

The Hidden Hand of Freemasonry and its Esoteric Origins (1)

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Today, Freemasonry is generally considered a system of morality veiled in allegory and concealed in symbols which are fundamental to the process of delivering the freemason messages. Among them is a certain gesture language – signs, grips and words that indicate one is a freemason. Like many aspects of Freemasonry, their precise origin is obscure and much debated riddle. According to Rudolf Steiner, to whom Freemasonry was a **“continuation of very ancient secret societies and brotherhoods”**¹, they are entrusted to the freemasons when they are initiated into one or another degree of Masonry.

The first degree attributes of apprenticeship is the sign, grip and word system, and he who wishes to attain to the next degrees undergoes next initiations and new signs, grips and words are revealed to him confined to his new rank. Their origin, just as the origin of Freemasonry itself, is an unsolved question, which even with the help of Rudolf Steiner leaves one rather puzzled than informed. He still pointed to a concrete historical moment when Freemasonry already did exist - the 14th century when it was already an established fact and an established **“complicated gesture language which is involved in sign, grip and word is spread out within the secret brotherhoods [but] the realities in them could not be brought to people since the 14th and 15th century. That could no longer**

¹GA 93, lecture from 23 October 1905

happen.”²

Here Steiner meant the Older, pre-English Freemasonry and its gesture system which in its essence was lost and which “*has come about because, since the sixteenth century, man has had little understanding of the true meaning of Freemasonry, namely that a temple has to be built in such a way that its proportions are a reflection of the great cosmic proportions, that a cathedral has to be built in such a way that its acoustics reproduce something of the harmony of the spheres, which is the source of all acoustics in the outer world. A knowledge of this original insight was gradually lost. Thus it came about that when Desaguliers (1683 – 1744)³ reunited Freemasonry in England during the first half of the eighteenth century, no one had any proper understanding of the fact that the word Freemasonry had to be taken literally. That is what I meant when I told you that what is left of Freemasonry is only the husk of what it was in former times.*”⁴

Thus, when the new, English Freemasonry was established in 1717, the entire meaning of the old, Continental Freemasonry was lost and even its origins became uncertain. The old freemason standards steadily declined since 14th and 15th centuries and this went on up to the 18th century when they disappeared completely and had to be reestablished by the four English lodges gathered at the London’s Goose and Gridiron pub and constituted themselves as a Grand Lodge. Later, this became known as the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).

² GA 167, lecture from 4 April 1916

³ John Desaguliers was a French born British natural philosopher and freemason. He became the third Grand Master in 1719 and was later three times Deputy Grand Master in the Premier Grand Lodge of England. He was the one who has presided when Frederick, Prince of Wales, became a freemason in 1731. He additionally has become a chaplain to the Prince

⁴ GA 93, lecture from 9 December 1904

The early 18th century English lodges met in taverns and pubs which was a sign of openness and at the same time of the state of degradation Freemasonry found itself at that time. This is what is visualized on the William Hogarth's (1697 - 1764) picture shown on fig. 1, depicting a drunk mason identified by his apron and set square medallion. He is supported by his tyler, equipped with sword and candle-snuffer. All around are pubs and taverns - The Earl of Cardigan and The Rummer in which masonic lodges met. William Hogarth was a well known mason himself identified by his self-portrait on fig. 2 (see further).

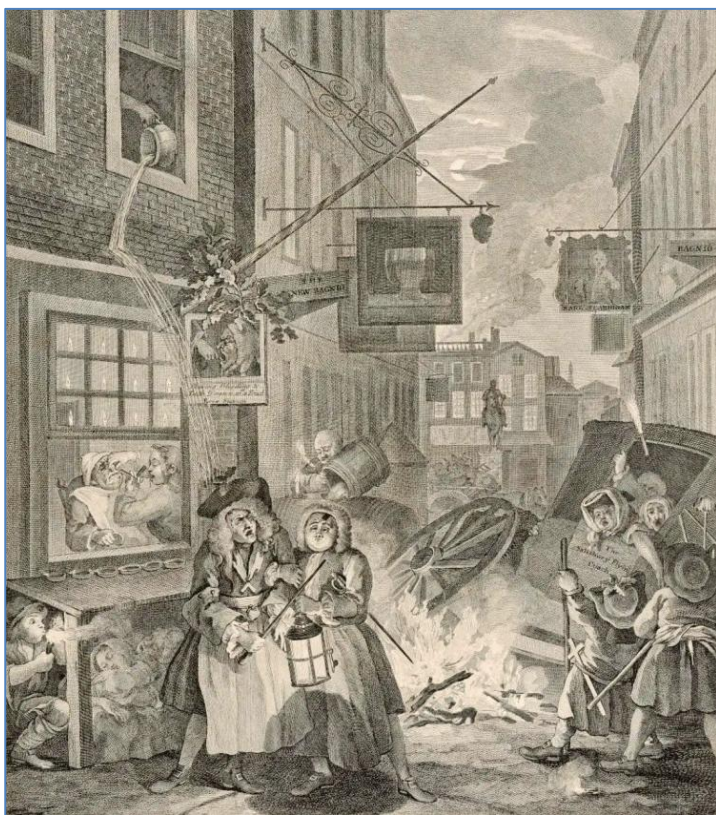


Fig. 1 and 2

Steiner pointed to the very reasons for this Masonic decline as to a general loss of higher spiritual abilities:

“Up to the eighteenth century it was known that things were so. Only when the connection with higher worlds was lost did the consciousness of what was lost fade from Freemasonry too. And yet again, not so. One watered Freemasonry down,

one said that one no longer knew its meaning. **One must be clear, however, that everything which existed as symbols, was derived from the old priestly wisdom and that what is implanted therein, in the symbols, must still first come into the open.** The true female wisdom is gradually becoming quite lost. Because of that, the so-called Higher Degrees of Freemasonry, which preserved the female wisdom, have been allowed to vanish. All that is still left is what is called Craft Masonry, which only concerns itself with worldly things, and only understands a little about them, in any case. But that is, after all, quite natural; as materialism developed itself, then the priestly wisdom did indeed have to fade away.”⁵

Thus, Freemasonry of old was incapable of supporting itself by reason of losing the state of connection with the higher worlds which concerns the general loss of clairvoyance and understanding of the underlying masonic symbolic system.

