



FREEMASONRY IN LEBANON: AN OVERVIEW

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The Lodge

The lodge is the Temple of the Freemasons. It is a permanent building, specially equipped, where the Brothers meet to do their work. There are no solitary Freemasons.

A 'Grand Lodge' is an association and an administrative unit that includes at least seven symbolic lodges that practise the same rites. A 'Grand Orient' is a grouping of seven or more lodges that may practise different rites. The term 'lodge' is also used to describe a group of Masons who work together.

To constitute a lodge, it is necessary and sufficient that the group includes seven Brothers who hold the degree of Master Mason. A small lodge includes about ten Brothers. The largest may include up to fifty.

It is recognized that a lodge cannot reasonably be expected to include more than fifteen members if these are really to know one another and to work efficiently. A normal lodge is called 'symbolic' or 'blue'. It affiliates only members of the three first degrees of Freemasonry, that is Entered Apprentices (often shortened to Apprentices), Fellow Crafts (often shortened to Fellows) and Master Masons.

The Premises

Inside the Temple, all the basic symbols of initiation are to be found: the mosaic pavement, the two columns, the three pillars and the painting of the lodge, to cite only the principal ones.

The Worshipful Master (*le Vénérable Maître*), sits in the East, and, is responsible for directing the work. He is assisted by a college of officers, a term designating Brothers who fulfil particular functions within the lodge.

The Apprentices take up positions by the 'Column of the North', the Fellows by the 'Column of the South', the Master Masons by either.

The Officers of the Lodge

A lodge includes at most ten officers. For a lodge to be set to work, at least seven officers must be present. For a lodge to be 'just and perfect' it must be directed by seven Master Masons.

The Worshipful Master (*le Vénérable Maître*) presides over and directs the

lodge. This title refers to the officer in charge of a blue or symbolic lodge who is elected for a term of three years only. The Worshipful Master is the Master Mason responsible for the administration of the lodge and supervising the Masonic work that is done there. Of course he also presides over the meetings (or sessions) of the lodge. At the end of his⁵ term of office, he is obliged to occupy the humblest position in his lodge, that of Brother Tyler or porter.

The Senior Warden (*Premier Surveillant*) directs and oversees the work of the Fellow Crafts.

The Junior Warden (*Deuxième Surveillant*) instructs the Apprentices.

The Orator ensures that the debates go smoothly and keeps order by seeing that the established rules of the lodge are strictly observed.

The Secretary is responsible for taking the minutes, which he inscribes in the book of architecture of the lodge.

The Expert, formerly known as the '*frère terrible*', organizes and regulates the initiation ceremonies and sees to it that the ritual is correctly carried out; he takes responsibility for the work of the Tyler (recognizing the credentials of Freemasons).

The Master of Ceremonies assists the expert by performing the practical tasks (he places all the objects needed for a ceremony). The *Volume of the Sacred Law* is always displayed in an open Lodge.

The Treasurer manages the lodge's money and makes sure that subscriptions are paid.

The Hospitaller manages the 'tronc de la Veuve' (poor box) for Brothers who find themselves in financial difficulties, and for charities.

The Tyler or Porter grants permission to Brothers to enter the Temple. He is often an ex-officer who moves from positions of the greatest responsibility to the humblest of duties.

Other Masonic Titles

Other Masonic titles in current use, of which two that occur frequently follow, designate precisely defined honorary functions at the heart of Freemasonry.

The Grand Master is the president of a Grand Lodge, which consists of and oversees a group of regular symbolic lodges.

The Sovereign Grand Commander is the Brother of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite who heads a Supreme Council that governs the thirty higher degrees of the Scottish Rite.

The First Three Degrees

These are:

Entered Apprentice (or Apprentice for short)

Fellow Craft (or Fellow for short)

Master Mason

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Entered Apprentice

In speculative Freemasonry the term Entered Apprentice is used to the exclusion of all others to designate the layman who has successfully passed the symbolic tests of the initiation rite.

This initiation equips the Apprentice with all that is symbolically necessary for his entrance into the sacred universe of Freemasonry and for his progression to further degrees.

The number 3, with its symbols, is the number of the Entered Apprentice. In Masonic terms, he is thus three years old.

The Entered Apprentice may not speak in the lodge until he is confirmed as a Fellow. He does not know how to read or write. His education is therefore essentially oral. When he works in the lodge, he sits in the North – that is to say far from the light of knowledge.

The Entered Apprentice wears a white leather apron with its bib raised, since he is still clumsy and needs to protect himself. Like all other Masons, he wears white gloves.

