical difficulty whatsoever in effecting the transfer of these masonic rituals to a Mechanics Order, be it the IUOSM or the IUOM.

One might think, therefore, that a reconstruction of the history of the rituals in use in the IUOM from its start until the end of the 19th century could be, that (1) it started with a single very simple ritual for the incorporation of a new member, such as may have been found among most Friendly Societies, and which may have been very similar to that of the FUOM; that (2) somewhere before 1833 it adopted a more complex set of degrees, mainly copied from masonic Craft rituals and worked it into a six degree system, still with the same rather simple first degree; while (3) in 1887 Talbot in its turn proposed more elaborate new rituals, at least partly copied from those in use in the IUOSM, but possibly also going back, directly or through the IUOSM, to masonic examples.

In order to test this preliminary theory, the Talbot 1887 rituals have to be compared with the masonic¹⁴³ ones. I will do that now, starting “from the top”, i.e. with the “Order of Chivalry”. Not surprisingly, that Talbot ritual is indeed virtually identical with the Carlile version, not with the Grand Conclave rituals. Even the paragraph on the “Cook” (which, as far as I know, is not found in any other masonic ritual for this degree) occurs in both:

¹³⁷ Richard Carlile: *Freemasonry, Part I: A Manual of the First Three Degrees*, London 1836.

¹³⁸ Richard Carlile: *Manual of Masonry, [Part II:] Containing the Royal Arch and the Knight Templar degrees*, London 1836.

¹³⁹ Richard Carlile: *Manual of Freemasonry, Part III: [etc.]*, London 1837.

¹⁴⁰ George Claret: *A Series of Masonic Illustrations, comprising all those taught by the late Bro. P. Gilkes with many others*, London 1838.

¹⁴¹ *The Genuine Edition: Manual of Freemasonry, in Three Parts ... by the late Richard Carlile. Now first collected in one volume*, W. Dugdale: London 1845.

¹⁴² Smyth 1991, 78.

¹⁴³ For Carlile I used the first “three parts in one volume” edition, viz. the 3rd edition of 1845, but later verified these against other editions: there turn out to be virtually no differences. Of the Lewis rituals, I used the second edition of 1881 (Anon. 1881).

Carlile 1845	Talbot 1887
<p>In some encampments, the following is a concluding part of the ceremony:—</p> <p>One of the equerries, dressed as a cook, with a white night cap and apron, and a large kitchen knife in his hand, suddenly makes his entrance, and kneeling on one knee before the new Sir Knight, says:—</p> <p>Sir Knight, I admonish you to be just, honourable, and faithful to the Order, and not to disgrace yourself, or I, the cook, will hack your spurs from off your heels with this my kitchen knife. He then retires.</p>	<p>[Enter an Equerry dressed as a Cook with a white apron, and a white cap, a large kitchen knife in his hands. He kneels on one knee, before the new Sir Knight, and says—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COOK'S CHARGE.</p> <p>Sir Knight I charge and admonish you to be just, honourable and faithful to the order and not to disgrace yourself, or I the Cook, will hack your spurs from off your heels with my kitchen knife) <i>Retires.</i></p>

This example at once also demonstrates how closely Talbot follows the text of Carlile. There is some rephrasing here and there (here indeed rather a lot, compared to most other parts of the text), but that never intentionally changes the meaning of the text. When the meaning of the text *is* changed, it is always clearly the result of poor quality copying. Four times a whole line was dropped in the process of copying, many times words were dropped or misread, sometimes resulting in incomprehensible text, or in text with a different meaning. Also three questions from the catechism were dropped, again very likely unintentionally. What probably is intentional, is the dropping of some duplications in Carlile, the shortening of some texts, and the addition in two places of the indication to sing a hymn. Carlile nowhere indicates singing, but it was standard practice in Freemasonry in the 18th and 19th century, and in many lodges it is even today. Apart, of course, from the change, where appropriate, from “Mason” to “Mechanic”, there is one more adaptation made in Talbot’s version of this ritual which is worth mentioning:

Carlile 1845	Talbot 1887
E. What recommendation have you ?	Equerry. What recommendation have you?
C. The Sign and Word of a Royal Arch Mason.	Conductor. The sign and word of a Master Mechanic.
E. Have you worked at the second temple?	Equerry. What! Have you worked at the Temple?
C. I have.	Conductor. I have.

This fragment shows that in Masonry the Candidate for the “Order of Chivalry” has to be a “Royal Arch Mason”, a degree which, apparently, the IUOM did not (yet) practice in 1887. Thus, here the Candidate has only to be a “Master Mechanic”. As a consequence, the Candidate in the masonic version has “worked at the second temple”, i.e. the Temple of Zerubbabel, the building of which is the central symbolic theme of the Royal Arch degree, whereas the Candidate in the Mechanics version has “only” worked “at the Temple”, i.e. the Temple of Solomon, the building of which is the central symbolic theme of the Masters’ degree. However, such changes are very few. There can, therefore, on the basis of this evidence, be no doubt that, at least for this degree, Carlile was copied almost verbatim in Talbot 1887.

More or less the same can be said about the first, and largest, part of the Masters’ degree. Talbot 1887 adds “After obligation of 6th Degree, read Ecclesiastes, 12th, from 1 to 7 verses. Then Hymn” and also has a “Prayer to be used after obligation” which is absent from Carlile. Furthermore, the “retrospect of those degrees, which you have already passed” is slightly

shortened, possibly leaving out elements from the masonic Apprentice and Fellow-Craft degrees, which were not found in the IUOM versions used at that time. For the rest, these two versions are again virtually identical, confirming Carlile as the source for Talbot 1887. Talbot clearly refers to this degree as the 6th, whereas in Freemasonry it is the 3rd. But we saw already that the development of the masonic 2nd or Fellow-Craft degree into four degrees, as practised in Mechanism also today, must have taken place before 1833. Furthermore, at the end of the first part, we read:

Carlile 1845	Talbot 1887
You are now at liberty to retire, in order to restore yourself to your personal comforts, and on your return into the lodge, the signs, tokens, and words shall be explained to you, and the history resumed.	You are at liberty now to retire in order to restore yourself to personal comforts, and in returning you will receive the White Lecture of Purity. See White Degree Ceremony Book.

What follows now is quite different: In Carlile, after the return of the Candidate, the secrets of the degree are explained, the second part of the Hiramic myth (here referred to as “the history”) is told, as well as the explanation of the “ornaments of a Master Mason’s lodge”, and a (very short) “lecture” (catechism), after which the lodge is closed. In Talbot 1887, however, it follows only the section “Speculative and Operative Mechanism” yet, which is a kind of instructive charge, a.o. on a number of symbols, of which there is no equivalent in Carlile. However, in Talbot there is a reference here to the “White Degree Ceremony Book”. Also, the title page of Talbot states explicitly that this “Manual” is to be “used with the small ceremony books” and in the ritual of the first degree, there are references to the “small ritual 1st Degree” and the “grand Ritual” (p. 7). If these were also referred to as manual “A” and “B”, then that would explain why Talbot’s is called “Manual C”. Apparently, then, the IUOM had in 1887 already printed rituals for at least its six “Craft” degrees, and Talbot’s publication of that year replaces only part of these rituals in use before, though possibly adding the “Order of Chivalry” as a new degree. It clearly replaces the first part of the Masters’ degree, but leaves unaltered (and thus does not include) the second part of it.

The “Fellow” material is even far smaller, consisting mainly of the “Obligation for a Fellow Craft” (a term which is rather masonic, mechanism usually referring to a “Fellow Mechanic”), and a “Charge at passing [the] 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Degree of a Fellow Mechanic”. The obligation includes material also present in Carlile, but actually combines as much from the obligation for the first as from that for the Fellow Craft degree. The charge, however, is clearly a shortened form of “the charge in the second degree” in Carlile, though somewhat re-ordered:

Carlile 1845	Talbot 1887
<p>THE CHARGE IN THE SECOND DEGREE.</p> <p>Brother N——, being advanced to the Second Degree of the Order, we congratulate you on your preferment. The internal, and not the external, qualifications of a man are what masonry regards. As you increase in knowledge, you will consequently improve in social intercourse. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the duties, which, as a Mason,</p>	<p>CHARGE.</p> <p>(At passing 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Degree of a Fellow Mechanic.)</p> <p>Bro., you having now passed to the fifth Degree of Mechanism, we congratulate you on your preferment. The internal and not the external qualifications of a man are what Mechanism regards. As you increase in knowledge, you will improve in social intercourse. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the duties which, as a Mechanic</p>

<p>you are now bound to discharge; or enlarge on the necessity of a strict adherence to them, as your own experience must have established their value. It may be sufficient to observe, that your past behaviour and regular deportment have merited the honour which we have conferred; and in your new character, it is expected that you will not only conform to the principles of the order, but steadily persevere in the practice of every commendable virtue. The study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration ; especially the science of geometry, or masonry, originally synonymous terms, is of a divine and moral nature, and enriches with the most useful knowledge; while it proves the wonderful properties of Nature, it demonstrates the more important truth of morality.</p> <p>...</p> <p>The laws and regulations of the order, you are strenuously to support and maintain. You are not to palliate or aggravate the offences of your brethren; but, in the decision of every trespass against our rules, judge with candour, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with mercy.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Such is the nature of your engagements as a Craftsman, and these duties you are now bound to observe by the most sacred ties.</p>	<p>you are bound to discharge, or to enlarge on the necessity of a strict adherence to them as your own experience must have established their value. Our laws and regulations you are strenuously to support; and be always ready to assist in seeing them duly executed. You are not to palliate or aggravate the offences of your brethren; but in decision of every trespass against our rules, you are to judge with candour, admonish with friendship, and reprimand with justice. The study of the liberal arts that valuable charge of education which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration; especially the science of Geometry, which is established as the basis of our art. Geometry or Mechanism originally synonymous terms, being of a divine and moral nature enriched with the most useful knowledge: while it proves the most wonderful properties of nature, it demonstrates the more important truths of mortality.</p> <p>Your past behaviour, and regular deportment have merited the honour which we have now conferred, and [in y]our new character it is expected that you will conform to the principles of the order, by steadfastly persevering in the practice of every commendable virtue.</p> <p>Such is the nature of your engagements as a Fellow Mechanic and to those duties you are bound by the most sacred ties.</p>
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So, this again confirms that Carlile is the basis of Talbot 1887. However, here is where this stops. Of three chapters in Talbot 1887—viz. “Emblems of the Order”, “Installation of Officers” and “Dedication of a Mechanic Lodge”—Carlile has no equivalent at all. Talbot’s section “Emblems of the Order”, which is in itself already quite short, misses, probably as an error of the printer, one page, thus leaving only its first and last page, of which the last one contains only a few lines of text. The emblems explained on the first page are “The Eye”, “The Heart and Hand”, and “The +++n [= coffin,] Skull, and o-o-o [= crossed] Bones”. Comparison with the ritual for the first degree of the IUOSM from 1978 shows that at least the first page of this chapter actually is part of the instructions of Talbot’s 1887 first degree, about which more follows below.

The “Installation of Officers” does not correspond to Carlile’s Installed Master’s degree, which only describes the esoteric part of this ceremony, which is precisely lacking in Talbot. But it does mention obligations for all the principal officers of the lodge, for the text of which we are, however, again referred to the “Small or 1st Degree Ritual”, with the exception of those for the Worshipful Master and the Deputy Master of the lodge, which are included. The

practice that all officers have to enter into an obligation at their installation is not usual in English masonic lodges, where normally only the new Master recites one. Comparing the text of the two obligations provided with those in the ritual of the FUOM (Appendix A) shows only minor similarities, mainly obvious ones. Yet, an important similarity seems to be the fact itself that in both cases all officers enter into an obligation. This is also practised in a number of masonic Grand Lodges outside of England, but I don't recognise the text from Talbot's manual as copied from a masonic source.

That is very different in the case of the "Dedication of a Mechanic Lodge" with corn (usually wheat), wine and oil, which describes exactly the masonic practice, not only in England, but also in America and on the continent of Europe, both in the past and today. Although I can't at the moment point out the immediate source of Talbot's 1887 version, it is no doubt copied from a masonic ritual booklet. What is interesting is that this ritual describes the dedication of a "lodge" with which, in the masonic context, was originally meant the "tracing board" on the floor in the centre of the lodge room. That this is what was intended in this ritual becomes clear in such texts as: "The lodge carried by 4 brothers ..." (p. 34). However, such a tracing board seems never to have been part of the tradition of the Mechanics, so that this text cannot have been designed originally for a Mechanics' context. In the context of the Mechanics, therefore, the word "lodge" may have followed one of the shifts in meaning, also prominent in the masonic context, viz. its use for either the group of members, standing around the tracing board, or even for the lodge room where this takes place. Dedication ceremonies for both (the group of persons and the room) were and are performed by Masons, and all these dedication ceremonies are very similar.

There remains one more chapter of Talbot 1887 to be discussed, viz. the ritual for the first degree. There is, of course, a ritual for the masonic first degree in Carlile, but these two rituals are (with the exception of a few questions and answers exchanged when the candidate enters the lodge for the first time) not similar at all. What is more, this Talbot 1887 ritual is not similar to any main stream masonic first degree ritual. In fact, it is loaded with references to death and mortality, thus rather reflecting the 19th century versions of the masonic Masters' degree. As such it does not really fit into a standard set of "Craft" degrees. Furthermore, it is the ritual of this degree alone which has the three references to the "Independent United Order of *Scottish* Mechanics". I will come back to the contents of this ritual again below.