Therefore, two Freemason systems are clearly to be distinguished: an old and a new one, the first of which relates to the second as a (lost) Father to a Son. One would never get to know the old one if there were not the Rudolf Steiner’s contributions and explanations. The Old Freemasonry **was based on the old Abel priestly wisdom which is completely different from the new, Cain’s wisdom of the new English Masonry.** Steiner spoke of it as related to the God’s or Jehovah’s wisdom based on the old spiritual abilities which faded away at the time when the new Freemasonry came into existence. The latter however soon got into difficulties with what was left from the old priestly wisdom consisting of symbols and gestures which the English freemasons did not (and generally still do not) understand and which as Steiner suggests *“must still first come into the open”*:

⁵ GA 93, 23 October 1905

“However, this process which belonged to the Fourth Period, continued into the Fifth post-Atlantean Period through the brotherhoods. In the three subsequent grades, **they have come among other symbolical things, the grip and word, however this continued among souls who were differently invigorated from those souls in the earlier periods.** These people could no longer combine anything real with the sign, grip and word, because they could not bring to themselves that which was corresponding in the ether body. It was merely an external aspect as far as the soul was concerned. Previously in the age of the Intellectual Soul, there was a possibility of it having a real substantial content, but when man began to develop the Consciousness Soul, he began to focus upon the physical brain intellect and the sensitivity of the ether body receded. This ether body could [clairvoyantly] perceive much more of that which was around it. When the ether body perceives, then it sees the elementary world, that which is of an elemental nature, elemental beings in plants, animals and minerals. When people in those centuries were still able to speak of cobbies and gnomes which they could perceive in certain mountains and which approached them from certain mines, today's people, when they hear about it call this situation just poetical. However, to the people in these centuries, this is not poetical; they still knew something about the presence of an elementary world behind the physical world. ... **Those symbols which form the foundation for certain occult brotherhoods also arose in the 4th post-Atlantean period. At that time these symbols were perceived in a living way.** ... In the 4th post-Atlantean period, people knew about this because they were themselves able to perceive the movements of the ether body.”⁶

All this refers to the old Middle Age sign and gesture system of the “*medieval Freemasons*, who dealt with and made contracts with the clergy, about how they should build, wanted nothing

⁶GA 167, lecture from 4 April 1916

else but to shape outer life in such a way that — along with the Gothic cathedral — it could become an image of the great spiritual structure of the universe”⁷ and the “*Freemasons of old.*”⁸ They had totally different soul constitution rooted in the more receptive ether body.

The old puzzling masonic symbolism is that which is still used to illustrate the modern Freemason principles. It however is inappropriate and even likely to cause harm to the new freemasons since they had to experience a loss of its meaning and having to learn to know it only externally, intellectually and “particularly out of pure symbolism”⁹. According to Steiner:

“People are taken up in the first grade or any other occultism and sign, grip and word and many other things are transmitted to them. In that way one is able to work upon their unconsciousness. Now what is the consequence of that? The consequences that you can adapt these people to become *tools for all sorts of plans*, because when you are able to work over the ether body in such a way that he does not understand what is going on, you **eliminate those forces which would otherwise be present in his understanding. In the case of these brotherhoods it can become a tool for those who want to execute their own plans.**”¹⁰

This is how the new English Freemasonry works, threatening the very foundations of human mind.

⁷ GA 93 15 May 1904

⁸ GA 93, lecture from 2 December 1904

⁹ GA 167, lecture from 4 April 1916

¹⁰ Ibid

“Seeking for the Genius“ versus “becoming a thinking automat”

In regard to all this, Steiner described the two polar soul tendencies which are to develop after year 2000 out of the Russian and English-speaking populations:

“Today we live in a relatively idealistic spiritual age compared with that which will come in the future. We are living at the end of the 2nd post-Christian Millennium and it will *not be long until we reach the year 2000* and then mankind will have to experience something of a special nature. Things which are preparing themselves very gradually right now are so prepared that there are two polarities which we are going to meet as time goes on. Two polarities are being prepared, one pole from the East and another from the West. In the East things will gradually develop in such a way that another kind of thinking will dominate. Whenever a child is born, one will attempt to say: “What comes of this child? We have to deal with a hidden spiritual being who wants gradually to develop this child.” You will want to solve the riddle of this child, and in the first place you will unite a kind of cult dealing with the growing up of this child. This sort of thing prepares itself in the East. Naturally it will pass over towards Europe and the consequence will be that an immense reverence will develop for that which one calls genius, **a seeking for genius. This is what will come from the East. However this will affect only the smaller portion of mankind.** We might say that the present time is doing very well compared with that which will come in the future when the Western development blossoms more and more. Very shortly, when one will have written the year 2000, there will come from America not a direct prohibition, but a kind of prohibition against all thinking, a sort of law which will have the aim of suppressing all individual thinking. On the other hand, there is the beginning achieved in this direction of suppressing all individual thinking into pure materialistic thinking where one does not need to work upon the soul on the basis of external

experiments, in which the human being is handled as if he were a machine. Now, in the future you will not get a law passed which says you must not think. No. What will happen is that things will be done the effect of which will be to exclude all individual thinking. This is the other pole to which we are proceeding. This is connected with the development of the West.”¹¹

This is actually what is supposed to be developing today. The things are going their separate ways regardless that special measures are taken to water down this polarity for the benefit of the Western occultists as shows the scenario of *The Matrix* (1999-2003). It presents a brotherhood of occultists against an army of machines, and the main personage Neo is considered a leading figure, the chosen One, who is to return to the Source. Interestingly, he is called the *Sixth version of Chosen Ones* whose mission always is to bring salvation to the world¹² (fig. 3), reminding of a slavish-like person belonging to the Sixth Slavonic post-Atlantean epoch.