Fellow Craft (originally Fellow of the Craft)

The degree of Fellow derives from the fellowship of the Middle Ages. The degree is accorded after a minimum of eight months of Masonic activity, in the course of a ritual during which the candidate is required to give an account of some of the knowledge acquired through his work as an Apprentice.

In the lodge, the Fellow may, in fact ought to, speak and although he is not in full possession of all his Masonic rights until he becomes a Master Mason, he has the right to vote during initiations.

The Fellow is five years old in Masonic terms; in the lodge he sits in the South, that is to say in the light. He wears the same white apron as the Apprentice, but with the bib lowered, a sign of his experience. Like all Masons, he wears white gloves.

Master Mason

The principal degree of Freemasonry. One is raised to this degree only after a year spent in the degree of Fellow and after having completed a number of tasks or duties devoted to symbolism or philosophy. These tasks are performed under the supervision of an officer of the lodge, a Master Mason with the title of *Premier Surveillant*.

A Master Mason is eligible to be an officer of his lodge. In some instances, such as taking on the position of president of the lodge, i.e. Worshipful Master, three to five years as a Master Mason are required.

The Masonic age of a Master Mason is seven years in the Ancient⁷ Accepted Scottish Rite.

In the lodge, the officers wear a chain from which their badge (or jewel) of office is suspended. Master Masons wear a distinctive apron and, in the Scottish Rite, they wear a headdress.

The degree of Master Mason is a qualification for the higher degrees, from the 4th to the 33rd, which are obtained after study in the school or college of degrees and after examinations taken there.

The Principal Masonic Symbols

In Masonic symbolism, the meanings are not set in stone.

The square symbolizes the quality and ordering of material. Serving to draw only shapes with right angles, it symbolizes rectitude and respect for laws and regulations.

The compass symbolizes the opening of the spirit that is indispensable to the Mason during his initiation. It is the emblem of the field of knowledge.

The plumb assures the equilibrium of the edifice built by the Mason. Worn on a chain by the *Deuxième Surveillant*, it accords with his role as guide.

The jewel of office of the Secretary are two crossed quills worn suspended from a chain around his neck. They represent the work done in the lodge.

The jewel of office of the *Premier Surveillant* is the level, a tool used to check that a surface is horizontal, it symbolizes the work of the Fellow in the lodge.

The jewel of office of the *Trésorier* is a key. It suggests the opening of the chest in which the funds with which the lodge is financed are kept.

The combined square and compass suggest that matter and spirit are indissolubly linked. They are often shown in various configurations on the covers of Bibles and other holy books.

The letter 'G' is the initial of God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, in traditional Masonry. A lay interpretation sees it as the symbol of geometry or of gnosis.

The *étoile flamboyante* represents the initiate who shines in the darkness. This symbol accompanies the Freemason throughout the journey of his initiations.

The Freemasons in the Middle East

General

Freemasonry came to Lebanon by various routes. At first it was brought by individuals: either returned emigrants or travellers who⁸ had spent some time in Europe, the U.S.A or South America, or who, in flight from the Ottoman occupation, had sought refuge in Egypt.

Later, Freemasonry installed itself as an institution with the creation of lodges that were at first dependent on the Grand Lodge of Egypt, before becoming independent in 1934.

A Unifying Factor Among the Freemasons of the Middle East: the Druze

Druzism unites the gnostic wisdom of Greece, Egypt, Persia and Islam. The tenets of the Druze are based on initiation. Only initiates are able to read and understand the holy books known as *The Seven Books of Wisdom*: they are a continuation of the Greek and Egyptian hermetic schools, of the esoteric tradition.

Today, only a Druze who has received 'the message' in a previous life may, if he is worthy, be initiated. To be a Druze it is not necessary to belong to the minority commonly known as 'the Druze', who live in Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Turkey and northern Pakistan. A Druze is above all a believer in the unity of all the religions in the world, whatever their rites. A little like the Rosicrucians, who are followers of all religions and who once used to call themselves 'the Druze of the West'.

According to *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842-1852*, by Colonel Churchill¹, the Druze have several traditions identical to those of the Freemasons.

For one Druze to be sure of being able to recognize another, a password was adopted in order to assure that nothing pertaining to the tenets of the religion filters out of the community.

The initiation of a Druze takes place after 12 months of studies and examinations. Initiation is open to both men and women. Candidates for initiation are required to be of irreproachable morality. During the second year, the initiate is permitted to wear the white turban; from then on he is allowed to participate progressively in all the mysteries of the religion, depending on which degrees he has obtained.