Looking back to the preceding analysis of the rituals in Talbot's 1887 manual, the question must be posed: what actually did "L.L. Talbot, M.A.G.M.",¹⁴⁴ who poses as the author of this publication, do? Was he just copying a complete system, as in use at that moment in the IUOSM? Or did he make this collection himself, copying from them only the first degree (including the "Emblems of the Order") while taking the material for the other degrees directly from Carlile, the "Dedication of a Mechanic Lodge" from another masonic source, and the "Installation of Officers" from still somewhere else? At the moment I have no way of telling. Either way, it remains most likely that (1) in the late 18th or maybe still the early 19th century, the IUOM worked with a simple one degree ritual, (2) by 1833 it had adopted the six Craft degrees worked in Mechanism today but probably with still rather simple rituals, while (3) from no later than 1887 onwards the seven degree system shown by Talbot's publication, including much more elaborated rituals for the first and Masters' degrees, would remain in use (and even be extended further). In Talbot's Manual, the Masters' degree is clearly the 6th, and the Craft degrees are also referred to by their colour. The fact that its title page states explicitly that it should be "used with the small ceremony books" shows that these degrees were in use at that time in the IUOM. Furthermore, the references in the ritual for the first degree or "Pink Order" to the "small ritual 1st Degree" and the "grand Ritual", and in that for the Mas-

¹⁴⁴ It remains at the moment unclear what "M.A.G.M." stands for. Probably something like "Most A? Grand Master". Maybe the A. is a printing error, after all there are many printing errors in this publication.

ters' Degree to the "White Degree Ceremony Book", suggest that there were "small" rituals for at least the six Craft degrees available, and also a "grand" ritual, before 1887. In other words, the ritual system of the IUOM had developed by 1833 into at least a six, and from no later than 1887 a seven degree system.

The next ritual I have before me is that of the *Opening and Closing Ceremony and Initiation of Members of the District* from 1903.¹⁴⁵ By now the Grand Christian Encampments had merged with the District Grand Lodges, whereby the initiation into the "Order of Chivalry" had become a consecration ritual for District Grand Officers. In 1946 this had apparently been reversed again, and Vassall explains the logic behind that reversal:

The Mechanic Order was completed, and remains complete, without the Grand Christian Encampment. The Encampment was never an appendix to the Order; ... The Sir Knight is not even a degree of the Order. The Encampment is a purely military Branch, paralleling the Order but never touching it, never superseding it, and never usurping any of its functions. ... The responsibility for the work of the Order in any community has ever devolved on the District Grand Lodge. ... The subordinate Lodges confer all subordinate degrees, and the Grand Lodge confers all grand degrees. The Encampment confers no degree but its own.¹⁴⁶

Essentially the 1903 ritual, however, is the "Order of Chivalry" again, and it is virtually identical to that in both Carlile and Talbot 1887. As opposed to the other two, however, it misses the last part, starting with the large "charge" and ending with the catechism. On the other hand, that (by far most essential) part which it has even closer ties to Carlile than Talbot, thus it does not perpetuate the many mistakes in the latter. One point in which it copies Carlile, however, is apparently based on a lack of understanding as to why Talbot had made the change. This is, that the Candidate in 1903 claims to have worked at the *second* Temple, which, as we have seen, is in Carlile the logical consequence of the fact that he has to be a Royal Arch Freemason. Since the qualification for a Candidate in the IUOM ritual of 1903, however, remains only that he is a Master Mechanic, it is illogical that he should claim to have worked at the second Temple, that is, the Temple of Zerubbabel, rather than the Temple of Solomon.

Important, however, is that this ritual shows, that the "Order of Chivalry" had since 1887 become firmly established within the IUOM. But already in 1946 it was no longer its highest degree, or else Vassall could not have written: "The Encampment was never an appendix to the Order; had it been, it must have come after the highest degree".¹⁴⁷ Apparently, by that time, at least one further, higher degree had been added to the system. There is one explicit candidate for such a degree, since the list of branches in the Annual Report of 1950 (p. 22) mentions, besides the usual Lodges, Chapters and Grand Christian Encampments, also one Royal Arch Council (Loyal Invincible Royal Arch Council No. 1 in Cristobal, Panama).

Today, there are in the IUOM, apart from the Rose degree (see below), officially 16 degrees. The "Sir / Sister Knight" (the "Order of Chivalry") is today "optional" (but no less popular) and has moved to position eight (making place for the "Past Master" as Seventh). It is followed by the "Covenant" (Ninth), "Royal Blue" (Tenth), "Merit" (Eleventh), "Royal Arch" (Twelfth), "Priest" (Thirteenth), "Past Eminent Commander" (Fourteenth), "Past

¹⁴⁵ I thank the owner of this ritual (who wants to stay anonymous), for making it available to me. "*The District*" is probably "The District throughout the B.W.I.", i.e. "The District throughout the British West Indies".

¹⁴⁶ Vassall 1946, 10/11.

¹⁴⁷ Vassall 1946, 10.

Grandmaster / Past Grandmatron” (Fifteenth), and “Procouncillor” (Sixteenth).¹⁴⁸ Of these, some—such as the Past Master, the Royal Arch, and possibly the Priest (which may correspond to the Grand High Priest of the “Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees”)—are well known in Masonry and may well have been copied from there. However, others—such as the Covenant, the Royal Blue and the Merit—are from their names not recognisable as such. Clearly, then, there has been a very creative development during the 20th century. Regrettably, however, no further information on this development is available to me at the moment.

2. The “Craft” Degrees (Degrees 1 to 6)

No matter how interesting this history of the development of the degree system (Rite) of the IUOM may be, the centre piece of any masonic or related Rite is always the Craft degrees. Apart from Talbot’s rituals from 1887, the only version to which I have access at the moment are those which were put in the Internet by the mildly anti-masonic Dutch foundation “Argus”: <http://www.stelling.nl/vrijmetselarij/mechanics.html>. They claim to be:

- the 1st or Pink Degree of the IUOSM from 1978, and the
- the 2nd or Scarlet Degree,
- the 3rd or Green Degree,
- the 4th or Blue Degree,
- the 5th or Red Knight Degree, and
- the 6th or White Degree,

all of the IUOM from the 1960s (which I will, for convenience, refer to as from ca. 1965). That the first degree of 1978 comes, just as the first degree from Talbot, from the IUOSM, rather than from the IUOM, seems pure coincidence. It makes these two rituals, of course, all the more comparable. However, members of the IUOM have stated to me that these rituals on the Internet are indeed the rituals used by the IUOM, and they made no exception for the first degree. It is therefore quite likely that, at least since Talbot transferred this ritual for the first degree from the IUOSM to the IUOM, it has become the ritual practised within the IUOM for this degree. Regrettably, I have no means of telling if, and to what extent, the rituals of the IUOM and the IUOSM have since then developed somewhat different after all.

Comparing the rituals for the first degree in Talbot 1887 and IUOSM 1978, confirms in the first place that the ritual in Talbot is lacking some parts. But it now also becomes clear which parts these are. All in all, these turn out not very substantial in size. Clearly, these parts will have been covered by the “small ritual books” which Talbot mentions. What is lacking for example (actually systematically for all degrees) in Talbot, are the opening and closing ceremonies. Comparing the parts which are given by Talbot, it is above all the similarities between the two versions which are striking. Even long charges are repeated virtually verbatim. It seems therefore fair to assume that these rituals were mainly retained unchanged over roughly a century.

Talbot mentions as the regalia for the first degree only a “pink Collarette”, whereas in IUOSM 1978 it also includes a “white apron bordered with pink”. This may well be a later addition indeed, assimilating the Mechanics’ praxis even more to the masonic one. The “Emblems of the Order” mentioned in Talbot, do return in IUOSM 1978 as the “Emblems of the Pink Degree”, the first three being again: “The Eye”, “The Heart and The Hand”, and “The Coffin, Skull and Crossed Bones”, but now followed by “The Bee Hive” and “The Bundle of Sticks”. The texts for the first three are virtually identical in the two versions. The last two in IUOSM 1978 must have been roughly the text intended for the missing page 4 in Talbot 1887. The few lines which do occur in Talbot on page 5, I have not been able to trace. They are: “... theme we contemplate, and by its dictates endeavour to regulate our conduct; hence, while

¹⁴⁸ Strijk 2001, 12.

influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us, and the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare and rejoicing in each other's prosperity."

It remains that, though there can be little doubt that this ritual for the first degree follows all the principles of masonic rituals in general, its contents are very different from any masonic first degree I know, and that, with its emphasis upon death, it is much closer to masonic third degree rituals of the 19th (Romantic) century. Indeed, it does not so much have the character of a first step in a multi-degree system, but rather that of a one degree complete system in its own right.

The amount of Fellow material in Talbot 1887 is, as we have seen, very limited. One element is the text of the oath. We have seen that this has some similarity with Carlile 1845. The remarkable thing, however, is that IUOM ca. 1965 has corrected this back to a form which is even much closer to Carlile:

Carlile 1845: Obligation 2nd degree	IUOM ca. 1965: Scarlet Degree
<p>I, N. N., in the presence of the Grand Geometrician of the Universe, and in this worshipful and warranted Lodge of Fellow-Craft Masons, duly constituted, regularly assembled, and properly dedicated, of my own free will and accord, do hereby and hereon most solemnly promise and swear that I will always hail, conceal, and never reveal any or either of the secrets or mysteries of, or belonging to, the second degree of Freemasonry, known by the name of the Fellow-Crafts;</p> <p>to him who is but an Entered Apprentice, no more than I would either of them to the uninitiated or the popular world who are not Masons.</p> <p>I further solemnly pledge myself to act as a true and faithful craftsman, obey signs, and maintain the principles inculcated in the first degree. All these points I most solemnly swear to obey, without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind, under no less a penalty, on the violation of any of them, in addition to my former obligation, than to have my left breast cut open, my heart torn therefrom, and given to the ravenous birds of the air, or the devouring beasts of the field, as a prey : So help me Almighty God, and keep me steadfast in this my great and solemn obligation of a Fellow-Craft Mason.</p> <p>W.M. As a pledge of fidelity, and to render this a solemn obligation, which would otherwise be but a serious promise, I will thank you to seal it with your lips twice on the volume of the sacred law.</p>	<p>I, ..., in the presence of the Grand Geometrician of the Universe and this Worshipful and Warranted Lodge of Fellow Mechanics, duly constituted, regularly assembled and properly dedicated, of my own free will and accord, do hereby and hereon most solemnly promise and swear, that I will always hail, conceal and never reveal any or either of the secrets or mysteries of or belonging to the second degree of Mechanism known by the name of Fellow Mechanics,</p> <p>any more than I would either of them to the uninitiated or the popular world who are Mechanics.</p> <p>I further solemnly pledge myself to act as a true and faithful Mechanic, obey signs and maintain the principles inculcated in the first degree. All these points I most solemnly swear to obey, without evasion, equivocation or mental reservation of any kind; under no less a penalty on the violation of any of them, in addition to my former obligation, than to have my left breast torn open, my heart torn therefrom and given to the ravenous birds of the air, or the devouring beast of the field as a prey. So help me, Almighty God and keep me steadfast in this my great and solemn obligation of a Fellow Mechanic.</p> <p>As a pledge of your fidelity and to render this a solemn obligation, which would otherwise be but a serious promise, I will thank you to seal it with your lips twice on the Volume of the Sacred Law.</p>

The comparison also shows why one sentence in the IUOM-version is incomprehensible, whereas the Carlile version is clear. It is unclear where this corruption comes from. It does not occur in Talbot 1887.

The next significant part of Fellow Mechanic ritual in Talbot 1887 is the “Charge at passing [the] 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Degree of a Fellow Mechanic”. We have seen that it is a shortened version of the corresponding Charge in Carlile 1845 with some parts in a different order. Comparison with the version of the Charge in the ritual of the Scarlet or second Degree of the IUOM of ca. 1965 shows a similar result. Once again a direct comparison between Carlile 1845 and the IUOM ritual of ca. 1965 proves to be fascinating:

Carlile 1845: Charge 2nd degree	IUOM ca. 1965: Scarlet Degree
<p>Brother N——, being advanced to the Second Degree of the Order, we congratulate you on your preferment. The internal, and not the external, qualifications of a man are what masonry regards.</p> <p>As you increase in knowledge, you will consequently improve in social intercourse. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the duties, which, as a Mason, you are now bound to discharge; or enlarge on the necessity of a strict adherence to them, as your own experience must have established their value. It may be sufficient to observe, that your past behaviour and regular deportment have merited the honour which we have conferred; and in your new character, it is expected that you will not only conform to the principles of the order, but steadily persevere in the practice of every commendable virtue.</p> <p>The study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration; especially the science of geometry, or masonry, originally synonymous terms, is of a divine and moral nature, and enriches with the most useful knowledge; while it proves the wonderful properties of Nature, it demonstrates the more important truth of morality.</p> <p>As the solemnity of our ceremonies requires a serious deportment, you are to be particularly attentive to your behaviour in our regular assemblies. You are to preserve our ancient usages and customs sacred and inviolable; and induce others, by your example to hold them in due veneration.</p> <p>The laws and regulations of the order, you are strenuously to support and maintain. You are not to palliate or aggravate the offences of</p>	<p>W.M.: Brother ..., being advanced to the second degree of the Order, we congratulate you on your preferment; the internal, and not external, qualifications of man are what Mechanism regards.</p> <p>As you increase in knowledge you will consequently improve in social intercourse. It is to recapitulate the duties, which as a mechanic you are now bound to discharge, or enlarge on the necessity of a strict adherence to them, as your own experience must have established their value. It may be sufficient to observe that your past behaviour and regular deportment have merited, the honour which we have conferred, and in your new character it is expected that you will not only conform to the principles of the order, but steadily persevere in the practice of every commendable virtue.</p> <p>The study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration, especially the science of geometry or mechanism (originally synonymous terms) is of a divine and moral, nature, and enriches with the most useful knowledge, while it proves the wonderful properties of nature, it demonstrates the more important truths of morality.</p> <p>As the solemnity of our ceremonies requires a serious deportment, you are to be particularly attentive to your behaviour in our regular assemblies, you are to preserve our ancient usages and customs, sacred and inviolable, and induce others, by your example, to hold them in due veneration.</p> <p>The laws and regulations of the order you are strenuously to support and maintain. You are not to pallate or aggravate the offence of</p>

your brethren; but, in the decision of every trespass against our rules, judge with candour, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with mercy.