Fig. 3

¹¹ GA 167, lecture from 4 April 1916

¹² According to the Architect: “The function of the One is now to return to the source, allowing a temporary dissemination of the code you carry, reinserting the prime program. After which you will be required to select from the matrix 23 individuals, 16 female, 7 male, to rebuild Zion. Failure to comply with this process will result in a cataclysmic system crash killing everyone connected to the matrix, which coupled with the extermination of Zion will ultimately result in the extinction of the entire human race”

The “2000 year” suppressive law Steiner speaks about should be on its way and did not come directly indeed but in the roundabout way done with the help of 1) The all-pervading network of Anglo-American mass and social media channels as the Rothschild’s *The Economist*. It sets the tone for world development by deliberate strategic themes as poverty reduction, human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, “democracy”, supposed higher levels of pollution, racial equality, Covid-19 and after Covid-19 life, “failing” capitalism and currently the most important theme - the “failing Russia”, 2) The rules, laws and standards issued by the US backed European Communion which started to have an effect among the whole of Europe around year 2000, 3) The effects of auto-censorship practiced today by many of the journalists, politicians, scientists, publishers, even musicians, students, film producers and other kinds of authors whose number has increased dramatically over the last years, 4) The imposition of the so called “Euro-Atlantic” values, 5) The culture of *imitation* developed in Eastern and Middle Europe which is nonsensical in some cases (fig. 4), 6) The knowledge world tone-setting Wikipedia, etc.



Fig. 4 Pedestrian crossings in London and in Eastern Europe
(Sunny Beach, Bulgaria)

What follows from that? The effect of excluding individual thinking and freedom indeed of which Steiner spoke about hundred years ago. And modern freemasons are especially

vulnerable and susceptible due to the inadequate use of gesture, sign, grip, word and more traditional symbolic system automatically inherited from the masons of old. It is what effectively dulls human mind with the effect of uncritically receiving ideas handed down, for example, by upper grade mason brothers executing their own plans. This is an “internal” looming danger, and the external one is the Jesuitism imbued with backward female Abel wisdom:

“So, anthroposophy is a world task, connected with occult currents, and must take over where Freemasonry left off. Freemasonry could indeed still be reawakened, and could help us. But the more profound thought is this: these one-sided male endeavours must be vanquished in anthroposophical circles. Throughout the Middle Ages there was a sublime preparation for spiritual engendering the opposite sex in man. Man developed in himself, by concentrating, at first as a thought, what had to become a reality in him later on. Therefore, as a preparation for this, the Cult of Mary resulted during the Middle Ages. This is nothing else than concentrating to engender the female in the male, while for the female the Cult of Jesus served the parallel purpose. The Cult of Mary had its origin in this foundation. **You will now see what confusion must result when an Order arose which broke with all this and sought to regain the female wisdom. It is a world dominion which is at stake in this; if anyone wants to leave the old wisdom as it is, he will have to conquer the world for the old powers. There is such an Order: it is the Jesuit Order. It has consciously set itself this task.** That is why the Jesuits and the Freemasons confront each other so sourly.”¹³

Here Rudolf Steiner points to the problem, as well as to the salvation. The latter is the anthroposophical knowledge which may serve as a saving power to the Hiram's (Christian Rosenkreutz's) Freemasonry. “Our task is to bridge the gulf

¹³ GA 93, lecture from 23 October 1905

between the freemasons and the rosicrucians.”¹⁴ Steiner had high hopes of awakening Freemasonry to a new life and also of a link made with Anthroposophy bringing both of them to their modern common source: Christian Rosenkreutz’s (Hiram’s) who is the patron of both “male” Anthroposophy and also “male” Freemasonry. In this sense Anthroposophy and Freemasonry are brotherly movements issuing from one and the same source, or “father”, and having to be kept free of every influence of female catholic priestly wisdom. The freemason’s battle against the female wisdom seems discontinued and turned in its very opposite: both (occult) masons and occult jesuits seek to regain the old wisdom of ancient times thus reaching world control. It is leaving this wisdom ununderstood by the common freemasons and people on the planet.

The hand and body gestures of Old Freemasonry

The old priestly wisdom contained in the masonic gesture, sign, grip, and word symbolic system is still kept prisoner of the Catholic orders. These modes of recognition, as well as the essence of the masonic ritual, have been exposed multiple times through the years, but this doesn’t refer to the pictorial portrait gestures used by the old and some of the new masons which are still kept as secret as possible. The very earliest surviving examples of medieval and Renaissance religious, historical, mythical and any other scenes depict a number of such gestures *used in Masonic portraiture and self-portraiture!* This is the integral system of altogether seven (7+1) gestures and poses, which are as follows:

- 1.** *Hidden hand;*
- 2.** *Pointing to the side;*
- 3.** *Middle fingers;*

¹⁴ Ibid

4. Middle finger;

5. Turning the head to the side and looking away;

6. Hand grasping a book, letter, sheet (s) of paper or scrolls (always in combination with other masonic gesture(s);

7. Pointing down;

8. The modern Triangle, which is popular due to its continuous demonstration by the German Prime Minister Angela Merkel.

Only the first three of these gestures of old are more or less known to the public. Four portraits of famous masons, Goethe (1749–1832), Mozart (1756–91), Garibaldi ((1807–82), Gotthold Lessing (1729 –1781), Washington (1732–99) and Prince Edward, Duke of Kent (Figure 5 to Figure 10) are use here as an explicative examples displaying the the first of them: the hidden hand which is considered **1)** Commonly found in portraiture during the 18th and 19th centuries¹⁵ **2)** Indication of leadership in a calm and firm manner¹⁶ **3)** Visualization of English national character in the post-Restoration period¹⁷ **4)** Indication to the other masons know that the individual depicted is part of their secret brotherhood and that his actions were inspired by the Masonic philosophy and beliefs¹⁸ **5)** Cliche used while posing for a photograph or sitting for a portrait¹⁹ **6)** Common stance for men of breeding promoting a natural, modest, and reticent

¹⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand-in-waistcoat>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3046079?origin=crossref>

¹⁸ <https://www.scribd.com/document/141476427/The-Hidden-Hand-That-Shaped-History#>

¹⁹ <http://wesclark.com/jw/imponderables.html>

image that was sanctioned by classical precedent²⁰ 7) Most often associated with Napoleon Bonaparte.²¹



Fig. 5 and 6



Fig. 7 and 8

²⁰ Arline Meyer, Re-dressing classical statuary: The eighteenth-century 'Hand-in-Waistcoat' portrait, *Art Bulletin*. March 1995. 77 (1), p. 45–63

²¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand-in-waistcoat>

De facto, the hidden hand dates back long before the 18th century and it was used by artists of many nations belonging to the Renaissance and Middle age, including most of the great masters; it is hidden not only in the jacket or a pocket, but in any other possible way, incl. “outside the picture” (see further); it is not letting know only other initiated masons that the individual depicted is mason because for that purpose there are other, special masonic signs and gestures, but it is rather letting know all uninitiated that this is so; it is a means for revealing certain masonic secret to the public, or in other words, in cases of portraiture, it is a *demasking gesture!* Sometimes it is attributed to uninitiated – women and even children.