Taken together, these characteristics have made it possible to claim that the Druze belonged to the subsidiary branch of the first Freemasons, and that their connections with Freemasonry date to the Crusaders, who themselves discovered Freemasonry during their occupation of Palestine. Some historians go even further, affirming that the titles of the 21st and the 22nd degrees of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Prince of Libanus refer to the followers of that symbolic religion. Today, many Druze have joined

the Lebanese Freemasons.

Freemasonry in Lebanon

General

Although Freemasonry has been established in Lebanon for over a century, it is relatively undeveloped.

In fact, since its introduction in this region, 237 lodges have been legitimately registered, of which fifty or so were still in existence in the year 2000. According to a survey of Lebanese Masonic circles, the best known are the following:

- The Grand Orient of Lebanon
- The Beit-El Grand Lodge
- The Sun Grand Lodge
- The Grand Lodge of the Cedars
- The United Grand Lodge
- The Grand Lodge of the Cedars N° 7
- The Grand Lodge of the Reform

The government of Lebanon, in contrast to those of most of the neighbouring countries, readily accepts the existence of Masonic lodges within its borders, on condition that each is registered with the Ministry of the Interior and that the list of the members of all Grand Lodges is deposited there every year, a condition which is not imposed in any other country and the possibility of which is now giving rise to a crisis in Great Britain.

However, so far as is known only two organizations have been authorized by the Government to function as Masonic lodges. These are the Grand Orient of Liban and the Unified Supreme Council of Lebanon. All the other Grand Lodges are registered as benevolent societies whose objective is to help the poorest in the land. They are, nonetheless, authorized in fact to engage in regular Masonic activities (see p. 2-3 in this issue).

It should be noted that several foreign Grand Lodges have established blue Lodges in Lebanon that answer only to their authority.

They are:

- The Grand Orient of France
- The Grand Lodge of New York
- The Grand Lodge of Scotland
- The Grand Lodge of Canada
- The Grand Lodge of Italy

Contacts with the Droit Humain International and the Grand Women's Lodge of France were in progress around 2002 with the objective of opening a lodge in Lebanon answerable to these lodges.

The golden age of Lebanese Freemasonry was in the 1960s, before the civil war in Lebanon, a time when several of the country's leading politicians were recognized and respected Brothers.

Today, 2500 Masons assiduously attend lodges answerable for the¹⁰ most part to the Grand Orient of France or the Grande Loge de France. It should, however, be noted that a minority of Brothers from Canada or the United States adhere to the York Rite.

The Memphis-Misraïm Rite is barely represented now, after having at one time had a position that was far from negligible.

Whatever their creeds, the Lebanese Brothers have in common their belief in a revealed God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, and their attachment to the virtues of the Brotherhood.

Chronology

Freemasonry was introduced into Lebanon and Syria around 1860 via sundry lodges answerable to the National Grand Lodge of Egypt. The presence in Syria – after his exile in France – of the Algerian Emir Abdel Kader el Jazairy brought Freemasonry to public notice in this part of the world. Moreover, the courageous attitude of the emir towards the Syrian Christians – after some incidents which set them against the Muslims – earned him the respect of France. Exceptionally, he was initiated into Freemasonry on the 18th of June, 1864 at the Loge Henri IV in Paris, and Napoleon III conferred the Légion d'honneur on him.

Freemasonry made its appearance at the end of the nineteenth century. The first lodge installed on actual Lebanese territory was the Loge Palestine (415), founded on the 6th of May 1861, answerable to the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Others lodges followed: in 1868 the Loge, *Liban* and in 1869 the Loge *Chaîne d'Orient*, working for the Grand Lodge of Scotland and for the lodges of the Grand Orient of France.

The French, Scottish, Italian, American and Egyptian Grand Lodges were later to open many other lodges in the larger Lebanese cities. This expansion was halted by the First World War, during which Lebanese Freemasonry lay dormant.

The Grand Orient of France established the following lodges:

Etoile du Liban, 2 April 1913, at Zahlé.