As a craftsman in our private assemblies, you may offer your sentiments and opinions on such subjects as are regularly introduced in the Lecture, under the superintendence of an experienced master, who will guard the landmarks against encroachment. By this privilege, you may improve your intellectual powers; qualify yourself to become a useful member of society; and, like a skilful brother, strive to excel in what is good and great.

All regular signs and summonses, given and received, you are duly to honour and punctually to obey; inasmuch as they consist with our professed principles. You are to encourage industry and reward merit; supply the wants and relieve the necessities of brethren and fellows, to the utmost of your power and ability; and on no account wrong them, or see them wronged; but to apprise them of approaching danger, and to view their interest as inseparable from your own. Such is the nature of your engagements as a Craftsman, and these duties you are now bound to observe by the most sacred ties.

our brethren, but in the decision of every trespass against our rules, judge with candour, admonish with friendship and reprehend with mercy.

As a Fellow Mechanic, in our private assemblies you may offer your sentiments and opinions on such subjects as are regularly introduced in the lecture under the superintendence of an experienced master, who will guard the landmarks against encroachments. By this privilege you may improve your intellectual powers, qualify yourself to become a useful member of society, and like a skilful brother try to excel in what is good and great;

all regular signs and summonses given and received, you are duly to honour and punctually obey. inasmuch as they consist with our professed principles, you are to encourage industry, and reward merit, supply the wants and relieve the necessities of brethren and fellows to the utmost of your power and ability, and on no account wrong them or see them wronged, but to apprise them of approaching dangers, and to view their interest as inseparable from your own. Such is the nature of your engagements as a Fellow-Mechanic and these duties you are now bound to observe.

This shows, that the IUOM ca. 1965 version gives virtually the full text of Carlile 1845, even in its original order. Only one important word is missed.

The last degree of which we can compare the Talbot 1887 ritual with the IUOM ca. 1965 version, is the 6th, White or Masters' degree. But here we come to a completely different result than in the case of the previous degrees. The rituals for the Masters' degree in the Talbot 1887 and the IUOM ca. 1965 versions are very different. Indeed, a large and important part of the IUOM ca. 1965 version is not copied from an English, but from an American masonic ritual. In England, the Premier Grand Lodge (the "Moderns") and the Grand Lodge of the "Antients" merged in 1813 into the United Grand Lodge of England, which created new rituals for its Craft degrees, which were approved in 1816, and were since then demonstrated in special lodges, the most famous of which is the "Emulation" Lodge of Improvement", founded in 1823. Carlile's rituals are "Emulation", as is Talbot's for this degree. The masonic rituals in America developed very differently. Here the "Moderns" had been mainly the British officers, who were sent home when the USA became independent. The Masons who stayed were predominantly traders, soldiers, and other middle class people, who usually belonged to lodges of the "Antients". These lodges now formed themselves into new Grand Lodges, one per State. Standardisation, to a large extent, of the rituals practised in all of the USA, despite the independence of each Grand Lodge, was achieved by the publication of two books: Thomas Smith Webb: *The Freemason's Monitor; or, Illustrations of Masonry* of 1797, and Jeremy Ladd Cross: *The True Masonic Chart or Hieroglyphic Monitor* of 1819. Both saw

a large number of editions. They were followed by books, spelling out the ritual texts, such as Malcolm C. Duncan: *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor* of 1866. The distinction between the English and the USA ritual for the third degree is characterised by a clear difference in the performance of the central part of the ritual. In this part, the candidate learns the Hiramic Myth, while it is also to some extent enacted with the candidate playing the principal part. In the English version, the myth is basically told, in two parts, and only the central event (the killing, burying, and raising of Hiram, the architect of the Temple of Solomon) is enacted theatrically. The USA version, on the contrary, re-enacts the whole myth in great detail in a very dramatic theatrical form, replacing virtually all of the English monologue with complex dialogues between a large number of participants, thus turning it almost into a real theatre play. It is precisely this part which (though in a clearly shortened form) has been substituted in the IUOM ca. 1965 ritual for the corresponding English part, still present (or rather precisely introduced) in Talbot 1887. The first, “English”, part of the ca. 1965 ritual, runs until the end of the charge, summarising the previous degrees. The second, “USA”, part, starts with the communication of the pass-grip and ends after the candidate has been raised and then led out of the lodge room. The third and last part starts with the “Lecture” (Catechism), in which the traditional “English” version is picked-up again from the Question about “the particular subject of this degree” onwards. Each of these three parts follows in its structure its masonic (English or USA) example very closely. Obviously, this change will have been made only after the seat of the Order had been moved from England to New York in 1941. Indeed, Vassall writes: “During 1942” [or is 1952 intended?] the Grand Council of the IUOM in the Western Hemisphere had “its own rituals printed. We closed 1952 with ...”.¹⁴⁹

One last remark: my comparison of the IUOM ca. 1965 ritual of the White Degree with the rituals by Carlile (England 1845) and Duncan (USA 1866) showed, that there are numerous transcription errors in the IUOM version, quite a number of which result in unintelligible language. I have also before me a copy of the printed IUOM ritual for the sixth or White degree from 1963.¹⁵⁰ A comparison of this ritual from 1963 with the ca. 1965 one shows, that the number of errors introduced by Optical Reading the ca. 1965 text in order to put it in the Internet, is fairly restricted. The majority of the corruptions in the text cannot have been caused by that, but must have crept in over time, or even when the Mechanics texts were copied from their masonic examples. Of course, these corruptions can be removed again, using precisely these masonic texts once more. A few examples:

<p>Texts from the ca. 1965 ritual for the sixth or White degree. Possible corrections based on comparing with the printed ritual from 1963 in red. Possible corrections based on comparing with Carlile 1845 and Duncan 1866 in blue.</p>
<p>... we the frail creation [creatures] of Thy providence ...</p>
<p>... th[r]ough the valley of the shadow of death, that he may finally arise from the tomb of [transgressi]on to shine as the stars ...</p>
<p>It inculcated the stirring [striking] lessons [lesson] of natural equality ...</p>
<p>... you learnt the just causes [estimate] of those wondrous faculties [with] which God has endowed [the being formed] after His own image, ...</p>
<p>... nature presents one more great and useful reason [lesson more], viz.: ...</p>
<p>... you will ... [re-]invest him of [with] what he has been divested [of].</p>
<p>... that there might not be [had] the least trace of remembrance remain among men ...</p>
<p>... taking hold of each others right hand [wrist] with the points of fingers, piercing the wrist; ...</p>
<p>... right foot parallel with the other's left; right foot on the inside; ...</p>

¹⁴⁹ Vassall 1957, 10 [= 1964, 17].

¹⁵⁰ I thank the person who made this ritual available to me; I assume that he wants to remain anonymous.

... hand over left [right] shoulder, supporting the back.
Accordingly the [a stated] day [having been] appointed for their return to Jerusalem having arrived they formed themselves into three Fellow Mechanics Lodges and reported [departed] from the three entrances of the Temple; ...
He therefore charged them to be very careful in [observing] whatsoever casual sign, token or [and] word might occur ...
... till time or circumstance should restore the right [genuine] ones.
... because nothing [common or] unclean was offered [suffered] to enter there, not even the High Priest, and he, but once a year, [nor then,] till, after many washings and purifications, ...
The ornaments of a [Master] Mechanics Lodge are the porch, domes [dormer,] and square pavement.
... the sign of joy [and exultation], an exclamation, ...

Now it is stated that Ralph Weeks, who was Most Worshipful Grand Master of the IUOM from 1974 to 1986, “worked diligently to standardize the ‘Fundamentals’ and the ‘Rituals’ as we know them today”.¹⁵¹ I do not know what changes in the rituals are hidden behind this statement, because I have not seen any more recent ones, but hopefully he corrected these corruptions, so that the rituals in use today are easier to understand.

Let me summarise the results of the comparison of Talbot’s 1887 rituals with those of the IUOSM from 1978 for the first, and those of the IUOM from ca. 1965 for the 2nd to the 6th degrees:

- The 1st degree has remained virtually the same. It is not comparable to any masonic first degree ritual known to me, and gives the impression of being an independent one degree complete system in its own right. It is clearly a 19th century “Romantic” ritual.
- The degrees 2 to 5 clearly developed out of the masonic degree of a Fellow-Craft, though adding some extra material. The basis may well have been the Emulation ritual, for example as available in Carlile’s Manual in any of its 19th century editions, since at least part of the texts are still almost word for word identical to the corresponding parts of his Fellow-Craft ritual. However, the splitting up into four degrees must have taken place before 1833.
- The 6th degree was apparently modified at once when in 1941 the seat of the Order was moved to New York, now in its central part very recognisably reflecting the usual USA 19th century version of the ritual for the masonic degree of a Master Mason.

The previous observations are very interesting from the perspective of ritual theory, and especially from the point of view of the theory of transfer of ritual.¹⁵² In the first place, just as in Freemasonry and other ritual communities, so also among Mechanics, we find the opinion that “the old customs and rituals, on which the Order was originally founded, have always been preserved and have remained in force until the present day”.¹⁵³ This assumption about the inviolable nature of rituals seems to be more or less a standard ingredient of ritual traditions. But the scholarly historical reality looks very different: the rituals of the Mechanics have shown to be as flexible and changeable as all other rituals in the world. Secondly, they have not been created out of a void, but are rooted in several of the masonic traditions, which can be identified explicitly. However, the ritual material found in these masonic traditions has by the Mechanics been used in a very liberal and creative manner. In the first degree we see a ritual which abides by all the apparent rules of what a masonic ritual should look like, but

¹⁵¹ Anon. 1991, [2].

¹⁵² Langer, Lüddeckens, Radde & Snoek 2006, 1-10.

¹⁵³ Baarn & Julen 1987, 7.

taking these into account, it is purely a creation of its own, though borrowing many elements from existing British masonic rituals. The freedom which the Mechanics felt to do whatever they wanted with the available masonic ritual material is maybe most clearly seen in their splitting up of the degree of a Fellow-Craft Freemason into four degrees in the Mechanics' Rite, and their introducing much ritual building blocks—including such symbols as the twelve stones—which do not occur in Freemasonry at all. It clearly shows that, although the Mechanics never seem to have denied the masonic origins of their ritual tradition, they at the same time never felt themselves under an obligation to follow the masonic examples in any strict way. That same freedom and creativity is seen in the mixing of the English and the USA tradition in the Masters' Degree, quite a dramatic action, which must have taken place even rather recently (i.e. shortly after 1941).

Yet, there remains one more aspect to the ritual of the Mechanics, which is in my view more than worth while mentioning. So far I have highlighted the similarities of their rituals with the main-stream Anglo-Saxon masonic traditions: those of the 19th century traditions of the United Grand Lodge of England and USA Grand Lodges. However, there was in the 18th century in England a third tradition, besides those of the Grand Lodges of the “Moderns” and the “Antients” who merged into the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813. To this third tradition belonged the “Harodim” (active in London and the North of England from before 1732), the Lodge of the City of York (in existence in 1693) which formed itself into “The Grand Lodge of All England” in 1725, “The Grand Lodge of England, South of the River Trent” (created in 1779 by William Preston in an attempt to revive the Harodim tradition), the “Royal Order of Scotland” (which is the successor of the Harodim, still active today), the “Adoption Rite” (in which, mainly in France, women were initiated from ca. 1744 onwards), and possibly a number of other organisations. All of them have a number of characteristics in common: their rituals are purely Christian; these rituals are more catechetical than dramatic, and their long catechisms with many questions and long answers are called “Lectures”; all their degrees have a strong relation with biblical stories; and the first degree(s) of their degree-system or Rite do(es) often not so much refer to the story of the building of the Temple of Solomon, as rather to the stories from Genesis: the Creation, the Fall of Man, Noah's Ark and the Covenant between God and him, the Tower of Babel, the Destruction of Sodom, Abraham ready to sacrifice Isaac, Jacob's Ladder, Joseph in the Pit, and Joseph in Egypt. As a result, a number of symbols feature prominently in them, which are far less common in the other traditions. Among these are: the Tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, the Rainbow, the Tower of Babel, and Jacob's ladder. One such a feature does not yet identify a masonic ritual as belonging to this tradition. But when a remarkable number of them are found together, that does point in this direction. It should furthermore be pointed out, that this tradition always was rather strong in especially the North of England.