Fig. 9 and 10

The hidden hand origins

The hidden hand is repeatedly used in the work of many Renaissance artists. The first examples of the posture are dating from the Middle Ages, well before Napoleon's birth depicted on the Western Balkan Manichaeism (Bogomilism) Medieval tombstones, called Stećak. They date from the mid 12th century when the second, “European” wave of Manichaeism reached the Western Balkans. These are the territories of Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and the border parts of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia today.



Fig. 11

Most remarkable is the figure of a man with his right hand raised and his left hand hidden behind his back (fig. 11). The palm of the right hand is made larger implying cult significance and reminding of the Manichaean imposition of hands ritual, called in latin sources *consolamentum*. It was a procedure resulting from a method by which candidates were initiated in the Manichaean Mysteries. It consisted in the imposition of hands of at least two Manichaean initiates described in several historical sources, as *Summa on the Cathars and the Poor of Lyons* (1250) by Rainerius Sacconi.²² He describes the whole procedure in the

²² Born in Italy, initially he was follower of the cathars to become later on a member the Dominican order. From 1254 to 1259 inquisitor for Lombardy

following way:

*“The imposition of the hand is called by them the consolamentum, spiritual baptism, or baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to them, without it mortal sin is not forgiven, nor is the Holy Spirit imparted to anyone; both of these occur only when the rite is performed by them. But the Albanenses differ a little from the others in this; for they say that in this rite the hand accomplishes nothing (since according to them it was itself created by the devil, as will be explained below), but only the Lord's Prayer, which those who impose the hand repeat at the time. All the other Cathars, however, say that both, that is, the imposition of the hand and the Lord's Prayer, are necessary and requisite for the rite. It is also the common belief of all Cathars that no remission of sins is accomplished by that imposition of the hand if those who impose the hand are in any mortal sin at the time. This imposition of the hand is performed by at least two persons, and not only by their prelates but by those under them, even, in case of need, by Cathar women.”*²³

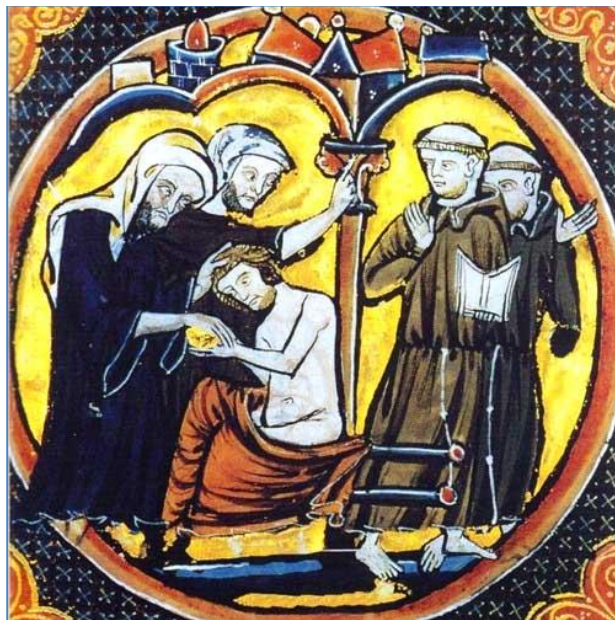


Fig. 12

²³ See Wakefield & Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, S51 pp. 329-346

This legendary ritual was of central importance in the Manichaean Mysteries since it linked the “earth” with “heaven” in those minds of the chosen ones. Most likely it has to do with what is depicted on the 13th century Stećak and also on the French medallion shown on fig. 12 representing two groups of priests, heretical on the left and catholic on the right. Between them is the kneeling candidate who is the subject of the imposition of the hands. In front of them are the two catholics who seem witnessing the procedure. The two groups are separated by a column that supports the Heavenly City (Jerusalem).

In latin sources manichaean initiates are referred to as the Elect or as Parfaits. An important detail is that in this case the person kneeling in front of them is resting his back on the Heavenly column. He is holding an object on which one of the leading manichaean priest places his right hand, while the other gently rests on his head. The main Parfait is dressed in a long blue robe with a white hood, while his colleague wears brown robe with a bluish hood. The latter appears to be showing the Catholic couple a rejecting gesture waving his finger. A closer look, however, reveals that his finger is pointing in the direction of the white curve along the arch at the right that supports the Heaven. This indicates that the Heavenly City forces are the one that stream down into the kneeling person, invoked from above. They enter into his spine from “behind” which seems as the “way” *the Holy Spirit invoked by the consolamentum ritual*.²⁴

Any Parfait who perceived (saw/heard/united with) the spiritual world was also able to initiate other people in it. The column separates the scene in two, symbolically dividing the catholic “earth” from the Manichaean Heaven. This is why the catholics firmly stand on the Earth while their colleagues seem not stepping on it.

²⁴ Invocation is always necessary: by the Father, by the Son or by Both of Them

By the colour of the robes the catholics can be identified as Franciscans who teach the manichaeans the Bible. This is also depicted on the frescos in the Church of St. Achilles in Arilje, Serbia (fig. 13 and 14). They are also commonly identified as manichaeen or bogomil, dated from 1290.