Kesrouan, 19 May 1922, at Harissa

Le cèdre du Liban, 3 septembre 1922, at Souk el-Gharb

Tripoli, 7 novembre 1923, at Tripoli,

Syria, 6 May 1925, at Beirut

The Grand Lodge of France, for its part, established the following lodges:

La Sagesse (N° 493), 1921, at Beirut

Le soleil (N° 494), 1922, at Baalbeck

An-Nour (N° 528), 1924, at Tripoli

Bernard Wellhof (N° 526), 1927, at Beirut

A Chapter of the Rose Croix 18th was grafted on to the Loge de la Sagesse in 1925.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland, for its part, installed eight lodges in the beginning of the twentieth century:

Sannine N° 969 at Dhour Choueir

Peace N° 908, at Beirut

Kadish N° 1002, el-Mizab N° 1130, at Tripoli

Zahlé N° 1047, at Zahlé

Mount Lebanon N° 1047, at Shweifat

Al-Ittihad N° 224, at Beirut

Phénicia N° 237, at Hadath

Al-Minaa Al-Amin N° 245, at Tripoli

At the end of the First World War the National Grand Lodge of Egypt, answerable directly to the Grand Lodge of Scotland, was established. It at once attracted all the Freemasons of the Arab world, as it was the first national and independent Arab Masonic authority.

At the beginning of the 1920s, most of the Lebanese lodges that sought independence asked Prince Mohamed Ali, Grand Master of the National Grand Lodge of Egypt, for authority to establish 'provincial' lodges in Lebanon. The Syrian and Palestinian lodges asked for the same authority.

This was accorded in 1923; the first Grand Master of the Grand Provincial Lodge of Lebanon was Ahmad Nami Bey.

However, the National Grand Lodge of Egypt went back on this decision for unknown reasons, and proclaimed, by decree N° 535 of the 30 December 1923, the establishment for an initial period of seven years of a sole Provincial Grand Lodge called 'Rifi', to include the Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian lodges.

This Provincial Grand Lodge developed rapidly, and a dozen lodges submitted to its authority. Some Lebanese lodges established by foreign Grand Lodges also asked to be connected to this Grand Lodge.

It was not until 1934, at the end of the seven-year period, that the National Grand Lodge of Egypt finally accorded the Lebanese lodges their Masonic independence, by officially recognizing the establishment of the Grand Orient du Liban. Other grand lodges appeared subsequently. They are all examined consecutively below, in the order in which they were established.

Freemasonry in Lebanon during the Mandate (see also p. 82 in this issue).

Although a large number of lodges were established by the Grand Orient of France, French Freemasonry appeared in the public arena in Lebanon only after the nomination by the Cartel des Gauches¹² (Coalition of the Left) of General Sarrail, a Freemason, as High Commissioner in the Levant.

Taking its orders from France, French Freemasonry in Lebanon was interested in the Lebanese lodges only insofar as they were willing to follow the politics of the Cartel des Gauches, and if the French Brothers sometimes supported, indeed favoured, the rise to power of some Lebanese Brothers, it was only if this was in the interests of France. In all the time they were in Lebanon, they never really integrated with Lebanese Freemasonry. The officers of the French administration in Lebanon, having for the most part previously served in the French colonies, were fundamentally anti-Mandate. They could only conceive of direct administration, being quite unable to envisage the slightest sharing of authority with the local élites.

The Various Rites Practised in Lebanon

In Lebanon, a country in which religion occupies a prominent place in society, the rite most practised is the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, the rite of the Mother Lodge of England, which makes the belief in a revealed God obligatory.

Some lodges practise the York Rite, the main rite of Freemasonry in the United States. Others once practised the Memphis-Misraïm Rite, which has now disappeared from the Lebanese scene.

The Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite AASR

The Scottish Rite is a rite or, as it was known in 18th-century France, a 'régime', which is found throughout the world wherever Freemasonry is accepted.

Its origins are very old, some writers believing that it predates the document known as *Anderson's Constitutions*, although this has never been proved. What is, however, known is that from as early as 1730 in England, a rank of Scottish Mason existed. From 1733 on, there were Scottish Masonic lodges in London, and from 1735 in Bath. In France, the first official document that mentions Scottish Masons is the rules of the Grande Loge of the 11 December 1743, article 20 of which aims to prevent those Brothers adorned with the title of 'Maître Ecossais' from wearing distinctive symbols or claiming any special privileges. In 1756, however, these prerogatives must have been granted to them; meanwhile the epithet 'Ecossais' had been grafted onto numerous titles. That of Rite (originally Rit) Ecossais Philosophique was invented in 1777 by Dr Boileau.

It was not until the 24th of June 1801 that the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR) was established within the Supreme Council of the United

States, founded in Philadelphia by the first General Assembly of the associated Grand Inspectors General.

