

# MASONIC AUTHORS

(THE GOOD THE BAD, AND THE UGLY)<sup>1</sup>

by Alain Bernheim

*The highest, as the lowest, form of criticism is a mode of autobiography*  
OSCAR WILDE

## J. Corneloup and Marius Lepage

In 1963, as I lived in a small German village and gave some hundred piano recitals a year, I was made a Mason in a French Lodge working in Germany next to the French border. Two German Lodges worked in the same town as ours but we never visited them and they didn't visit us. As an Entered Apprentice I asked Why? A white-haired Brother answered it was difficult to say why and wouldn't explain any further.

That same year, a gentleman who was a bit older than I am myself today (he was 75) published the first of seven masonic books he was to write before his death which fortunately happened fifteen years later only. His full name was Joannis Corneloup – he never used his first name which he disliked. The cover of the book described him as a Honorary Grand Commander of the *Grand Collège des Rites* - the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of France, the masonic body to which I belonged - and I had no idea what that title meant.

His book came into my hands. Its first part described accurately and clearly the main lines of English and French masonic history in the first century of their existence ('Yesterday') and what happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. between 1929 and 1963 ('Today'). It quoted the *Basic Principles* and explained the meaning of words such as regularity and recognition. I understood quickly that my own Lodge was neither regular nor recognized. But most important of all, right at the beginning of the book, Corneloup stressed the big difference existing between 'the Order' and '*les Obédiences*', that is, Grand Lodges and Grand Orients throughout the world. I decided to thank him for the information his book – *Universalisme et Franc-Maçonnerie* – had provided me with. He answered by return I should visit him next time I came to Paris. His short note was the beginning of a mutual friendship which lasted until his death. He was almost fifty years older than I was and gifted with a blue-steel cold stare which frightened most people. On the first page of his book, Corneloup referred to a book entitled : « *L'ORDRE et les Obédiences* » by Marius Lepage, which I ordered immediately.

Lepage also belonged to the French Grand Orient. He was famous for having invited the Jesuit Father Riquet to deliver a conference in his Lodge in Laval in 1961. I never met Lepage in person but from 1964, we wrote to each other quite a lot until he died in 1972. Lepage's is one of the best masonic books I ever read. Its first chapter, *Les Textes*, listed nine books from French masonic historians said by him to be somewhat reliable but rare and mostly out of print. It also enumerated English historians – Gould, Mackey and Lepage's friend Bernard Jones – and added : « I must lay a special emphasis upon the famous – extremely rare – full series of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* volumes ». Lepage's praise was so high that I decided to become a Corresponding Member of QC Lodge in 1965.

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<sup>1</sup> A film by Sergio Leone, known in Italy as : *Il buon, il brutto, il cattivo*.

## Contacts with *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge (London) and Harry Carr

Until 1975, new members of the Corresponding Circle (C.C.) were listed every year at the end of each volume of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*. Mine stays in the middle of some four hundred others, page 290 of vol. 78 (1965), together with the name of my Lodge and that of the German city where it was located. The application form didn't ask for the name of a Grand Lodge and the Secretary likely believed that since my Lodge was located in Germany, it belonged to one of the (regular) German Grand Lodges. My first two contributions to AQC, comments upon Eric Ward's and Paul Tunbridge's papers, appeared in vol. 80 and 81.

In 1965, QC Lodge changed printers. Some 7,000 odd and sometimes very old volumes kept by Parretts 'caused immediate storage problems' (Colin Dyer) and were offered for a nominal fee to members of the C.C. I bought every copy I could get.

In volume 40 (1927), I discovered a paper by an Irish Brother named Sitwell, Founder in 1925 of the first French Lodge of Research, *St. Claudius N° 21* belonging to the *Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière*. Sitwell had gained access to XVIII<sup>th</sup> Century French masonic documents which he quoted extensively. Some had been lent to him by an exiled White Russian named Choumitzky. According to Sitwell, Choumitzky asserted that these documents had arrived in Ukraine at the time of the French Revolution of 1789, were eventually entrusted to him by local masons at the time of the Soviet Revolution and that he finally brought them back to France. Other documents, said by Sitwell to come « from the collection of Bro. Sharp, of Bordeaux », obviously belonged to the archives of *L'Anglaise*, the oldest French Lodge outside Paris, founded in 1732.