Now we have seen that the Mechanics Orders were found exclusively in the North of England until in 1877 its first lodge was formed in South Africa. It is not surprising, then, to find—when we sift out all the material which can be clearly identified as having been copied from 19th century masonic rituals, and look at the fragments which then remain—traces of the “third tradition” in the rituals of the Mechanics (and in the furnishing of their Lodge Rooms). For example, in the first degree, the “First Lesson” is Genesis Chapter 22, verses 1 to 19. That is the story of Abraham who is prepared to sacrifice his only son Isaac. That theme recurs in the fifth or Red Knight Degree, in which the place where the Temple of Solomon was built is indicated as: “On Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered his son Isaac”, which recalls the ritual of the Royal Order of Scotland: “[Q] How did Mount Moriah become consecrated or called holy? [A] On account of three great offerings made thereon: 1st. Abraham, at the com-

mand of God, offering up his son Isaac; ...”.¹⁵⁴ The “Second Lesson” in the first degree is Revelation Chapter 4, in which the Rainbow is mentioned. The “Lecture” (sic!) of the same degree commences with four questions and answers about the Creation. The explanation of the first of the “Emblems of the Pink Degree”, the Eye, starts: “As Mechanics let us always remember those expressive words, that cannot be too deeply impressed on our minds ‘Thou God seest me’! For the eye of the Lord is in every place beholding the good and the evil”, whereas on the back of an Adoption Rite ritual from 1776 is written (in cipher): “Alleluia. Il faut q’un bon masson ait / toujours en vue la presence de / d+ [= dieu]” (= Alleluia ! A good Mason ought always to keep in mind the presence of God).¹⁵⁵ The second of the two Emblems of the third or Green Degree is the Jacob’s ladder, the staves or rungs of which are equated with particular moral virtues, just as is done in the Adoption Rite. The formulation in the ritual of the Green Degree looks like this:

... a ladder, denominated in Scripture as Jacob’s ladder; it is composed of several staves, which are illustrative of many moral virtues: there are three principal ones, Faith, Hope and Charity.



Fig. 16: IUOM Lodge-room (Suriname), showing Jacob’s ladder, standing on the Altar.

The manuscript of 1761 with the Adoption Rite rituals of the Prince of Clermont (BN Baylot FM⁴ 18) states (in my translation):

¹⁵⁴ [Ritual of] *The Royal Order of Scotland*, Dudley [no year], 26.

¹⁵⁵ *Art Royal ou Maçonnerie des Dames et du Sexe*, 1776 (GON 240.D.21).

Q. What does a (female) Mason wear on her breast (“devant elle”)?

A. The representation of Jacob’s ladder.

Q. What does that ladder denote?

A. Two main virtues: the love of God and of one’s neighbour, represented by the uprights of the ladder, of which each of the individual rungs indicates one of the moral virtues which derive from the first two.

That is the dominant version, found in this tradition. There is, however, also a variant version, found for example in *Les quatre grades complets de l’Ordre de l’Adoption, ou la Maçonnerie des Dames* (Jérusalem [= Paris], 1772), the first printed version of the French Adoption Rite rituals (in my translation):

Q. Are you a (female) Master Mason?

A. I know how to climb the ladder.

Q. What does that ladder denote?

A. The communication which exists between heaven and earth through the practice of the virtues.

Q. Which are these virtues?

A. The three Christian virtues and the four moral virtues.

Q. Which are the three Christian virtues?

A. Hope, Faith and Charity.

The ritual of the Green Degree seems to combine the two versions, found in the Adoption Rite rituals. Finally, in the ritual for the degree of a Master Mechanic, there are seven questions and answers in the Lecture about Noah’s Ark, followed by three about Jacob’s Ladder, although neither of these are—apart from these questions—a theme in this ritual. The last of these questions is: “Why is this ladder based on the Volume of the [Sacred] Law [= the Bible]?”. And indeed, when their lodges are opened, a life-sized ladder is standing on the opened Bible, reaching from there to the ceiling [= the sky / the Heavens] (See fig. 16). In modern English Freemasonry, Jacob’s Ladder does also occur on the first degree tracing board, but as far as I know, no serious research has been done yet about when and where this symbol made its appearance there for the first time. It may well have been introduced into the tracing boards of the “Moderns” under the influence of William Preston’s attempts to revive the Harodim tradition.

These “third tradition” symbols may have been borrowed by the Mechanics Orders for their rituals from old masonic lodges in the North of England, which may have continued at least part of this tradition in their own particular rituals long after the introduction of the new rituals for all the lodges of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1816. But it may also be a silent witness that the ritual tradition of the Mechanics Orders itself has its roots in this old “third tradition”. Who knows?

There are in the current rituals of the IUOM also a few text fragments directly borrowed from Samuel Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected*, published for the first time in 1730, and—because it became the ritual book of the “Moderns”—re-printed many times afterwards until the Union of the “Antients” and the “Moderns” in 1813. In the first place, the tree from which a branch is used in the Masters’ or White degree is called a Cassia.¹⁵⁶ This is specific to Prichard and the anonymous *A Defence of Masonry* (which is a reaction to Prichard’s publication),¹⁵⁷ all other English texts I know calling it Acacia, bringing it in connection with the wood used for the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon. Sec-

¹⁵⁶ Impens claims that this is not a mistake, but the correct, authentic form. (Impens 2005, 69/70, 72).

¹⁵⁷ Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1963, 169 resp. 224/225.

only, in the ritual for the fourth or Blue degree, the “Volume of the Sacred Law, and the Compasses and square” are referred to as the “furniture of the Lodge”. That, to the best of my knowledge, is found only in three other texts: Prichard, the Wilkinson manuscript¹⁵⁸ (which is closely related to Prichard’s text and may be a few years older), and the ritual of the Royal Order of Scotland:

[Q] What did you see ... in this Middle Chamber?

[A] The Furniture of the Lodge.

[Q] What are these?

[A] The Bible, Square and Compasses.¹⁵⁹

Since the Royal Order of Scotland belongs to the “third tradition”, this example belongs to both that and Prichard. As well as the traces of the “third tradition” in the rituals of the IUOM, these borrowings from Prichard do point to a connection with 18th century masonic rituals.

Finally, there is still one more indication that lurking behind the absolutely dominant 19th century material in the Mechanics’ rituals of today, there may indeed be an older layer. These rituals are full of explicit references to biblical texts. But there are also some Biblical quotations which are not explicitly indicated as such. Here the listener has to recognise what (s)he hears. In other words, one has to know one’s Bible pretty much by heart. Indeed, one is supposed to know also the footnotes which point towards parallel texts. All these parallel texts, which are only indicated to the knowledgeable listener, form together a multi-dimensional meaning space, which is offered to the beholder, and of which (s)he will only see that part which (s)he recognises and which is meaningful to him or her. This offering of hidden clues to the possible meanings of texts is called the allusive method.¹⁶⁰ It is as old as the Old Testament, and Paul used it extensively in his letters. But it was particularly popular in Europe during the Renaissance, and was continued in Freemasonry in its rituals up to the time of the French Revolution.

Texts from the Mechanic’s rituals which are “hidden” Biblical quotations include the following. In the first or Pink degree: “a stone fitted for that Spiritual Building [1 Peter 2:4-8 with a reference to Eph. 2:19-22 and Isaiah 8:14; 28:16], eternal in the Heavens [2 Cor. 5:1]”; “living stones; for that spiritual building [see above], that house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens [see before]”; “Man in darkness and in chains” (2 Peter 2:4); “the Dark Valley of the Shadow of Death” (Isaiah 9:1 with a reference to Matt. 4:16 and Luc. 1:79); “taking the name of God in vain” (Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11 with a reference to Lev. 19:12); “He made the two great luminaries, the greater to rule the day, the lesser the night; the stars in the firmament He made also” (Gen. 1:16); and “the eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the good and the evil. ... a wholesome tongue is a tree of life” (Proverbs 15:3-4).

In the second or Scarlet and third or Green degree: “Burns the fiery pillar” (Exodus 13:21, referring to Isaiah 4:5-6, referring to Matt. 2:1-12 & Luc. 2:1-20, referring to Rev. 22:16). In the fourth or Blue degree: “the earth He has planted as His footstool” (Isaiah 66:1 with references to Matt. 5:35 and Acts 7:49); and “The blazing star, like [the] glory in the centre” (Rev. 21:23 with a reference to Isaiah 60:19).

In the sixth or White degree: “Thou, O God, knowest our down sitting and uprising, understandest our thoughts afar off” (Psalm 139:2); “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and is full of troubles; he cometh forth as a flower and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” (Job 14:1-2 with references to 1 Chron. 29:15, Job 8:9, Psalm 90:6,

¹⁵⁸ Published in the second edition of Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1963. The question about the furniture of the lodge is on page 132, resp. 162.

¹⁵⁹ [*Ritual of*] *The Royal Order of Scotland*, Dudley [no year], 46.

¹⁶⁰ See Snoek 1999.

Psalm 103:15, Psalm 144:4, Isaiah 40:6, 1 Peter 1:24, and from these there are many further references); “Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. Turn from him that he may rest till he shall accomplish this day. For there is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.” (Job 14:5-7 with references to Job 7:2 and Job 10:20); and “But man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and dry up, so man lieth down and rise not again, till the heaven shall be no more.” (Job 14:10-12).

The presence of so many allusions, even in the Mechanics’ rituals of today, is unlikely to be mere coincidence. And since they belong to the common features of 18th rather than 19th century masonic rituals, their presence here may indeed be a remnant from older forms of rituals, once practised by the Mechanics. Taken together, the presence of allusions and of elements from the “third tradition” and from Prichard does support the assumption that the rituals of the IUOM may well have their roots in the 18th century after all.

3. Women

The IUOM started as a male only society. However, it is generally accepted within the IUOM that “early in the present [i.e. 20th] century, the Mechanics went one step farther [than Freemasonry], admitting women into full Mechanism.”¹⁶¹ But when, where and how precisely took this place, and what does “admitting women into full Mechanism” mean? As we shall see, these questions are not so easy to answer, and what happened is not so straight forward as this statement by Vassall may suggest.

The Half-Yearly Report of September 1922 mentions in its “List of Foreign Lodges” for the “British West Indian Section” for the District Grand Lodge “Trinidad” two female lodges:

- “Vashti” Lodge No 1 (Female) and
- “Naomi” Lodge (Female),¹⁶²

and for the “North American Section” for the “United States of America, District No. 3”, “Female Branch” even five Chapters plus a Grand Chapter:

- “Queen Esther” Grand Chapter No. 1
- “Bethel” Chapter No. 3
- “Unity Star” Chapter No. 4
- “Star of the East” Chapter No. 5
- “Sheba” Chapter No. 6 and
- “Condace” Chapter No. 7.¹⁶³

Since Hills’ list of “Addresses of I[llustrative] G[rands] in England¹⁶⁴ (as opposed to the above quoted “List of Foreign Lodges” which complements it) contains 7 names with initials only plus 22 names with *male*, but none with *female* first names, it seems that the mentioned 7 female Lodges / Chapters were the only ones in the world at that time. It follows that they were numbered consecutively, irrespective of their names or geographical location. Probably, then, “Naomi” Lodge was No. 2. Since the IUOM was introduced in the USA only in 1910, the five “Chapters” there must have been established between 1910 and 1922. Indeed, about the last one mentioned we can be more precise: “Candace” Chapter #7, the oldest chapter of Alpha District Grand Lodge #1, New York, was inaugurated November 20th, 1920.¹⁶⁵ Because of their lower numbers, the two female Lodges in Trinidad should be slightly older than the first Chapter (No. 3) in the USA, and therefore they are probably the first female branches

¹⁶¹ Vassall 1950, 6/7 [1964, 7/8].

¹⁶² Hills *et al.* 1922, 13.

¹⁶³ Hills *et al.* 1922, 16.

¹⁶⁴ Hills *et al.* 1922, 10/11.

¹⁶⁵ Anon. 1998, 1. (NB! Note the slightly different spelling of the name of this Chapter in the two sources.)

within the IUOM. The incorporation of women thus may have started in Trinidad, though it cannot be excluded on the basis of the currently available evidence, that some individual initiations of women took place elsewhere already earlier. The use of the indication “Chapter” rather than “Lodge (Female)” seems to have originated in the USA, possibly following the use in the “Order of the Eastern Star”. Indeed, the names of some of these (Grand) Chapters (“Star of the East”, “Queen Esther”, “Sheba”) have clear associations with that Order.

Vassall continues:

The admission of women into Mechanism led to a good deal of confusion. In the first place, there were then no rituals for women. Some Chapters were able to obtain the complete rituals used by the Lodges, and, ignorant of the fact that a great deal of Mechanism is not written, assumed the highest degrees. Other Districts, depending upon the amount of opposition they had to women members, prepared for the women rituals of their own, which were not, in fact, any part of Mechanic teaching. Thus we soon had four or five groups of women Mechanics, each working according to its own rituals, and each unable to associate with or understand the other. One of the most popular of these was the “Court of Esther” ritual, prepared by Emmanuel Davis, G.M. of Ben Hur Grand Lodge [and founder of Mechanism in the USA in 1910¹⁶⁶].¹⁶⁷

This demands at least two comments. In the first place, when Vassall states that “some Chapters were able to obtain the complete rituals used by the Lodges”, and at the same time that the members of these Chapters were “ignorant of the fact that a great deal of Mechanism is not written”, that then implies that the women would have received the *texts* of the rituals, but without any instruction of how to perform them, let alone that the first female members would have themselves been initiated by the men. This may be a correct representation of what happened, but it would be very unusual, compared to the transfer of the rituals from the men to the women in the creation of other female (branches of) Orders,¹⁶⁸ and it would thus be very interesting from the perspective of ritual theory to know more about what precisely happened.