Fig. 13

The illustrated moments are from the Council organized by the Serbian Veliki Župan Stefan Nemanja (1113–1199) against the Serbian Bogomils held in 1176. The mainstream political tendency in Serbia, Bulgaria and the Eastern Roman Empire at that time was resistance to the Bogomilian Christianity and following it Nemanja convened a Council of the Church of his realm in Raška which he presided. It confirmed the Orthodox confession and condemned the serbian bogomils, ordering their persecution as heretics. This preceded the Council against Bulgarian Bogomils held in Tarnovo, Bulgaria in 1210 by 34

years, and interestingly, when defeated by the Emperor Manuel I Komnenus in Niš Nemanja offered to present himself in a masonic-like ritual. He went out to the emperor barefoot, bareheaded, with arms uncovered as far as the elbows, a rope around his neck and a sword in his hands. Falling on his knees in front of him he handed him his sword. The ritual that went on in Constantinople, where Nemanja was taken as a “slave” in Manoel's triumphal procession, while the gathered people ridiculed him. At the final the Emperor restored him to power.²⁵



Fig. 14

Significantly, in each of these two frescoes the manichaeans (bogomils) are shown hiding their hands from the mainstream

²⁵ See John Kinnamos, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, New York, 1976, p. 287-288

Orthodox priests who teach them something. This reminds of the masonic hidden hand gesture which appeared later on. Particularly this is highlighted on the fig. 14 where all hands are hidden. The Parfaits hide them deliberately. Interestingly, their poses are more animated than those of the others - their faces look lively and individualised as opposed to the traditional strict, lifeless outlook of the orthodox authorities (fig. 13). Particularly notable is the position of the heads of the three Parfaits on fig. 14, which is parfaity balanced. Their gazes are focused in three directions: up to Heaven, down to Earth, and strait-forward. Especially animated is the position of the young, un-bearded Parfait on fig. 13. He bends his hand to the left. Notable also is that these manicheans are recognized Christians by the Orthodox authorities, identified by their robe floral cross decoration.

Since the beginning of the 12th century the Constantinopol Church started the process of persecution of the Bogomils as heretics. Bogomilism was eradicated sequentially in Byzantium (1111), Serbia (1176) and Bulgaria (1210), but **was steadily adopted and thrived in the Bosnian Church until the Ottoman Empire gained control of the region in 1463.** Only then Bogomilism extended its influence into Italy and France where the bogomils were called Patarenes, Cathars, Albigenses, etc. Especially the Bosnian Church appeared as independent of and considered heretical by both the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Its adherents called themselves just “Christians” or “Good Bosnians”, just as those in Italy and France were *boni homines*, *Bonneshommes* or “Goodmen”. Regardless of all persecutions, this little but heroical Church remained essentially Manichaeian in nature till the end.

This is indicated by both Latin records and the monumental Stećci. The image of the male figure with a huge right hand raised at *head level* is “canonical” and most significant as shown on Figures 11 and 15. Its palm is made visibly larger than normal, while the other one is hidden behind the back. The small arrows that pierce both forearms are essential. Notably, the right ones are pointing into the direction of the palm, while the left go away

from it which means that the right hand is the active one. **It is the one that actually directs the spiritual forces that flow from Heaven into the head of each of the candidates.** This allows the Holy Spirit to stream down and build the bridge between the Visible and the Invisible in human mind enabling it to see/hear/unite with the spiritual world. The right hand is the one which initiates, while the other *does not!* *This is why the latter remains hidden.*



Fig. 15

Therefore, the Bogomil stone figures of men with right hand raised and left one hidden are representations both symbolic and real taken from life. They can be regarded as symbolical self-portraits made by or under the instructions of the Parfaits.

Although symbolical, they are the earliest surviving examples of medieval (self)portraiture depicting the initiates as either the main subject, or as important characters in their sacramental work in the Mysteries.

The esoteric origins of Freemasonry

The right hand raised gesture as well as the left one hidden are unique gestures which remind of the hidden hand performed by both old and new freemasons. And if the former means “initiation”, the latter suggests “non-initiation”, Resignation or Refusal of initiation. The following statements of Rudolf Steiner point to the possibility of such link - between the Manichaeism and Freemasonry which has to do with the Gothic cathedrals and many other buildings in similar style in the Middle Age Europe:

“The peculiar architectural style of the Middle Ages, mistakenly called Gothic, came from the south of France, originated in areas where lived such pious heretics as the Cathars, the Waldenses, who strove to deepen the inner life and break with the lavish life of the bishops and the clergy. A peculiar spiritual life spreads from there; German mysticism is strongly influenced by it. What a profound influence this attitude had on the outer form of these churches is evident from the fact that all these Gothic ministers possessed a mystical decoration in the marvelous stained-glass windows. *This art, which was completely lost in the 17th century,* was not an artistic allegory, but the symbols that were painted there really exerted a mystical influence on the crowd when the sunshine shone through them into the dim high churches.” (GA 51, lecture from 28 December 1904)

If the architectural style in question is mistakenly called “Gothic” then its proper name would rather be “Cathar”, or “Manichaean” since it is derived from the Medieval Manichaeism. In such case the “Gothic” artistic stained-glass windows are based on the forgotten manichaean artistry and a few people are aware of

these facts today. What is also interesting, this is the time when the meaning of all this was completely lost, namely, the 17th century when the Freemasonry of old was lost, too. This also suggests a link between the Medieval Manichaeism and the Freemasonry of old, between which Steiner draws a peculiar equal sign by saying:

“Well, if we go back to the **9th, 10th, 11th centuries** and look at the civilized world within which these secret societies, these Masonic Lodges, were spread out as the cream of civilization, we find that all the instruments, which today lie as symbols upon the altars of these Masonic Lodges, were employed for house-building and church-building. There were squares, circles, compasses, levels and plummets, and these were employed in external life.” GA 194, lecture from 12 December, 1919

If fact, it was not Freemasonry but Manichaeism which was (re)established in the 9th century by Parcifal who was a reincarnation of Mani, who founded Manichaeism in the 3rd century.“ He was reborn as Parcifal, the son of Herzeleide, the tragic figure abandoned by her husband. As the son of this widow, he now also leaves his mother. He goes out into the world. After many a wandering journey, he is chosen to be the guardian of the Holy Grail.”²⁶ What Steiner adds to this is also highly significant:

“And the continuation of the Parcifal saga tells us how **he again goes to the Orient, how he finds his brothers in the members of the dark races, and how the blessings of the Holy Grail will one day come to them too.**”²⁷

According to Steiner, Mani-Parcifal received the Grail on Montsalvat, the Mountain of Salvation in northern Spain which

²⁶ GA 264, see <http://fvn-archiv.net/PDF/GA/GA264.pdf#page=230&view=Fit>

²⁷ Ibid

is the starting point of the new impulse but its incarnation firstly happened in the East of Europe, popular as Bogomilism. This is what going again to the East means explaining the fact that historically this renewed Manichaeism appeared over Bulgaria and in many European and Oriental provinces of the Byzantine Empire. This happened toward the middle of the 10th century and the first who were influenced were the Slavic speaking population living in these territories. This is how the Slavonic name Bogomilism came, meaning “dear to God”, or “blessed by God” (“bogupomilvan”). This name probably was not chosen by chance and it is a mystery technical term derived from the renewed Manichaean or Holy Grail Mysteries²⁸.

This means that generally Medieval Manichaeism was not a “Bulgarian” phenomenon as it is maintained today - arising “in Bulgaria toward the middle of the 10th century from a fusion of dualistic, neo-Manichaean doctrines imported especially from the Paulicians, a sect of Armenia and Asia Minor, and a local Slavonic movement aimed at reforming, in the name of an evangelical Christianity, the recently established Bulgarian Orthodox Church”

(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bogomils>) The New Manichaeism, called by the local Slavic speaking people (at that time all Bulgarians and Thracians living in Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire spoke Slavic language) Bogomilism, however, was a *Mystery phenomenon* which after its 9th century appearance in Spain spread publicly first in the East over the Balkan Orient of Europe and many provinces of the Byzantine Orient. In other words, after being born in Spain, Manichaeism moved to the Eastern Balkans where it spent its “childhood”; its “youth” it spent in the Western Balkans, mainly in Bosna; and finally it reached its culmination in the South-West European countries of its origin where it flourished during its “adulthood”. Thus, by the early 13th century the New Manichaeism formed a

²⁸ "From the Abel-Seth direction come the priests and kings [initiated] by God's mercy." Rudolf Steiner, "Freemasonry and ritual work", SteinerBooks, 2007, p. 411.

chain of mystery communities stretching from the Black Sea to the Atlantic Ocean:

„At the time when the Crusades begin, and a little before, we find an important mystery in an area in the north of Spain. The mysteries then present were called-the later Gothic mysteries.“ (GA 97, see <http://fvn-archiv.net/PDF/GA/GA097.pdf>, p. 261)

Directly related to this are the origins and the essence of the "Gothic" art and architecture of which Steiner also said:

“Truly, in Gothic art once more two impulses have come together. The one is carried thither from the North. It contains, if I may describe it so, a practicality of life, a cleverness in skill and understanding, a certain realism. It comes to Europe on the Norman waves of culture. **The other impulse comes from Spain, and more especially from Southern France.** Thus we have an element of intelligence, utility and realism, coming from the North- but we must not confuse this with the later realism; this early realism sought to understand the Universe, the Cosmos, and wanted to see all earthly things in their connection with the heavenly. **From the South, on the other hand, and concentrated most of all in Southern France, there came what we may describe as the mystical element, striving upward from the earthly realm and reaching up to Heaven.**

Hence the peculiar nature of the Gothic, for these two elements have grown together in it, a mystical element and an intellectual. No one will understand the Gothic who cannot see in it on the one hand this mystical element which, concentrated in the South of France, grew especially in the **9th, 10th and 11th centuries.** It brings into the Gothic Art that mysterious quality of striving upward from below, while united with it, on the other hand, there is an element of cool intelligence and craftsmanship, which is

never absent from the Gothic. The sublime upward striving of the Gothic forms is mystical; their interlacings, and ingenious relationships come from another quarter, adding to the mystical element the height of craftsmanship. Thus in the Gothic the one side and the other are peculiarly united. These impulses which poured themselves into the Gothic flowed over again from the West, notably in the 12th and 13th centuries, to permeate once more the artistic creation of Mid-Europe.”²⁹

This actually speaks of the “masonic” 9th, 10th, 11th centuries from the above mentioned citation and the Masonic Lodges spread out “as the cream of civilization”. In fact, these were the Manichaeian Lodges which appeared at that time - firstly in Thrace, Bulgaria and the oriental provinces of the Byzantine Empire and then going more and more to the West where the Gothic style was established as something essentially Manichaeian. This gave impetus to the whole occult Christian artistic tradition which was deeply influenced by the Manichaeian initiates. “It would be quite wrong to assert that such a Gothic cathedral simply came to be out of outer needs, out of a certain longing perhaps, to create a House of God that should express or mean this or that. Something much deeper underlay this. **Those who indicated the first ideas for these Gothic buildings were adepts in occultism. They were, to a certain degree, initiates.**” GA 101, 19 September 1907

Undoubtedly, the occult adepts who were to a certain degree initiated (in the Mysteries) are the Manichaeians! They were the ones who establish the “Gothic” tradition which the Freemasons of new related to. All this suggests that there is a link between the Manichaeism of New and the Freemasonry of Old and that they both have common root – Manichaeism, springing from the Holy Grail impulse, and a common gesture – the hidden hand, which was adopted by both old and new freemasons. This concerns the hand that is hidden in the Bosnian Stećak - the only material

²⁹ GA 292, lecture from 8 November 1916

remnants of the Western Balkan Manichaeic tradition. Even less of this Manichaeic tradition is to be found in Bulgaria where only traces of it in the Bulgarian folklore are all that remain in the history of the Eastern Balkans and not a single Manichaeic material artifact is found! This first “childlike” step seems purely mystical compared to the next two: the “youthful” Western Balkan “Stećak” one and the one towards the Manichaeic “adulthood” in Western Europe evidenced by the Gothic architecture today. This shows the process of aging and materialization of the culture before its final eradication by the Catholic Church during the 13th century.