Sitwell's paper did not interest the members of *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge at all. Besides the WM, two Brethren only thought fit to express some comments, the Russian scholar Telepneff and the somewhat eccentric Bro. Bullamore. WM Covey-Crump summed up the atmosphere of the meeting by stating: « Bro. Sitwell's subject is unfortunately one which does not make a wide appeal to Masons; it will be as "caviare to the general" », a fitting quote from *Hamlet*.

It wasn't caviare to me. After reading Sitwell's paper, I went to London where I made the acquaintance of the Secretary of the Lodge, the legendary Harry Carr, and asked him if, by any chance, unpublished papers by Sitwell (who died in 1931) would be archived in QC's Library. He scratched his head, disappeared and came back quickly with some 500 pages of typescript covered with a thirty years old thin cover of dust. I took a look, ascertained that Sitwell had used the oldest original Minute Books of *L'Anglaise* and that his papers were filled with hitherto unknown facts about early French High Degrees. Carr was kind enough to have the papers Xeroxed for me and sent them to Germany a few weeks later.

My relationship with QC Lodge was interrupted in January 1970 when I received a stern letter from Carr: « Dear Bro. Bernheim, we have received information that although you are apparently attached to perfectly respectable lodges in Germany [*I was not!*], you are also a member of the French Grand Orient. If this is true, we would not be able to keep you on our Roll of Members and I must ask you to let me have a declaration certified by the Secretary of your Lodge and stating that you are not in any way involved with that irregular and unrecognised body. I shall hope to hear from you at your early convenience. » My straightforward truthful letter was answered coldly. However, having been regularized two years later, I was reinstated free of charge as a member of the C.C. and Carr wrote to me: « I am delighted to hear that you are now within the fold... Needless to say I shall be most interested to know if you have written any thing suitable for us in the years when we were divorced ».

I had indeed 'rediscovered' documents considered as lost forever by French masonic historians who ignored the writings of their German and English colleagues. And I had put my hands on a microfilm reproducing most of the original documents Sitwell had used.

## **'Rediscoveries' made with the help of Kloss, Gould and Sitwell**

A friend of mine, a doctor in philosophy, told me once : « Alain, you can write whatever you want about philosophy. But first you must read everything which has been written about it ». A lesson I tried never to forget. The following shows how right my friend was.

I began by studying all the AQC volumes I owned, sought for the books recommended by Lepage, and acquired among others a good leather-bound original edition of Gould. Since I was interested in French masonic history, I noticed his foot-note in Chapter xxv, 'Freemasonry in France': « It should not surprise my readers that almost all references are to Kloss's history, and for this reason-Every statement of his predecessors has been carefully used and sifted by that writer, and his successors have been able to add remarkably little ». I decided to follow Kloss' and Gould's tracks.

The two volumes of Kloss' *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Frankreich* issued in 1852-53 and his *Bibliographie der Freimaurerei* issued in 1844 had just been reprinted in Austria. Kloss (1787-1854) had the good fortune to acquire 188 out of 552 masonic books and documents from Bro. Lerouge's private library, which had been offered for sale in 1835 (*Bibliographie*, p. X). They allowed him to write a 'History of Freemasonry in France' the accuracy of which, in my opinion, has not yet been surpassed for the first third of the XIX<sup>th</sup> C.

My first rediscovery was that of the full texts of the French General Regulations of 1743 and Statutes of 1755. According to the French historian Félix Marcy (1881-1963), both texts were 'missing' long before 1940 and he quoted short excerpts after authors 'who did not show their sources' (Marcy II: 173). Marcy was wrong: Kloss (I: 52) wrote that the text of 1743 was fully printed in a German publication of 1836 and according to Gould (*History of Freemasonry* III: 144, n1), the 1755 Statutes were reproduced in an issue of the London *Freemason* from 1885. I ordered photocopies of both publications and at a historical congress organized in 1967 by the Grand Orient of France, I submitted my windfalls in a communication published two years later in the *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (N° 197: 379-392).

With the help of the invaluable Sitwell papers, I was able to ascertain many hitherto unknown facts pertaining to the first Grand Lodge of France. Accompanied by documents which he had fully transcribed in French, they formed the substance of a paper, '*Contribution à la connaissance de la genèse de la première Grande Loge de France*', which appeared with proper acknowledgments in *Travaux de Villard de Honnecourt* X (1974): 18-99. I wrote in the Introduction : « Ten years ago, when I began to be interested in the history of our Order, I tried to ascertain which authors I could trust according to the sole standard of their respective accuracy. Whenever possible, I tried to find the original documents they used or those they mentioned, and indeed, I have found quite a few again... For sure, it is necessary to try and understand the events of the first years [of Freemasonry in France]. However before risking any hypothesis without falling into science fiction, one must keep by the facts... ». My position hasn't changed since.