Secondly, the name of this ritual, “Court of Esther”, suggests that it was based on the third degree within the (para-masonic) Order of the Eastern Star, its five “points” or degrees being:

1. Jephthah’s Daughter, or the daughter’s degree; colour: blue, represented by the violet.
2. Ruth, or the widow’s degree; colour: yellow, represented by the sunflower.
3. Esther, or the wife’s degree; colour: white, represented by the white lily.
4. Martha, or the sister’s degree; colour: green, represented by the pine leaf.
5. Electa, or the benevolent degree; colour: red, represented by the red rose.

After these five degrees there are still the degree of “Queen of the South” (Queen of Sheba, a kind of merit degree) and a “Matron’s Administrative Degree” (for those who may be elected to the office of “Worthy Matron” of a “Chapter”) as a kind of “higher” degrees. Regrettably, I have no copy of Davis’ “Court of Esther” ritual (or of any of the other early IUOM rituals for women), so I cannot compare it with the corresponding one of the Order of the Eastern Star.

The initiative to incorporate women into the IUOM seems to have been welcomed by the Grand Council in England.¹⁶⁹ Not everywhere, however, was the initiative received with equal enthusiasm. In Suriname for example, the first two attempts to create a Chapter, in 1939 and 1958, both failed; only in 1969 could the first Chapter (Queen Esther Chapter No. 10) be

¹⁶⁶ Sampson 2003, [1].

¹⁶⁷ Vassall 1950, 7 [1964, 8].

¹⁶⁸ Snoek, forthcoming.

¹⁶⁹ Vassall 1950, 7 [1964, 8]; Sampson 2003, [1].

founded there, and then “Ruth Chapter No. 1 ... and Queen of Sheba Chapter No. 2 ... soon followed”.¹⁷⁰ This is not an exception. For example, in British Guiana in 1943:

The commodious banquet-hall of the Lodge’s new building ... was taxed to its utmost capacity with both sexes. ... [At the suggestion of S.D. Morrison, P.I.G. (Secretary of the Lodge)] the ladies present, much to their delight and amusement, were elected to honorary membership of the Lodge [Corinthian Lodge No. 5] for the duration of the evening. ... Mrs. Saunders, wife of the District Grand Master, replying on behalf of her ‘Sisters’, expressed their gratitude for the hearty welcome accorded them and their election to honorary membership of the Lodge for the evening. She added that while appreciating that gesture of goodwill they were disappointed at not being regularly initiated, an ordeal for which they would have been fully prepared with due notice. They, however, looked forward to the day, in keeping with the new order, when the veil would be lifted and women allowed to share in the researches of the hidden mysteries of the Order.¹⁷¹

Nevertheless, “when the Grand Council (in England) approved the admission of women into the Order, it also approved certain Degrees suitable for women”.¹⁷² Strijk is slightly more precise: “The sisters [at first] had to be happy with the first and only degree for them. In the thirties their perspectives enlarged to the third degree. In the sixties to the fifth and in the eighties they were entitled to the Master Mechanic Degree, all in their Chapters”.¹⁷³ Vassall tells us further that “when the present Grand Council [i.e. in New York] assumed control of the Order [i.e. in 1941], it rued the lack of uniformity, and prepared a Chapter ritual, which is now [i.e. in 1950] the only one approved and authorized for women”.¹⁷⁴ And this formulation of 1950 in the singular in fact suggests that this was only *one* ritual, i.e. thus still only for the first degree. Furthermore, it is interesting to see that—despite this claim of Vassall that by 1950 the older rituals, including the “Court of Esther” ritual, had been replaced by the new one—the list of branches in the same Annual Report in which his article was published mentions for the republic of Cuba, not only four “Chapters”, but also the “Queen Esther Court [sic!] No. 1”,¹⁷⁵ while for Trinidad the two “female lodges” had disappeared and four new Chapters (including a “Queen Esther Chapter No. 9”) been formed, and also in the USA all Chapters of 1922 had disappeared while six new ones had been established. In 1956 the women definitely had three degrees,¹⁷⁶ while the Laws of the Order of 1973 state:

Sec. 2. The Works and Rituals provided for Chapters shall not be beyond those of the Fifth or Red Degree of the Order, excepting only such other honorary degrees as the Grand Council or the Executive Committee shall from time to time approve.¹⁷⁷

There remained, however, strong resistance to opening the Masters’ Degree to women. As an alternative to that degree, an entirely new degree was now developed: the Rose degree. At the twelfth Triennial Conference in 1977:

¹⁷⁰ Baarn & Julen 1987, 15/16. NB! All three these names refer again to names of degrees of the Order of the Eastern Star!

¹⁷¹ Leubin 1943, 13/14.

¹⁷² Vassall 1950, 7 [1964, 8]; Sampson 2003, [1].

¹⁷³ Strijk 1996, 2.

¹⁷⁴ Vassall 1950, 7 [1964, 8].

¹⁷⁵ However, the Annual Report of 1957 mentions on Cuba both a “Queen Esther Chapter No. 1. *Org. July 21, 1939*” and a “Queen Esther Court of Juveniles No. 1.” (pp. 24, resp. 25).

¹⁷⁶ Haughton 1957, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Law XIII, “Woman’s Chapters” in “General Laws Part II” in Anon. (ed.) 1973, 27/28.

... formalities of the Rose or Sixth Degree for Chapters were gone into. There were detailed demonstrations of all aspects of this Degree, and Delegates were instructed to exercise care in their selection of those who should first be awarded the Degree. Delegates would at the outset confer the Degree on those selected, after which Past Illustrative Matrons would be instructed in the procedure, as they would ultimately be responsible for its conferring. Delegates were informed that a sample of the Regalia could be ordered, as also their requirements regarding Rituals.¹⁷⁸

Already at the next Triennial Convention, in 1980, it became clear that this was no solution.¹⁷⁹ The discontent was probably most clearly expressed by Councillor Hunte, Trinidad & Tobago District, who said that:

... the Sisters not only wanted the Rose Degree, but they also wanted the Master's Degree. ... Many he said were not happy about the Rose Degree, and with respect to the Executive [Committee] the Rose Degree was not a Degree in Mechanism. Something, he felt should be done to satisfy them ...¹⁸⁰

At the same Convention there was also a discussion about whether it was acceptable to have Brothers assisting in the rituals of the Chapters, concerning which finally:

... the Grand Master ruled that any Chapter having Initiation or Degrees, and requiring assistance, request such assistance from the District. The Grand Master using his discretion will choose Brothers for this purpose. But no male members will be permitted to visit Chapters at will. This decision was agreed to by all.¹⁸¹

Two Conventions later, in 1986, it was again a dominant topic on the agenda.¹⁸² It started with the proposition of the Jamaica District: "Be it resolved that the Master or Sixth Degree be conferred on sisters of the Order, and that the Rose Degree be disbanded".¹⁸³ During the discussion, it was made clear that "the Preston Unity conferred the Master's Degree on sisters",¹⁸⁴ whereas "the Scottish Mechanics ... were conferring up to the Royal Arch Degree on sisters",¹⁸⁵ and that "some of our sisters being a bit dissatisfied, are drifting toward other fraternities".¹⁸⁶ As a result, the motion passed with 41 against 28 votes, and a committee was appointed to "Consider the upward movement in the other degrees during the Convention".¹⁸⁷ When the committee reported, it proposed:

¹⁷⁸ Minutes of the Proceedings of the twelfth Triennial Convention of the Grand Council, Independent United Order of Mechanics, Western Hemisphere, held at Panama City, Republic of Panama, on Thursday, October 20, thru Thursday, October 27, 1977, sheet 24.

¹⁷⁹ Minutes of the Thirteenth Triennial Convention of the Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics of the Western Hemisphere Incorporated, held on Saturday, October 18 thru Sunday, October 26, 1980 at Mechanics' Tempel, 65 Putnam Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 14 and 19.

¹⁸⁰ *Idem*, 19.

¹⁸¹ *Idem*, 15-16. Quotation: 16.

¹⁸² Minutes of the fifteenth Triennial Convention of the Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics of the Western Hemisphere, Incorporated, held on Saturday, October 18 thru Sunday, October 26, 1986 at the Mechanics' Tempel, 65 Putnam Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., pp. 24-28, 31, 33, and 41-42.

¹⁸³ *Idem*, 24.

¹⁸⁴ Councillor James, Ontario District (*Idem*, 25).

¹⁸⁵ Councillor E. Jones, Belize District (*Idem*, 25).

¹⁸⁶ Proposition 6 of the Ontario District (*Idem*, 31).

¹⁸⁷ *Idem*, 26/27.

- (1) That the Rose Degree be retained in its present form, and to be followed by the Masters Degree.
- (2) That the Past Masters Degree be conferred on Sisters.
- (3) That the Sir Knight Degree be conferred on Sisters.
- (4) That these Degrees must be the same as their male counterparts.¹⁸⁸

The propositions 1, 2 and (implicitly) 4 (with respect to the Past Masters Degree) were accepted,¹⁸⁹ while concerning proposition 3 “The Grand Master ... suggested Delegates give the Executive [Committee] the authority to go deeper into the Sir Knight Degree, advise Districts and ask for their views. The majority were in favour. The Executive [Committee] to do as per the Grand Master’s suggestion”.¹⁹⁰ Following up these decisions, on June 29, 1987, the Grand Secretary, Clarence P. Small, sent out a “Directive Re: approval of the Masters Degree for Sisters” to all District Grand Lodges, which stated:

Know Ye These Present that, all District Grand Lodges are hereby officially informed of the following Directive, regarding the above matter as ratified by The Executive Committee of the Grand Council at a meeting held on June 27, 1987, as delegated by the 15th Triennial Convention of Grand Council.

- 1 – That the Masters Degree will be the qualifying Degree for Sisters to hold Office in the Chapter.
- 2 – The Master Degree must be conferred after the Fifth or Red Knight Degree (same manner as to Brothers).
- 3 – This Degree must be conferred on Sisters under the District Grand Lodge’s supervision; thereafter, Sisters in possession of the Master Degree must be trained to confer said Degree in their Chapter.
- 4 – The Master Degree is a subordinate Chapter/Lodge Degree[,] hence it must be conferred by the Chapter/Lodge.
- 5 – District Grand Lodges are reminded that Regalias [sic!], Rituals and Certificates should be secured.
- 6 – The Rose Degree will be retained and placed in the Past Illustrative Matron Conclave. Where there is no Conclave it is the responsibility of the District Grand Master to see it conferred. Candidates for the Past Illustrative Matron Degree must be in possession of the Rose Degree. [etc.]¹⁹¹

It will be seen at once, that this “directive” deviates from the decisions taken at the Convention, in that it placed the Rose Degree not between the Fifth or Red Knight Degree and the Masters’ Degree, but between the latter and the Past Illustrative Matron Degree. Also, it did in fact not give explicit permission to confer the Past Illustrative Matron Degree, despite the fact that the Convention had decided accordingly. No wonder, then, that at the next Triennial Convention in 1989

Councillor Reginald Taylor, Trinidad and Tobago District ... questioned as to why authority for the conferring of the Past Master and Sir Knight degrees on sisters was not given by the Executive Committee of the Grand Council after being authorized so to do by the 1986 Convention ... The Most Worshipful Grand Master in reply stated that

¹⁸⁸ *Idem*, 41.

¹⁸⁹ *Idem*, 41/42.

¹⁹⁰ *Idem*, 42.

¹⁹¹ Letter with Ref. No. 16-065.

the question of the conferring of the Past Masters and Sir Knight Degrees on the Sisters is still under review and study by the Executive Committee of Grand Council.¹⁹²

Thus, concerning this matter, no progress was made at this Convention. The status quo remained until the 18th Triennial Convention of the IUOM held 27 October to 6 November 1995 in Miami Beach, when there were three propositions concerning degrees for Sisters:¹⁹³

Londinium District: Creation of Grand degree exclusively for females;
Conferring of Master Mechanic degree on sisters;
Trinidad & Tobago: Elevation of Sisters to higher degrees.¹⁹⁴

These propositions were discussed by the Ritualistic Committee, after which “Ven. Lyseight reported the following recommendations”:

[That] the Past Master degree be conferred on the sisters effective January 01, 1996 and the Sir Knight degree twenty-four months after the conferring of the Past Master degree.¹⁹⁵

The Ritualistic Committee also recommended approval of the following:

Past Master degree be conferred on sisters effective January, 1996 and the Sir Knight degree be conferred on sisters twenty-four [24] months after receiving the past master degree.¹⁹⁶

The M[ost] W[orshipful] G[rand] M[aster] then put this recommendation to the house. The vote was 44 in favor, 38 against. The motion passed.¹⁹⁷

Consequently, on December 6, 1995, the Grand Secretary, H. George Bull, wrote to the District Grand Lodges:

I have been directed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Rt. Hon. Winston A. Jones, to issue the following directive regarding the conferring of the Past Masters Degree on eligible sisters as was agreed and sanctioned at the 18th Triennial Convention.