All this means that in its initial forms Freemasonry was never a purely operative system content just with the mere material and manual part of the things. It was first of all an ideological, occult, spiritual or speculative system born out of the Manichean priestly element. All freemasonic operative things are based on that. It is a Norman-operative and Manichaeic-speculative combination, which led to the appearance of the Gothic architecture based on the occult ingredient. That led to what was later called “Freemasonry”. Thence the practical Masonic impulse evolved, permeating the priestly imagination with the reality of earthly things.

The Freemason of Old hidden hand

The position of the hidden hand is commonly found in the works of many Renaissance artists in which it obviously plays a crucial role. It is depicted in hundreds of paintings especially of “Norman” Renaissance authors as Jan van Eyck (c. before 1390 – 1441) who is credited with inventing the modern (self) portrait and one of the first artists to sign his own work. The hidden hand is to be found in his work (fig. 16, 17 and 18) along with the one of grasping of papers (scrolls) - another of the portrait gestures used by Freemasons Old and New (see also Goethe’s portrait on fig. 5).



Fig. 16, 17 and 18

The following 1572 and 1764 portraits of Jan van Eyck (fig. 19 and 20 - with his elder brother Herbert) recognize him as a mason by the both old and new Freemasonry:

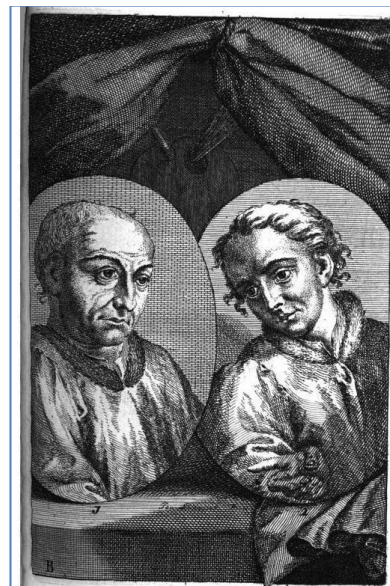
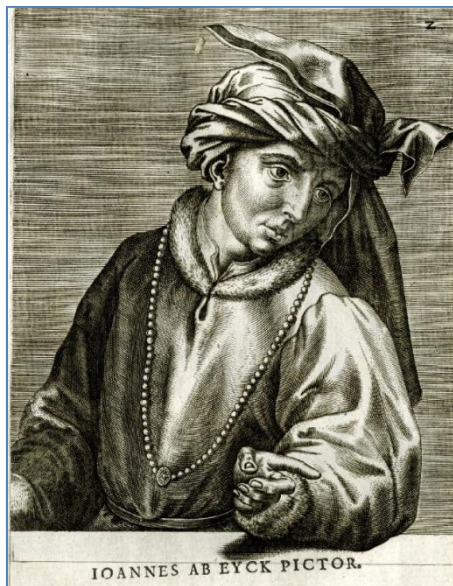


Fig. 19 and 20

The hidden hand appears in the paintings of many Renaissance artists as Titian (1488 – 1576) (fig. 21, 1-4), Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543) (fig. 22, 1-3), Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528) (fig. 23, 24 and 25), Dürer's father (a self-portrait on fig. 26) and some others (fig. 27):



Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23 and 24



Fig. 25 and 26

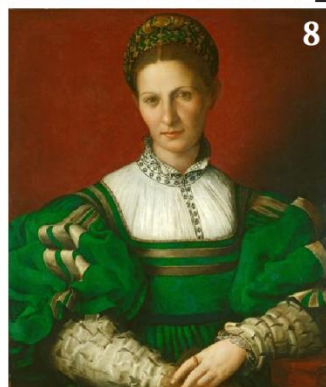
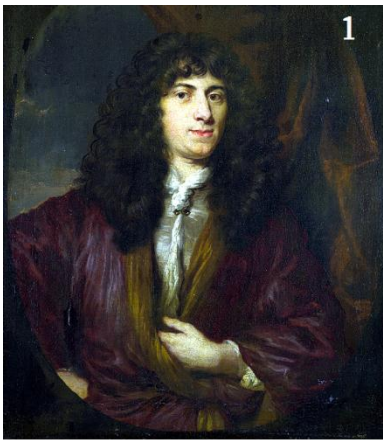


Fig. 27 (1-9)

Fig. 27: Nicolaes Maes (1634 – 1693), portrait of a man (1) Cornelis van Caukercken (1626 – 1680), portrait of Tobias Verhaecht (1561–1631) (2) A 1485 portrait of Adolf von Kleve (1425 - 1492) (3) A 1490 portrait of a man (4) Barthel Beham (1502–1540), portrait of the chancellor Leonhard von Eck (5) Frans Hals (1582 – 1666), portrait of a man (6) Frans Hals (1582 – 1666), portrait of a man (7) Bronzino (1503-72), lady in green (8) Anthony van Dyck (1599 – 1641), portrait of Adriaan van Stalbeemt (9)

Unlike some other masonic portrait gestures the hidden hand is rarely attributed to non-masons (fig. 27/8).

The Freemasons of New hidden hand

Its use was continued by the new Freemasonry in England soon after its establishing in 1717 as shown in the engraving on fig. 28 based on a 1745 illustration.