I kept looking after the original documents used by Sitwell and had another windfall. The Supreme Council of the United States (Northern Masonic Jurisdiction) had created a Historical Committee which held eleven meetings between 1950 and 1955. Their typewritten Minutes were not for publication but a friend of mine had received a full set from America and provided me with a photocopy. One of the 1952 Minutes stated : « the Committee had the good fortune to acquire from Past Master Irwin Sharp of London, England, nearly 100 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Documents ... Harold V. B. Voorhis consummated the acquisition in behalf of Supreme Council... [Sharp] became a member of the 220-year-old English Lodge L'Anglaise (N° 204) and once served as its Master... While in Bordeaux he secured from Librarian Graton (W.M. 1921) of l'Anglaise the MSS ... To say that the documents are priceless is putting it mildly ». Further Minutes showed that in 1954 the NMJ Historical Committee had sent a full microfilm of the so-called "Sharp documents" to the French *Bibliothèque Nationale* in exchange for French ones they had become as photocopies.

I went to Paris and asked about that microfilm. It hadn't interested anyone, it was in a drawer and nobody ever had a look at it.<sup>2</sup>

## René Guilly

In 1970, at the time of my short 'divorce' from the C.C. of *Quatuor Coronati*, I belonged to a French Lodge in Strasbourg with the distinctive title *Europa*. It was one of the few Lodges belonging to the French Grand Orient, working the 'Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite' Craft degrees, that is, with the Bible on the altar, the invocation to the GAOTU, and a few other specificities. It was a gratifying experience to be a member of a Lodge working in the realm of regularity, though it belonged to an unrecognized masonic body. Through a member of my Lodge, I met a man whom I consider as the foremost historian of French Freemasonry in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, René Guilly (1921-1992).

Like most French Brethren, this extraordinary Freemason began his masonic life at the Grand Orient where he was made a mason in 1951. He demitted in 1964 to affiliate with the *Grande Loge Nationale Française (Opéra)*, a small body founded after a split occurred within the *GLNF* in 1958. On 26 April 1968, he created a masonic body of his own, the *Loge Nationale Française* and shortly afterwards, founded a French masonic quarterly review, *Renaissance Traditionnelle*. No masonic review in the world has published so many important papers and unearthed so many essential unknown documents as *Renaissance Traditionnelle* while René was its Director, except maybe *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* during its best years.

René Guilly wrote about himself: « I am a traditionalist Freemason. I acknowledge the traditional and spiritual legitimacy of the Basic Principles enacted in 1929 by the United Grand Lodge of England. However I contest their temporal application. I love masonic History and History plain and simple, I try to become familiar with it and to understand it. For me, it is a safe guide, which prevents me from using so easy weapons like global anathema and collective excommunication. True masonic Tradition belongs by no means to the past. It is fully alive. But such totalitarian ways of behaving definitively belong to the past and their survival is but the shame of our Order and of specific countries. They are the negation of every universalism and of every ecumenism.»<sup>3</sup>

René and I had much in common. We insisted on getting at original documents, on publishing them in full and trying to understand what they said without letting ourselves be influenced by the writings of other historians. My first paper in *Renaissance Traditionnelle*, 'Que savons-nous du Morin de la patente ?' (What do we know about the Morin of the patent ?) was published in vol. 3. A dozen further papers followed, two of them belonging to the longest I ever wrote, 'Le "Bicentenaire" des Grandes Constitutions de 1786: Essai sur les cinq textes de référence historique du Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté' issued in 1986-1987, and 'Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire...', a review of Daniel Ligou's *Dictionnaire de la Franc-Maçonnerie* 2nd edition, issued one year later.

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<sup>2</sup> I told the odyssey of the 'Sharp Documents' in the first two Appendixes of a paper issued in AQC 101 (1989) and drew up a 'Répertoire des Documents Sharp' issued in *Renaissance Traditionnelle* 93 (1993): 53-58. Also see my short paper, 'An "Introduction" to the Sharp documents ?' in AQC 108 (1996).