The procedure for the conferring of the Past Masters Degree on sisters will be effective beginning on January 1, 1996. Please note the following stipulations:

1. The Past Master Degree will be conferred by the District Grand Lodge Officers, assisted by selected priests and Venerable Past Grand Masters.
2. Brothers with the exception of those authorized in (1) above must not be in attendance at any conferral of the Past Masters Degree on sisters.
3. All deserving Past Illustrative Matrons must be given the Past Masters degree first. [etc.]¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Minutes of the Sixteenth International Triennial Convention of Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics of the Western Hemisphere, Incorporated, held on Saturday, October 21st, 1989 through Sunday, October 29th, 1989 at the Volharding Lodge Center, Dr. Sophie Redmondstraat 52/54, Paramaribo, Suriname, South America, 56. See also 123 and 134/135.

¹⁹³ Minutes of the Eighteenth International Triennial Convention of Grand Council of the Independent United Order of Mechanics of the Western Hemisphere, Incorporated, held on Saturday, October 27th, 1995 through Sunday, November 6th, 1995 at ... Miami Beach ...

¹⁹⁴ *Idem.* 82.

¹⁹⁵ *Idem.* 118.

¹⁹⁶ *Idem.* 119.

¹⁹⁷ *Idem.* 119.

¹⁹⁸ Letter with Ref. No. 19-012-95.

And a month later, on January 6, 1996, the new Grand Secretary, Clive Oscar Sang, wrote:

I have been directed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Rt. Hon. Winston A. Jones to forward the following information which takes effect from January 1, 1996.

At the Eighteenth Triennial Convention in Miami Beach, Florida, the following propositions were approved and now becomes incorporated into the General Laws of the Independent United Order of Mechanics, Western Hemisphere, Inc.

...

2. Higher Degrees for Sisters. (a) Effective immediately sisters in possession of the Masters Degree are eligible to receive the Past Masters Degree in accordance with the implementation procedures previously forwarded (Ref. 19-012-95). (b) Effective **Easter 1998**, sisters in possession of the Past Masters Degree will be eligible to receive the Sir Knight Degree. Implementation procedures for the conferring of the Sir Knight Degree on sisters will be forwarded in due time. [etc.]¹⁹⁹

At the 20th Convention, in October 2001, two Districts (Composite District No. 2, New York, and Aurora District No. 2, England) proposed to abolish the Rose degree. Their motions were referred to the Ritualistic Committee, which decided to abolish the Rose Degree at once and to forbid the Districts to confer that degree any longer, which decision was unanimously approved by the Convention.²⁰⁰ However, I was given to understand, that things are not as straight forward as they may seem, since as long as there are Sisters in certain Districts who have received this degree legally, to prevent the embarrassing situation that a District Grand Master would not have a degree which one of his subordinate members does have, this degree is conferred on him on entering into his office. As a result this degree is not a completely historical relic yet.

At the next Convention in 2004, the Grand Master, Horace L. Mills, in his opening address stated:

We have witnessed the elevation of the Sisters to the Sir Knights Degree, and the inauguration of their Encampments. To complete this milestone in their journey I do hereby decree that from hereon all Sisters who have served for one term or more as Eminent Commanders of their Encampments shall have the Past Eminent Commander Degree conferred on them on leaving that office. Details of that conferral will be communicated to the Encampments.²⁰¹

This decision was confirmed by the Executive Committee on December 20th, 2004, with the instructions “that only District Grand Masters, Venerable Past Masters and Executive Grand Councilors could attend conferring of [this] degree on sisters”.²⁰²

As to the actual historical development of the rituals for the women (including the “Court of Esther” ritual and that for the Rose Degree), regrettably, I cannot say anything at the mo-

¹⁹⁹ Letter with Ref. No. 19-032-96.

²⁰⁰ “The Rose degree proposition; This matter was gone into in depth and at the end of discussions it was decided that this degree be discontinued. Recommendation: That the rose degree be discontinued and that Chapters/Districts cease to confer such degree on sisters. The Most Worshipful Grand Master called a vote on the adoption of the Ritualistic Committee report. The vote was unanimous in favor of acceptance and adoption.” (Report of the 20th Triennial Convention held in Kingston Jamaica 19 to 29/10/2001; also the Dutch language report about this Convention, pp. 23 and 29).

²⁰¹ Mills 2004, 43/44.

²⁰² Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of Grand Council of December 20th, 2004, p. 2.

ment, since none of them has been made available to me so far, so I could not compare them to what may have been their possible sources.

4. Other Rituals

All masonic Orders and Friendly Societies have, besides initiation rituals for one or more degrees, also other rituals, which are performed at diverse occasions. Hobsbawm reminds his readers that

besides its financial function the Friendly Societies had another, which is generally forgotten: they were important centres of collective life, whose colour and ceremonial was often at least as valued by the members as their money. ... in fact the ceremonial side of Friendly Societies is always important.²⁰³

On the whole the main enemy of “actual soundness” was the non-financial part of Friendly Societies’ activity: feasts, beer, rituals and the like. Their members clung tenaciously to this, often in defiance of good advice, a fact which middle class well-wishers could not understand. Very often the difference between a popular and an unpopular society (or lodge) was that between the society (or lodge) with plenty of ceremonial and festivity, and the one without it; even though it might pay better benefits. In a sense the last battle of the common people against the “cash nexus” and for the old, medieval type of life was that for the maintenance of the Friendly Society feasts and colours. However, the unsound societies gradually went bankrupt, the sound ones survived, even though they maintained—as a concession to public opinion—a fair amount of colour and ritual.²⁰⁴

And Maltby confirms:

These early societies clung with great fondness to the annual feasts, and such occasions were made opportunities for festivity. Usually there was a procession of all members who attended Church in the morning, and after the service a dinner was provided in the society’s room, a sum of money being voted out of the funds of the society to defray the costs.²⁰⁵

Apart from the procession, which is performed today only inside rather than towards the church, Maltby’s description fits very well today’s celebration of St. John’s Day (on the Sunday nearest to 24 June, St. John the Baptist) by the IUOM’s Knight Templars Grand Christian Encampments, as I witnessed myself on Sunday 24th June 2007 in London. Another occasion, following the same kind of programme, is Mechanics Day, which is each year celebrated by all IUOM-members world-wide on the second Sunday of September. It is defined as a Thanksgiving Day, and intends to enhance the feeling of unity within the Order. Whereas St. John’s Day is the last meeting before the summer break, Mechanics Day starts the new working season. The “Logos Morning” is celebrated either on Christmas day (25 December) early in the morning (e.g. 5:00 – 7:00) or on Christmas night, depending on whether the celebration takes place in a tropical or a more northern country, but always at such a time that those present have the opportunity to attend the service at their church on Christmas morning afterwards. It again follows the same general order of proceedings.

The days of St. John the Baptist (celebrated on the normal day a lodge meets, nearest to 24 June) and St. John the Evangelist (celebrated during the normal lodge meeting, nearest to 27

²⁰³ Hobsbawm 1957, 96.

²⁰⁴ Hobsbawm 1957, 97.

²⁰⁵ Maltby 1931, 40.

December, in a way corresponding to the IUOM Logos Morning) are also celebrated by Freemasons in many countries, and in some they likewise hold a celebration of the start of the new working season. But the rituals practised by the IUOM on these occasions seem less related to those in use among the Freemasons, as to those traditionally performed by English Friendly Societies generally.

Quite different are the rituals at the occasion of a funeral (burial service) and at the occasion of a commemoration of the dead (lodge of sorrow). The two are not the same, the first being performed at the actual interment of a deceased member, the second from time to time to remember those members who died in the preceding period. I was present at a burial service at 29 and 30 March 2007 in Paramaribo (Suriname), a description of which is given in Appendix B. At first I got the impression that, because I had seen nothing like it within Freemasonry and because it seemed very old to me, it might have been preserved within the IUOM since its earliest days. But then I realised, that the masonic funeral rituals I was familiar with were mainly those in use in European continental Grand Lodges. A scan of English and American masonic funeral rituals showed, that the IUOM ritual I had witnessed, is in fact rather close to that in use in masonic Grand Lodges in the USA today. Some, in my view, striking similarities are summarised in the following table:

“Burial Service”, in <i>Murrow Masonic Monitor and Ceremonies (Oklahoma)</i>, 1928.²⁰⁶	Dede Oso and funeral of Bro. Paul Benjamin Hildenberg, 29 & 30 March 2007, Paramaribo.
<p>... the Lodge service should never be omitted and the burial service must not be given in a church, chapel or residence but always at the grave and it must always be remembered that outside of the Lodgeroom only the public or funeral grand honors can be given.</p> <p>Black or dark clothing, black hat, white gloves, a plain white apron, black and white crepe tied about the left arm, above the elbow, and a sprig of evergreen on the left breast should be worn. ... The officers of the Lodge should wear their respective Jewels. Grand Officers and Past Officers of Grand or constituent Lodges should also wear their official Jewels.</p>	<p>These rules were followed, except that no hats were worn.</p> <p>In general, during a funeral procession of the IUOM, Brethren may wear a black hat. However, only members of the Executive Committee of Grand Council and the Grand Master may wear a ‘Top hat’, and in any procession, no more than one person may wear one.</p> <p>When, at the end of the procession, the (District) Grand Master passes between the two rows formed by the members, to the entrance of the church or the cemetery, all members uncover their head.</p>
<p>If the procession proceeds to the place of interment in automobiles ... On arrival within a suitable distance of the grave, the brethren will alight, reform the procession, and march to the grave or vault.</p>	<p>This rule was obeyed: “Then all drove to the cemetery. In front of the cemetery, but at some distance from its entrance, we assembled again. ... This way we moved towards the entrance of the cemetery and from there to the grave.”</p>
<p>The body is then carried directly to the foot of the grave ...</p>	<p>“At the grave the crowd assembled. The coffin was lowered into the grave at once.”</p>
<p>Worshipful Master: Brethren, unite with me in giving the funeral Grand Honors.</p>	<p>“... then the members of the IUOM greeted the deceased with “Grand Honors”, ... This is done by crossing the arms on the breast, left over right, and the open palms of the hands</p>

²⁰⁶ Anon. 1928.

	striking the shoulders; they are then raised above the head, the palms striking each other and then made to fall sharply on the thighs with the head bowed. ...”
The brethren march in solemn procession around the grave and as each comes to the head of it, he deposits his evergreen; or the procession may be omitted and the brethren step forward and deposit the evergreen.	“All members where then invited to place the evergreen in the grave ...”
Worshipful Master: Brother Marshal, reform the procession, and we will return to the Lodgeroom. After returning to the Lodgeroom the ... Lodge must then be closed in ancient form.	“The lodge members went back to the lodge building in order to close the lodge ritually.”

The American masonic funeral ritual of 1928 is apparently based on an older English version: “The Ceremony Observed at Funerals, According to the Ancient Custom”, “drawn up by Rev. Bro. Albert Case in 1843”,²⁰⁷ and published in Albert Mackey’s *Lexicon of Freemasonry*.²⁰⁸ Whole sections of spoken text are identical in both the English 1843 and the American 1928 ritual, and their structure is the same as well. The most striking difference, in fact, is that in the English version the “Grand Honours” are lacking. Instead, “honours are given” during the part of the ceremony which takes place in the lodge-room, before the actual burial ritual at the grave, but it is not stated what this means. In fact, the “Grand Honours” of the American version are rather similar to the sign of the English Antient’s version of the degree of a Master Mason:

The Master’s Clap is by holding both hands above your Head, and striking upon your Apron, and both Feet going at the same Time ready to shake the Floor down; this they call the grand Sign of a Master Mason. They give two Reasons for this Sign, *viz.* When they saw their Master *Hiram* lye dead, they lifted up their Hands in a Surprise, and said, O Lord, my God! ...²⁰⁹

What remained of it in the ritual of the “United Grand Lodge of England” of 1816 is since then called the “sign of joy and exultation, likewise called the grand and royal sign ... (*to raise both hands over your head and exclaim O Worthy Masons!*)”,²¹⁰ but no English mason would ever make one of the official signs of any degree outside an “open lodge” in a properly guarded lodge-room. However, American Freemasonry is not based on the English form of the United Grand Lodge, but on that of the Antients. The “Grand Honours” of the IUOM ritual may thus well represent the same sign as was in use for the Master Mason’s degree in American lodges in the 18th and 19th centuries. It should be noted, that this last sign is also linked to seeing a dead Brother (Master Hiram).

All in all, I would now be inclined to assume that the IUOM burial ritual of today is in fact based upon a masonic example which is specifically American (though in its turn based on an English one from 1843). This means that it was most likely adopted first by the American District Grand Lodges of the IUOM which were formed from 1910 onwards, and then—after the seat of the Order had been transferred to New York in 1941—prescribed for all of the

²⁰⁷ Anon. 1942, 42.

²⁰⁸ Case 1843.

²⁰⁹ Anon. 1760, 66.

²¹⁰ Carlile 1825, 123.

IUOM. Of course this does not mean that the IUOM would not have practised burial rituals before 1941, on the contrary. Such rituals are among the standard activities of Friendly Societies generally for as long as these are known under this or any older name. But whatever form had been in use before was replaced by the American form as soon as the seat of the Order was moved to New York. We have seen already that a similar change was made at the same time in the ritual for the Masters' degree. It seems than that the complaints of a number of District Grand Lodges that the new government of the Order did not respect their traditions is not without a factual basis.