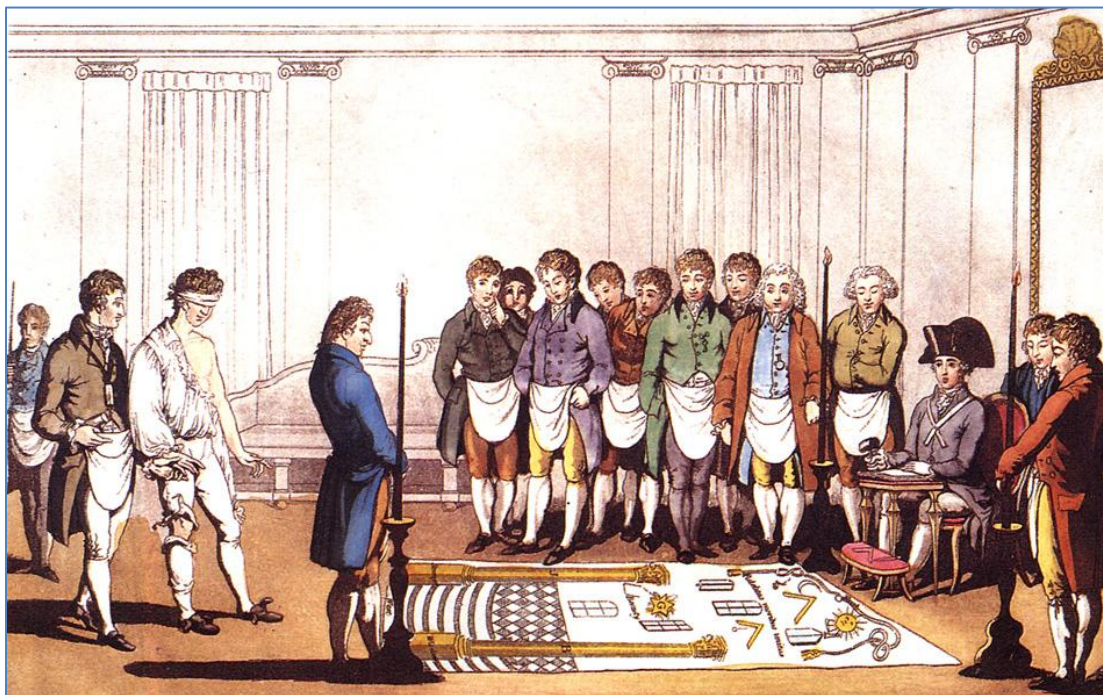


Fig. 28

The depicted scene is initiation of an apprentice Freemason. A number of masonic body and hand positions and gestures are shown, among which is the hidden hand. It is demonstrated by all of men standing and witnessing the ritual - most typically by the man dressed in brown next to the Grand Master. In the illustration on fig. 29 from the same period this gesture is

displayed by most of the participants, too. In both cases the modest costumes in comparison with the modern kitschy uniforms of the present-day mainstream masons (see fig. 10) are particularly striking. The same applied to the premise in which they are standing.



Fig. 29

The hidden hand was often depicted particularly by one of the first modern “masonic” artists – the already mentioned William Hogarth, who painted a range of “hidden hand” portraits of various people (fig. 30, 1-3).



Fig. 30

The hidden hand can be observed in the portraits of many other modern freemasons as Richard Wagner, John D. Rockefeller, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Sergey Pushkin and the two American presidents James Polk and Herbert Hoover shown on fig. 31.



Fig. 29

In some cases ‘mannerism’ should not be rejected. However, our investigation suggests that the systematic presence of the gesture in Renaissance and post-Renaissance paintings was not just “fashionable”. It is regularly shown by a lot of Renaissance masters followed by later ones who adopted it in dozens of portraits produced by them. Over time, however, it is more and more done in disguised manner and today it is rarely shown by the present-day freemasons at the expense of other portrait gestures (as the Angela Merkel’s triangle). Significantly, it is still not officially recognized by the UGLE despite the fact that it is demonstrated by its current Grand Master, Prince Edward, Duke

of Kent (see fig. 10) and it is popular and often regarded as masonic.

In the same misleading manner UGLE considers Freemasonry organization, which “roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our castles and cathedrals” (<https://www.ugle.org.uk/>) despite of the fact that the hidden hand points to another “reality” of which UGLE clearly is aware. It is the one which started not only with real stonemasons, but also with members belonging to other groups – artists, higher class people, aristocracy, and even royalty, some of which were shown above. It was not a “secular social and charitable” one as also declared by the UGLE and having nothing to do with the occult but it is consisting of many secrets that are still unexposed. The hidden hand is one of them.

Today, common freemasons often say that they "are not a secret society, but rather a society with secrets" and that “the best kept secret in Freemasonry is that there are no secrets”. This, however, does not refer to the deeper aspects of the Brotherhood which generally trace their origin to non-secret Middle Age operative masons lodges the somehow rites and trappings of other “ancient religious orders and of chivalric brotherhoods. In 1717 the first Grand Lodge, an association of lodges, was founded in England.” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Freemasonry>) Such views completely diverge from what is depicted in the renaissance "masonic" portraits, as well as from the Rudolf Steiner's statements. English Freemasonry, as shown on fig. 28 and 29, only in its outset *made no secret indeed at all of its activities, and even at its ultimate aim which was the initiation in the (Rosicrucian) Mysteries*. That was poetically revealed by Mozart in the final of the second part of The Magic Flute:

“Whoever makes his way through the obstacles of life is purified by fire, water, air, and earth. If he can overcome the horrors of death *he can soar from earth up to heaven.*

Enlightened, he can then devote himself entirely to the *Mysteries of the gods*.”³⁰

Today, such old Masonic aims seem forgotten. Guided the UGLE modern Freemasonry act worldwide in a more or less unified manner persisting in telling the story of the purely operative, stonemason origins. “Stonemasons often traveled around to find work in different locations. To demonstrate their level of qualification, they would use grips, words and signs in order to distinguish themselves from unqualified builders.”

(<https://www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/what-is-freemasonry>) Countless portraits and illustrations of many great artists who incorporated the hidden hand in their works, however, are historical evidences for the existence of masonic lodges before the 18th, or the late 17th century and that freemasonry was never clearly a craft organized around guilds. Its occult roots lie in the 9th - 13th century Manichaeism and its system of lodges (communities) initiated by the “eastern” occult adepts. This was later blended with the operative, purely masonic northern art resulting in what Steiner calls Freemasonry of Old and the Masonic hidden hand gesture. Masonry is rich in symbols derived from different sources that are not familiar to most people admiring renaissance paintings.

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Now, the question may arise whether any of the secret portrait masonic gestures as the hidden hand can be observed in the portraits and photographs of the founding fathers of the Inclusive Capitalism initiative: Evelyn de Rothschilds, Pope Francis and King Charles III? We will find the answer to this question only after we have explored the other masonic portrait gestures.

³⁰ The Magic Flute, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Act I, Scene 28