<sup>3</sup> « Je suis un Maçon traditionaliste. Je reconnais le bien-fondé spirituel et traditionnel des points essentiels énoncés en 1929 par la Grande Loge Unie d'Angleterre. Mais je conteste l'application temporelle qui en est faite. J'aime l'Histoire maçonnique et l'Histoire tout court, j'essaie de la connaître et de la comprendre. Elle est pour moi un guide sûr et elle m'empêche d'avoir recours à ces armes si faciles de l'anathème global et de l'excommunication collective. La Tradition maçonnique véritable n'appartient nullement au passé. Elle est totalement vivante. Mais ces procédés totalitaires, eux, sont périmés définitivement et leur survivance n'est que la honte de notre Ordre et de certains pays. Ils sont la négation de tout universalisme et de tout oecuménisme. » (*Renaissance Traditionnelle* No. 11, juillet 1972, p. 214).

## Brigadier A.C.F. Jackson

In 1978, I learned through AQC that Freddie Seal-Coon, then a member of the C.C., had just published *An Historical Account of Jamaican Freemasonry*. Since Estienne Morin had met Francken there and died in Kingston in 1771, I contacted Seal-Coon who suggested I write to Brigadier A.C.F. Jackson (Cosby to his friends), a PM of QC Lodge, who lived in Jersey.

Jackson had transcribed the earliest-known copy of the 'Great Statutes and Regulations' (also known as the 'Bordeaux Constitutions of 1762') embedded in the Francken MS of 1771, which had just been rediscovered in the Library of the Supreme Council for England and Wales<sup>4</sup> and included it in his book, *Rose-Croix*, which came out in 1980. From the start, we wrote to each other extensively. Although we knew each other very little, he was kind enough to add a few friendly words about me at the end of the Introduction to his book.

A few years later, I had side by side on my desk the text of the 1771 Statutes that Jackson had printed in his book and that of the 1763 Statutes of the Grand Lodge of France which Groussier had transcribed in July 1929. I realized suddenly that both texts were nearly identical except for such changes made necessary if the Statutes referred to a Grand Lodge or to a High Degree body. I drew the conclusion that the French 1763 Statutes (which we knew Chaillon de Jonville, General Substitute of the Grand Lodge of France, had sent to Morin in San Domingo) had been re-written by Morin and used as a basis for the system of High Degrees he developed in the West Indies before his death. I explained the above in a paper published in vol. 59 (1984) of *Renaissance Traditionnelle* and Jackson wrote one in AQC vol. 97, issued the same year.

When the first edition of *Rose-Croix* was nearly sold out, Lewis Publishers agreed to print a completely revised edition which would include our new discoveries. I went to Jersey in October 1985 to discuss a few points with Cosby and met him then for the first time. Many years a Military Attaché to the British Embassy in Paris, he was a gentleman in every sense of the word. Although aged 82, he was fit as a fiddle and extremely kind. During my stay in Jersey, he suggested I enter the Norman B. Spencer competition organized each year since 1971 by QC Lodge (he had been the first recipient). I did not tell him the subject I intended to choose, in case he would sit on the board of assessors (according to the rules of the competition, contributions are sent anonymously accompanied with the name of the author in a separate cover).

Cosby had introduced me in writing to George Draffen, the then Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council for Scotland. Draffen was an excellent historian with a great sense of humour, our correspondence was witty, and at his suggestion I sent him a draft of my paper. While at the hospital, he amended my style, changed the title from 'Masonic Dating Codes' into 'The Dating of Masonic Records' and on Good Friday 1986 sent it back to me expressing his hope that it would win the Prize. Unfortunately Draffen died six weeks later and never knew that his hope was fulfilled.

Next October, I went to London. Cosby took me to the Library of the Supreme Council of England and Wales and let me see the manuscript of the 1771 Constitutions. He invited me afterwards for lunch at Great Queen Street, introduced me to some senior members of the Lodge and brought me to the meeting of QC Lodge where the £50 cheque for the Prize was handed over to me. Two years later, I was invited to deliver a paper in the Lodge. According to the rules, I couldn't read it myself and Cosby read it at the May 1988 meeting ('Notes on early Freemasonry in Bordeaux (1732-1769)', AQC 101: 33-131).

Shortly before, my name was put forward by Neville Cryer, the Secretary of the Lodge, and seconded by Cosby and Seal-Coon (by then a PM of the Lodge) to become a full member. For reasons which Cosby put down in writing in the 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter of his unpublished *Memoirs* of which I own a copy, it was turned down by a 'gang' of members – Cosby quotes their names

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<sup>4</sup> AQC 89 (1977).

and adds: « I use the word [*gang*] deliberately » – who made what he describes as « a deliberate character assassination ». As a consequence, Cosby sent his resignation from QC Lodge.