Chapter IV: Ritual Dynamics in the IUOM

When we now look back at the results of this research project, it is clear that the case study of the IUOM confirms my expectation²¹¹ that here too I would find the ritual praxis to be highly flexible, despite the emic understanding of their rituals having ever been the same. It supports therefore the new thesis that ritual dynamics is the general case, whereas static rituals are the exception.

It can be confirmed as well, that, as also the Mechanics themselves assume, transfer of rituals and elements of rituals from the Freemasons to the Mechanics took place. As was to be expected according to the theory which we have developed about transfer of ritual,²¹² such transfer never left the rituals concerned completely unchanged, though in some cases, such as the ritual of the first degree as transferred by Talbot from the IUOSM to the IUOM in 1887 and the ritual of the 'Knight Templar' degree as transferred by him in the same year from its masonic publication by Carlile, it is in fact astonishing how closely the copy matches the original. In the last case this could be verified by direct comparison of the two texts, whereas the first case was confirmed by comparing the ritual in Talbot 1887 with that of the IUOSM from 1978.

It was regrettably not possible to locate rituals of the Mechanics from before those published by Talbot in 1887 and thus it was not possible either to find out what had changed or not when the first transfer of rituals from the Freemasons to the Mechanics took place. However, what could be deduced from the available sources is that already in 1833 the Mechanics had replaced the second degree (Fellow Craft) of the masonic system of three degrees, which had been established ca. 1725,²¹³ by four degrees, thus turning their system into one of six degrees. Furthermore, by analysing those texts which were not demonstrably of 19th century origin, it turned out that these were partly borrowed from Prichard's ritual from 1730, partly represented the "third tradition" in 18th century Freemasonry, and also showed a large proportion of allusions to Biblical texts, without mentioning that quoting was involved. All three of these aspects clearly point to the direction of 18th century masonic origins of these ritual texts. Whether these texts were borrowed by the Mechanics from masonic sources already in the 18th century, or only in the 19th century but from masonic sources which had preserved them since the 18th century, can, on the basis of the evidence currently available, not be decided. It is also not possible on this basis to decide if the allusions found in the rituals of the Mechanics were conscientiously included or just came unnoticed with the masonic texts borrowed. What can be said, however, is that today the Mechanics seem much more acquainted with Biblical texts than modern Freemasons. It is thus possible that they still do recognise such implicit quotations, whereas modern Freemasons generally don't anymore. This is all the more astonishing, since the Freemasons always were, and still are on average, from a higher social class than the average Mechanics, who still largely seem to be working class people. In the 18th century it were precisely the highest educated people who knew their Bible sufficiently well to be able to build these allusions into the masonic rituals, who would be able to recognise them. Today the situation seems to be the other way round.

If we ask for the circumstances which may have caused the changes induced into the ritual system borrowed by the Mechanics from the Freemasons, then again the small amount of sources available at the moment makes it very difficult to give clear answers. For example, what caused the Mechanics to replace the masonic second degree by four degrees? One could

²¹¹ Langer, Lüddeckens, Radde & Snoek 2006.

²¹² Langer, Lüddeckens, Radde & Snoek 2006.

²¹³ Snoek 2002.

imagine that someone with a somewhat better education than the average Mechanic in the late 18th or early 19th century may have thought that for the rather simple folk which made up the Mechanics, the step from Apprentice to Master was too big to be mediated by one degree only. When we look at the current rituals of the system, however, there is in fact not so much difference between those for the first and the sixth degree, which may seem to argue against this assumption. But the larger part of the current ritual for the first degree seems to have been introduced for the IUOM by Talbot only in 1887, when he seems to have borrowed it from the IUOSM. It is therefore quite likely that before 1887 the ritual for the first degree in use in the IUOM was much simpler; in fact it may have been close to the very simple ritual in use in the FUOM (see Appendix A). If that were the case, than this explanation may be valid, but there is not enough evidence available to be sure about it.

Moreover, it is not the only possible explanation. The degrees 1 to 5 are concerned with significant Biblical stories, in a way known from the “third tradition” in Freemasonry as well, told in Biblical chronological order: the first degree is associated with the story of the creation, the second with that about Moses and the building of the tabernacle, the third with that about Joshua and the people of Israel entering the Promised Land, the fourth and fifth with that about Solomon and the building of his temple. And then in the fifth degree the “five points of Fellowship”—known in Freemasonry in the degree which was originally called “Master Mason or Fellow of the Craft”, but later became the degree of a “Master Mason”—are associated to these five degrees, which in a symbolic context makes much sense. In other words, the degrees 2 to 5 seem to have been constructed by someone with great ritual competence, who may have created precisely this number of degrees for the sake of emulating the “five points of Fellowship”. What remains is that this change from one to four Fellow Craft degrees demonstrates the complete independence of the Mechanics from the Freemasons. They apparently neither expected nor had the ambition to be recognised as Freemasons by the Freemasons, even though they practised a ritual system within the same tradition.

When Talbot introduces new ritual material in 1887, we are in a slightly better situation to judge the contextual factors which may have required this. In 1875 a new Friendly Societies Act had been introduced and three years later the IUOM registered for the first time under that act. Since almost half of the members were against this action, a large part of the Order broke away around 1877. Those District Grand Lodges which made themselves independent of the IUOM were in the possession of the same ritual tradition and thus they were in a way all in concurrency, not distinguishing themselves much from each other. One can easily understand that an extension of that ritual system with a new degree—the Knight Templar degree—could be an advantage in attracting new members and in demonstrating the superiority of the IUOM over the other Mechanics Orders. Regrettably, the complete absence of documentation relating to this phenomenon, which could have confirmed this hypothesis, turns this for the moment also into no more than a theory, but at least it has the virtue of being a rather obvious one.

The influence of migration on the rituals of the IUOM is most visible in the case of the expansion of the IUOM to the USA and 30 years later (in 1941) the transfer of the seat of the Order from England to New York. Soon after that transfer, new versions of both the ritual for the degree of a Master Mechanic and that for a burial were prescribed world wide by the Grand Council, both based on the masonic rituals in use in the United States. These must have been adopted by the IUOM District Grand Lodges which were founded in the USA from 1910 onwards (migration), and by them prescribed for the whole of the IUOM as soon as they received the power to do so. That last step was no doubt intended by the newly installed Grand Council in order to, on the one hand, create at this time of war and thus insecurity one strong united Order with one and the same ritual system binding all its members together, and on the other to demonstrate its power. Still many years later District Grand Lodges complained about

this authoritarian behaviour and sometimes even broke away because of it.²¹⁴ But at the time it occurred the circumstances explain clearly why it was done. It makes, however, visible in what way and to what extent the exposure of the IUOM to the masonic ritual practice in the USA had influenced the rituals practised by the Mechanics there during the previous three decades. With respect to the ritual(s) for women too, Vassall tells: “when the present Grand Council [i.e. in New York] assumed control of the Order [i.e. in 1941], it rued the lack of uniformity, and prepared a Chapter ritual, which is now [i.e. in 1950] the only one approved and authorized for women”.²¹⁵ And also the extension of the Rite with another degree—the Royal Arch, well established within USA Freemasonry too—seems to have taken place around this time. Similar to the situation in 1887 this may well have been to make the IUOM more attractive to those District Grand Lodges that now had to decide whether or not to join the new Grand Council in New York. If that was the motive, then that also explains why this degree, which within Freemasonry is a prerequisite for the Knight Templar degree, was in the IUOM placed at the summit of the system in use at that time.

As to how far the new (District Grand) Lodges which were founded in Europe (in England in 1957 and in The Netherlands in 1973) have adapted any of the IUOM Rituals to the local situation, I was not able to find out yet.

The development of the rituals for Women is a clear example of ritual transfer in its own right. As in a number of other Orders, at first they received rituals deviant from those for the men (such as the “Court of Esther” ritual and the Rose degree, both no doubt built up from rites taken from different traditions), but in the course of time these were removed again and replaced by the male rituals. Their getting access to all the degrees of the IUOM Rite is a not yet completed process. On the basis of what can be seen in other Orders, I would be inclined to expect that at some point in the future, the women in the IUOM too will start to fight for the right to have rituals of their own, not made by men, but by the women themselves.

In summary, even the restricted material to which I have access at the moment shows clearly how dynamic the ritual praxis of the IUOM has been throughout its history. Ritual is time and again transferred from Freemasonry (and in the case of the early rituals for the women, probably from other Orders, such as Foresters and Eastern Star, as well) to the Mechanics, crossing the borders of social strata, countries and gender, and important extensions of the Rite seem to coincide with critical phases in the history of the Order, such as those caused by the first registration as a Friendly Society in 1878 and the transfer of the seat of the Order in 1941. Also within “Mechanism”, transfer (for example from the IUOSM to the IUOM in 1887) and development (such as the change from one to four Fellow Craft degrees, or the replacement of the special rituals for women by the normal male ones) can be observed. And these are only the “macro” changes. At a lower level, the reports of the triennial conferences witness to permanent adjustments of the rituals to the demands of the time concerned.

²¹⁴ In order to be fair one has to point out as well that the New York based Grand Council also in some respect was and is more democratic than the English one had been since the Order became an international one in 1877, since the English Grand Council was composed of the District Grand Masters of the English District Grand Lodges only (the rest of the Order being referred to as the ‘Foreign Section’, which was not represented by anyone), whereas the New York based Grand Council is composed of all the District Grand Masters in the world (King 1997, 5).

²¹⁵ Vassall 1950, 7 [1964, 8].

Appendices

Appendix A. Ritual of the Friendly United Order of Mechanics

[The Free and Independent United Order of Mechanics, in the archives of which this ritual was found (Cumbria Record Office (Kendal), WDB/125 acc 2647), was abolished in 1951. Also, this ritual is very different from that used today by the IUOM. Therefore, it seems that the text of this ritual may be included in a publication without embarrassing anyone.

This booklet has no title page or other indication of its author, place or date of publication, or printer. Its type, however, suggests the last quarter of the 19th century. The text has only 8 pages.]

*FREE and ~~FRIENDLY~~ UNITED ORDER OF MECHANICS.*²¹⁶

Ceremony of opening a Lodge.

The officers being assembled, the L.P. gives two knocks, which is answered by the V.P.'s one.

L.P. Brother Vice President, is the lodge duly tiled?

V.P. Lodge President, the lodge is duly tiled.

L.P. Brother Officers, assist me to open the lodge, in decency and order, by invoking a blessing.

Prayer.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who orderest all things both in Heaven and Earth, and makest men to be of one mind in a house, be gracious unto us, we pray Thee, whilst assembled together this evening. May the spirit of union, fidelity, and brotherly love animate and possess us. Guide us in our deliberations for the relief of the Sick and disabled members of our body, and do Thou look mercifully upon them, that they may look to Thee for that spiritual strength and comfort which Thou alone canst give. Bless and prosper this our institution, and assist us in all things with Thy Mercy and grace. This we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

L.P. I declare this lodge duly opened.

Initiation of a Candidate.

The lodge being duly opened, the Candidate is admitted into the lodge-room, and the Senior Deacon asks him the following questions:—

1. What is your name and age?

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2. Have you a Medical Certificate?

3. Do you voluntarily offer yourself as a Candidate, uninfluenced by any improper motives?

Which being satisfactorily answered, the Senior Deacon then introduces him as a Candidate who has been duly proposed and approved, is properly prepared, and wishful to become a brother.

L.P. Mr. ———, I acknowledge you as a Candidate, duly proposed and approved; it is therefore necessary that you hear the

²¹⁶ In pencil, the word "Friendly" was crossed out and replaced by "Free and".

Qualification.

Necessary to become a Member of the Friendly United Order of Mechanics.

It is requisite that you believe in God and in the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ, as revealed in His Word. It is expected of you to be loyal to those set over you, faithful to those your equals, and kind and considerate to those beneath you. By your example and endeavour you are to promote harmony, truth, and discipline in this our Order. You are to be sober, chaste, and honest: to lend a friendly hand, and give a cheering word to any brother member whom you may see or know in need of it; and you are to do your best to commend our Order, and, by its influence and advantage, to induce many to join it.

L.P. Is it your desire to conform to this Qualification?

Candidate. It is my desire.

L.P. Will you solemnly and sincerely declare that you will always conceal, and never reveal, in any manner or form whatever, any of the secrets of the F.U.O.M. which at any time may be communicated to you, except to a true and lawful brother or brothers; and not even to him, or them, unless you be authorized so to do by the proper authorities of the F.U.O.M. And further, that you will not give, lend, or in any other manner improperly dispose of, or improperly appropriate any book, writing, or other document or thing of a secret nature, of or belonging to the said Order, that may in anywise come into your possession, or cause or suffer the same to be done if it lies in your power to prevent it. That you

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now become a United Mechanic without, fear, bribery, or corruption; and that you will observe and abide by all rules, laws, and orders, made for the government of this Institution; and that you will not open, or cause to be opened, or be present at the opening of any lodge, without proper authority from the F.U.O.M.

Candidate. All these several points I solemnly and sincerely declare to observe, without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind.

L.P. to the Candidate. I now declare you to be a Member of the Friendly United Order of Mechanics.

The newly-initiated Brother now receives from the L.P. the Password and other requisites.

Ceremony of Closing a Lodge.