In 1989, a senior member of the Lodge, Cyril Batham, wrote to me : « Have you considered submitting [again] an entry for the Norman B. Spencer Prize ? ». I thought it could wait a little. I wrote a few comments on papers read in the Lodge and a paper about the *Mémoire de La Chaussée* which was printed in vol. 104 (1992). Having by then completed a paper about Masonic Catechisms and Exposures which had a few original lines, I decided to follow Cyril's suggestion and re-entered the competition. But warned by my previous experience, I submitted my paper under an anagrammatic pseudonym, Henri Amblaine. The paper won the Prize for 1993. When I let the Secretary of the Lodge know that Henri Amblaine and Alain Bernheim were one and the same person, he did not sound pleased at all.

Cosby died, 3 January 2000. I wrote a tribute to his memory which appeared in vol. 112 of AQC and in vol. 10 of *Acta Masonica* (Brussels).

## Reliability and unreliability

A fundamental idea I would like to stress for those genuinely interested in historical research is the great difference between facts and opinions. In many books and papers, both are mixed up in such a way that a candid reader is not able to sort them out. There is quite a difference between « We know that ... » - meaning This fact can be checked and proved - and « I believe that... » - implying This is my opinion, I am not sure if it is true.

When a masonic writer states a fact, there are two possibilities only.

- Either he learned it somewhere and should show where, which is the object of end- or footnotes. However the reader must not forget to check if the sources are sound and accurate.
- Or, he discovered an unknown document establishing the point he makes. Then he must state precisely where the document is and quote it.

I told this to a friend recently and he commented dryly : « You forget a third possibility : the author's own imagination ».

A good example of an unreliable well-known source is Claude-Antoine Thory (1759-1827) often considered as the earliest French masonic historian. His anonymous books are easy to read, especially his *Acta Latomorum* (2 vol. printed in 1815) but they are filled with a lot of wrong information recopied by generations of careless scholars. For instance:

- a new type of Masonry founded by Ramsay in London in 1728,
- an imaginary Lord Harnouester elected Grand Master in France as a successor to Lord Derwentwater on 24 December 1736 (Thory recopied this from Lalande), whereas actually it was Derwentwater who was elected Grand Master three days later,
- a *Grande Loge anglaise de France* said to have existed from 1743 to 1756, an imaginary body which found its way in most books and papers describing French masonic history up to vol. 100 (1987) of AQC under the pen of John Webb and that of Paul Naudon (*La franc-maçonnerie*, Que sais-je, 1999, 17<sup>th</sup> revised ed. [!], vol 1064, p. 38),
- deliberately misquoting the *Mémoire Justificatif* de La Chaussée which he had under his eyes.<sup>5</sup>

How right was Gould when he wrote: « That writer ... can only make a lame attempt to prove his charges by tampering with documentary evidence, or by wholesale suppression and perversion » (*History* III: 147).

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<sup>5</sup> See my *Introduction-Avertissement* to the reprint of La Chaussée's *Mémoire* and of Thory's *Histoire de la Fondation du Grand Orient de France*, Slatkine 1992, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

A simple way of verifying an author's degree of reliability is to check the accuracy of the dates, quotes and sources he mentions whenever possible. If what one is able to verify appears correct, the rest is likely correct too. If not, the reader should draw his own conclusions. Accordingly - you probably guessed it already - an abundance of notes, references and footnotes is no guarantee whatsoever for the reliability of a writer.

In 1991, the French writer Georges Perec made a wonderful parody of an academic-sounding paper, *Cantatrix Sopranica L.*,<sup>6</sup> written in a hilarious pseudo-scientific English. Alan Sokal, Professor of Physics at New York University, did better in 1996: he wrote a paper, 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity', which he later described as « a parody... a *mélange* of truths, half-truths, quarter-truths, falsehoods, non sequiturs, and syntactically correct sentences that have no meaning whatsoever ».<sup>7</sup> His paper however was printed as a straightforward contribution in a highly respectable American scientific publication, *Social Text*, 'regarded as an influential left-leaning periodical devoted to sociology and the relatively newly developed field of "cultural studies" ' (Stefan Steinberg). « What I feared did happen : they published it, unfortunately », commented Sokal dryly. Sokal's hoax shows that a paper accompanied with heaps of notes and references can easily dupe erudite readers, unfamiliar with a specific subject.

A nearly similar case – though an involuntarily one – happened recently in your sister Lodge in London. A full member of the Lodge read a paper entitled 'The Strict Observance' on 15 February 1996.<sup>8</sup> No less than 145 endnotes were appended to its printed version. The author was unanimously praised by his peers,<sup>9</sup> one of them laying stress on « the seven and a half pages of notes alone testifying to the huge amount of research entailed ».<sup>10</sup>

In an article, 'That "Strict Observance" Paper', reluctantly accepted by the Editor of AQC, I demonstrated one year later that the greater part of that paper was merely a poor summary of one single book issued in 1970 out of which the author had recopied most of his notes as well as his secondary references, acknowledging his main source only once in a while, and that the rest of his paper had been recopied from masonic encyclopaedias and dictionaries mentioned in only one half of his celebrated notes.<sup>11</sup> Asked by the Editor for a comment, the author chose to answer : « a detailed, analytic rebuttal of many of Bro. Bernheim's statements is not justified, as it would be of little interest for most readers of AQC and would serve only to confuse the larger issues concerning the Strict Observance ».<sup>12</sup>

There was a time when each new volume of AQC was a treasure for every serious scholar of the Craft. That glorious time is over. Historians like C.C. Adams, Wilhelm Begemann (never elected a full member although he invented the still valid classification of the Old Charges), Harry Carr, J.R. Clarke, W.J. Chetwode Crawley, J.R. Dashwood, George Draffen, Lewis Edwards, W.K. Firminger, R.F. Gould, Ivor Grantham, W.B. Hextall, W.J. Hughan, Bernard Jones, Douglas Knoop, John Lane, Heron Lepper, Robert James Meekren, Henry Sadler (who had to wait sixteen years after the publication of 'Masonic Facts and Fiction' to be accepted as a member), W.J. Songhurst, G.W. Speth, Boris Telepneff, J.E.S. Tuckett, Lionel Vibert and William Wonnacott had one thing in common: they made masonic research. They did not rehash old papers to write new ones. Nor would they have capitalized on the fact that many members of the Lodge are unfamiliar with foreign languages and masonic literature. They would have been ashamed of contemplating the idea.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://web.infinito.it/utenti/t/tecalibri/P/PEREC\\_cantatrix.htm#fine](http://web.infinito.it/utenti/t/tecalibri/P/PEREC_cantatrix.htm#fine)

<sup>7</sup> Alan Sokal 1996. 'Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterword'. In *Dissent* 43 (4): 93-99.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Litvine, 'The Strict Observance' (AQC 109: 19-50).

<sup>9</sup> « Erudite work... chorus of gratitude for this fully documented paper... » (Caywood *ibid.* 56. Stewart *ibid.* 52). Michel Brodsky, a Prestonian Lecturer and Past Master, whom the author thanked « for his help » and « advice » (*ibid.* 43, 68), said « Brother Litvine deserves congratulations » (*ibid.* 58). The only critical remarks came from Pierre Noël, a member of the Corresponding Circle.

<sup>10</sup> Seal-Coon (*ibid.* 59).

<sup>11</sup> Bernheim, 'That "Strict Observance" Paper' (AQC 110 : 192-207).

<sup>12</sup> AQC 110 : 207.

## A few recommendations

Is it more than a coincidence ? At the time AQC began to decline – a decline, which got worse over the last ten years – René Guilly issued the first volumes of *Renaissance Traditionnelle* in Paris. One year before René died, the first volume of *Acta Masonica* was issued in Brussels. One year after his death the first volume of *Heredom* was issued in Washington by its present excellent Editor, S. Brent Morris. Is it not as if an invisible light had passed across the sea and the ocean ? If you are an earnest masonic scholar not already familiar with these three masonic publications, take a look at them.

May I end this communication by mentioning the names of two exceptional living masonic historians.

One is the present Editor of *Acta Masonica*, the Belgian Pierre Noël. His latest achievement was to explain the origin of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite's Craft degrees. In a brilliant paper issued in vol. 12 (2002) of *Acta Masonica*, he was first to demonstrate that they derived directly from the translation of *Three Distinct Knocks* issued in London in 1760 !

The other one is the American Art deHoyos, a frequent contributor to *Heredom*. Though not yet forty-four years old, he happens to be the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian of the Supreme Council of the United States, Southern Jurisdiction. Such a high masonic responsibility has never been more appropriately fulfilled before. His knowledge of every aspect of the history and of the rituals of Freemasonry as well as his unusual memory are simply amazing. In my opinion, he will soon be acknowledged as the greatest masonic historian of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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