The L.P. gives two knocks, and the V.P. one.

L.P. Vice President, is true lodge duly tiled?

V.P. Lodge President, the lodge is duly tiled.

L.P. Brother Officers, assist me to close the lodge.

Prayer.

MOST Gracious God, accept, we pray Thee, our thanks for all Thine unnumbered and undeserved blessings. Pardon and do away with our many and grievous sins, failings, and transgressions. Give to each of us the spirit of repentance, faith, and love. Lead us by Thy Providence at all times, and especially protect us in the hour of danger; minister to us in the hour of sickness or infirmity, and be with us, by Thy Spirit, in the lonesome valley of death. Encourage and guide each in our several duties to our families, to ourselves, and to Thee. May true

religion be our desire, and the practice of it our endeavour. Grant this, O God, we beseech Thee, for the sake of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

L.P. I declare this lodge duly closed.

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L.P.'s Declaration.

I, *A. B.*, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am not made Lodge President for any private emolument or advantage, other than the lodge's welfare and prosperity; and that I will, to the utmost of my ability, act in strict conformity with the General and other Rules made for the government of the F.U.O. of Mechanics; and that I will use my best endeavours to keep proper order, and maintain sobriety in the lodge ; and that I will not initiate any person into the Order but in a regular and duly formed lodge, and not even then unless I am satisfied that he is a person of good character and of proper age; and that I will deliver up all books, writings, papers, and other things belonging to the said Order, when I am requested to do so by my successor or by the proper authorities of the F.U.O. of Mechanics.

Officers' Declaration.

L.P. Brother Officers,—Do you solemnly and sincerely declare that you are not now made Officers of this lodge for any private emolument or advantage other than the lodge's welfare and prosperity; and that you will, to the utmost of your ability, act in strict conformity to the General and other Rules made for the government of the F.U.O. of Mechanics; and that you will assist the L.P. to keep proper order in the lodge, likewise to govern and conduct the same, in your several capacities, to the best of your power?

Officers. This we acknowledge to be our solemn declaration.

Address

After the Funeral Service, whilst yet at the grave of a deceased Brother.

To be read by the L.P. or, in his absence, by the V.P.

BROTHERS ALL—The religious service has now closed over the remains of what was once our brother. United to us in the Order to which we belong, our influence with him we now fain would trust was for his good, both for time and for

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eternity. If we have comforted and encouraged him in the path of duty, honesty, and sobriety, now is our time of recompense, in the thankful feelings with which we can regard the past, and in the feelings of gratitude with which his relatives may now regard us. Still more; if we, by our influence and example, led him to number his days so as "to apply his heart unto wisdom," to seek for reconciliation, peace, and happiness in Christ, so as to be thereby prepared for this his great last change; then think, brothers, of the recompense awaiting us hereafter, declared by Daniel, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever;" think of the bliss that must now be his, if this be so with him; and think of the joy and satisfaction that must fill the hearts of those he has left behind, giving them comfort in their hour of sorrow, and obtaining for ourselves an example that it would be well for us to follow. All this, and our own feelings at this time, tell us that our Order can be made a means of much and lasting good. The higher our aim in view, the purer our motive, and the more persevering and unselfish our endeavour; the more favorably will our Order be regarded, the more numerous will be our members, and the more blessed, will be our efforts. Nothing but pure religion will avail any of us in the hour of death. Let that, then, enter into the composition of our being; let us not be ashamed of professing it before men; and whilst we ourselves seek in our

Order to secure for ourselves a provision in time of sickness or debility, let us not be forgetful, but mindful, of that higher provision that is necessary for the life to come. The duty we are now performing should teach us this; and what, alas! we are often taught, let us not be slow to learn. Truly, may we all unite in giving utterance to this wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Amen.

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Explanation of Lodge Emblems.

THE BIBLE = Our rule of Faith and Practice.
JACOB'S LADDER = IMMANUEL, or GOD with us.
THE TWELVE STONES = The Foundation of our Faith.
THE COFFIN, SKULL, AND X BONES = Sin, Death, and the Grave.
THE CIRCLE = Perfection, Eternity, Heaven.
THE SEVEN STARS = Order, system, completeness.
THE HOUR-GLASS = The passage of Time.
THE 24-INCH GAUGE [= GAUGE] = The Day and its proper duties.
MORNING STAR = Early life.
CANDLESTICK = Example, light, imitation.
A LAMB = Meekness, gentleness, simplicity.
A DOVE = Sincerity, truth, peace.
WHITE = Innocence, purity, uprightness.
THE SWORD = Justice, judgment, equity.
THE FLAG = The rallying point of the Order.
THE HAND AND HEART = Union, brotherhood, charity.
SQUARE AND COMPASS = Discipline, economy, care.
TERRESTRIAL GLOBE } = Universal Law.
CELESTIAL GLOBE }
THE ARCH = Mutual dependence and support.
THE SUN AND MOON = The Senior Officers.
THE CROSS KEYS = The Treasurer's badge.
ROLL AND CROSS PENS = The Secretary's badge.
THE WHITE WAND = Staff of Office.
THE FIVE POINTS = The five emblems of Fellowship.
HAND TO HAND = Brotherly help, counsel, and sympathy.
FOOT TO FOOT = Activity, firmness, and faithfulness.
KNEE TO KNEE = Humility, prayer, and gratitude.
BREAST TO BREAST = Secresy, honesty, watchfulness.
HAND TO BACK = Friendship, support, defence.

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Order of Festival Processions.

[See the image below.]

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Order of Funeral Processions.

[See the image below.]

Appendix B. Funeral Ritual

“Dede Oso” and funeral of Bro. Paul Benjamin Hildenberg, 29 & 30 March 2007, Paramaribo.

On Monday, March 19th, the IUOM Lodge “Volharding No. 6” celebrated its 85 year jubilee. I was asked to give, together with the Surinam Executive Grand Councillor Jack Uden (my contact person in Suriname), the speech of the day (on the historical development of the relation between the Church and such Orders as the Freemasons and the Mechanics).

At this occasion, Bro. Paul Hildenberg, 80 years old, was present as well. He had been an active member of “Volharding No. 6” most of his life, had then moved to The Netherlands, but was in his beloved fatherland Suriname for a visit at the time.

The lodge room was packed with visitors: the Executive Grand Councillor (representative of the Order); the Grand Masters, Past Grand Masters and other Grand Officers of the first and second Suriname District Grand Lodges [or Grand Jurisdictions]; representatives of the individual lodges of these two districts; representatives of other Orders (Freemasonry, the Foresters, AMORC); and the members of the celebrating lodge itself. (NB! Jack Uden estimated that the IUOM has ca. 750 to 1000 members in Suriname.) As a result, the condition of the air grew worse as the evening went on, and there came a point—towards the end of the evening—at which Bro. Hildenberg felt unwell. So, he left the room and did not return. However, he did not go home, and when the official part was over and the eating and drinking in the garden began, he was there again and obviously enjoyed it until past midnight (the feast went on till at least 2:30 in the morning, the time I left).

Two days later (March 22nd), Bro. Hildenberg died. Since he had always wanted to be buried in Suriname and have a IUOM funeral, and since part of his family lived in The Netherlands and had to come over for the occasion, the funeral ceremonies did not start before Thursday, March 29th.

That evening from 19:00 onwards was the “Dede Oso”. The body was present in the forecourt of the lodge building, a large room with three large doors to the street, which were usually open to let in fresh air. It was put on ice (I was told) in a preliminary coffin and covered, first with white cloth, and on top of that the banner of the lodge (a large, dark blue velvet one with gold embroidery) so that one could not see the body, but the orientation of the text on the banner made clear on what side the head was. Four candles on large candlesticks were placed at the four corners. It was placed in such a way, that, when one entered from the outside through the central door, one was in front of the right side of the body. At the sides of the head and the feet of the body, thus at the position of the other two entry doors, were seats (I guess about 10 rows of 15 seats on each side), almost all of which were soon occupied. The women were dressed predominantly in white, and the men in black trousers and white shirts. In the first row at the side of the head was the family, of which especially one daughter wept frequently. (His wife had died before him.) At the opposite side, against the wall, was a table with two members of the lodge who were in charge. Usually, they would either announce which song from the booklet (with about 100 songs for a Dede Oso) which was laid out on the seats, was to be sung, or they would just start to sing a song which was not in the booklet, and the others present would join in at once. All songs were classical Protestant Church songs, either in Dutch (the official language of Suriname) or in “Sranan tongo” (in earlier times also called “Negro English”), the language of the “neger-Creoles”, the section of the population to which most of the members of the IUOM in Suriname belong.

I arrived at ca. 20:00 and was put on the “right” side (i.e. opposite the family) in the first row. That row was reserved for guests of honour. Ca. 21:30 President Venetiaan of Suriname arrived with some Ministers, who were also put in the same row. The reason for their visit was that one of the sons of Bro. Hildenberg is one of the Ministers in the government of Suriname, and his father had been a quite prominent member of the Surinam community as well.

From 22:00 to 23:00 there was a break in the singing, during which most people present left the forecourt and went either on the street or in the garden. Drinks, starting with coffee & tea, and food were served during this break. The food, called heri-heri, consisted of “earth fruits” only, i.e. fruits which do not grow on trees, some of them cooked. It was served on plates, presented on trays, and covered with white sheets (“so that the dead cannot put their fingers into the food”).

At 23:00 precisely the singing began again. It lasted until midnight, at which point the official part came to an end. Sugared peanuts and pastries were distributed and either eaten on the spot or taken home. Some people stayed, possibly until dawn.

I was told that the next morning, the corpse was washed by the members of the corpse washers corporation of the IUOM in Suriname. It was dressed in its best clothes and put in its final coffin. This white coffin was then (now open) placed upon a bier at the same position as the previous evening, again surrounded by the four candles.

I was told that at 14:30 the lodge was opened (in the lodge room) and a ritual performed. In parallel, at 15:00 a church service was performed in the forecourt, the minister standing to the “left” wall (i.e. at the side of the head of the corpse). I arrived at about 15:15 and was again put on the “right” side. The people present were dressed as the evening before, except that the men were wearing also a black jacket and tie. Members of the Order were all (males and females) dressed in black with black ties, a white apron and white gloves with a sprig of evergreen (representing acacia) on the left breast. The service consisted mainly of singing, praying, and a sermon. A special song booklet had been prepared for the occasion, and was put out on the seats. Again President Venetiaan and several Ministers were present. At ca. 16:00 the minister who had led the service handed over to the Master of the lodge, who had, together with the other Brethren, emerged from the lodge room. Several speeches were given, a.o. by the Executive Grand Councillor, the Master of the lodge, and the son of Bro. Hildenberg. Then something took place which I could not see because the members of the lodge formed a closed circle around the coffin. The Executive Grand Councillor, Bro. Uden, was given the honour to clothe the brother for the last time with the regalia of his highest degree being the sash of gold, since the brother was a Royal Arch member. Before doing that Bro. Uden on behalf of the most worshipful Grandmaster of the IUOM said a few words of encouragement to the members and the family of Bro. Hildenberg. The members of the lodge then perambulated the coffin. All present also walked around the coffin, and most went outside. The hearse which was to bring the coffin to the cemetery now stood before the lodge building. Then a small group (I assume the family, but I also recognised several lodge members) put the lid on the coffin, and it seemed to me that all participated in screwing the screws which fixed it. Six men (members) then took the coffin and carried it three times anti-clockwise around the bier, and then outside and into the hearse. The hearse drove to the other side of the street, and the flags (which had been at half-mast) were run up to salute the deceased. Then all drove to the cemetery.

In front of the cemetery, but at some distance from its entrance, we assembled again. It started raining now. There was a brass band, as well as a group of undertakers, clothed in black with black hats and a blue/white shawl over one shoulder. Eight of those took the bier with the coffin on their shoulders while one with a short staff, curved at the end, guided and directed them. The brass band started to play and the undertakers more or less danced with the coffin (see the two pictures in T. Fey (ed.), p. 70), going in anything but a straight line towards the cemetery: their route would curve, go back a bit, even turn full circle, and then continue again (which reminded me of descriptions of voodoo funerals, where the same is done in order that the deceased may not be able to find his way back home). In this way we moved towards the entrance of the cemetery and from there to the grave.

At the grave the crowd assembled, mostly with umbrellas. The coffin was lowered into the grave at once. These graves are cellar graves, not very deep, and reaching about half a meter above the ground. The minister spoke and prayed. And then the members of the IUOM greeted the deceased with "Grand Honors", five times; for ordinary members – so called blue degrees – it is 3 times; for Sir Knights and higher it is 5 times and for Grand Officers 7 times. This is done by crossing the arms on the breast, left over right, and the open palms of the hands striking the shoulders; they are then raised above the head, the palms striking each other and then made to fall sharply on the thighs with the head bowed. While the honors are being given the last time the following words are said: when the arms are crossed on the breast: "We cherish his memory here" when the hands are extended above the head looking up high: "We commend his spirit to God who gave it" and when the hands are extended towards the ground over the grave: "And consign his body to the earth!"

All members were then invited to place the evergreen in the grave while a Grand Officer explained the reason for that: holding up the evergreen he said: this is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul; by this we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny beyond the world of shadows.

That done it was about 18:00. The guests (and we) went home, but the lodge members went back to the lodge building in order to close the lodge ritually. Presumably they went home at about 18:30 to 19:00. Thus, the whole ceremonial took about 24 hours.

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