These last derived their authority – by a series of co-options – directly or indirectly from Etienne Morin who, as is now known, had been¹³ invested and duly licensed by the highest French and English authorities in 1761 and 1763 respectively.

The Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite (which, since 1830, has been ever more commonly known in France as the Rite Ecossais Ancien et Accepté – or the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite), like most of the other rites, respects old traditions; it is characterized mainly by its structure, which consists of thirty-three degrees or ranks. The list below provides a summary:

Supreme Council: presided over by the Sovereign Grand Commander, it has from nine to thirty-three members, co-opted from among the holders of the 33rd degree.

Consistory: 32nd degree – Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret

Tribunal: 31st degree – Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander

Assembly (Aréopage): 30th degree – Grand Elect Knight Kadosh or Knight of the Black and White Eagle.

29 th degree	Grand Scottish Knight of St Andrew
28 th degree	Knight of the Sun
27 th degree	Grand Commander of the Temple or Sovereign Commander of the Temple of Jerusalem
26 th degree	Scottish Trinitarian or Prince of Mercy
25 th degree	Knight of the Brazen Serpent
24 th degree	Prince of the Tabernacle
23 rd degree	Chief of the Tabernacle
22 nd degree	Knight of the Royal Axe or Prince of Libanus
21 st degree	Patriarch Noachite
20 th degree	Worshipful Grand Master (<i>Vénéérable Grand Maître</i>) or Master ad Vitam of all the regular lodges
19 th degree	Grand Pontif or Sublime Scotsman of Celestial Jerusalem
18 th degree	Sovereign (or Sublime) Prince of the Rose Croix
17 th degree	Knight of the East and West
16 th degree	Prince of Jerusalem
15 th degree	Knight of the Sword or of the East
14 th degree	Grand Elect of the Holy Arch, or Sublime Mason

13 th degree	Knight of the Royal Arch
12 th degree	Grand Master Architect
11 th degree	Sublime Knight Elect
10 th degree	Illustrious Elect of Fifteen
9 th degree	Master Elect of Nine
8 th degree	Intendant of the Building
7 th degree	Provost and Judge
6 th degree	Intimate Secretary
5 th degree	Perfect Master
4 th degree	Secret Master

Blue or Symbolic Lodge

3 rd degree	Master Mason
2 nd degree	Fellow Craft
1 st degree	Entered Apprentice

This rite of Freemasonry, Scottish only in the philosophical sense of the word, is not without historic and geographic foundations. According to Lindsay's hypothesis, the Freemasons, moved by the condemnation pronounced in the bull *In Eminenti Apostolatum Specula* of Pope Clement XII, sought to justify themselves by accentuating their Catholic, legitimist and, so to say, Scottish characteristics.

The Memphis Rite (or Egyptian) Rite

Most of the officers of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force that accompanied General Bonaparte were Masons who belonged to long established lodges: the Philalethes, the African Brothers, the Hermetic Rite, the Philadelphians and the Primitive Rite, not to mention the Grand Orient of France. In Cairo they discovered a surviving gnostic-hermetic tradition, and in Lebanon a form of Druze Masonry that went back to the working stonemasons who had accompanied the Templars, their protectors. The Brothers of the Mission to Egypt decided to renounce their affiliation to the Grand Lodge of London and to practise a rite that owed nothing to England, then enemy number one of France. Thus the Memphis Rite was born in 1815 at Montauban under the direction of Samuel Honis and Marconis de Nègre.

The Memphis Rite very quickly rallied the old soldiers of Napoleon's ex-Grand Armée and those Bonapartists who remained faithful to the emperor.

The Memphis Rite and the Grand Orient of France were, however, to have the same Grand Master General in 1816, a portent of their future amalgamation. But at the time the majority of the Grand Orient was monarchist, its seal included fleurs de lys and it had the Memphis Rite abolished. This situation did not last, and in 1826 the Memphis Rite resumed its work under the auspices of the same Grand Orient.

Abolished once more in 1841, the Memphis Rite went underground, and didn't reappear until 1848, together with the Republic. Abolished once

more in 1850, revived in 1853, the Memphis Rite was reunited with the Grand Orient in 1862 on the orders of Napoleon III. At the time it had a great many lodges abroad, and it can count some famous names, such as Louis Blanc and Garibaldi, who was soon to unite the Memphis and Misraïm rites.

The Misraïm (or Templar)² Rite

This rite made its first appearance in Venice in 1788. A group of Socinians (an anti-Trinitarian Protestant sect) asked Cagliostro³ to license their constitution. Not wishing to practice the magical-kabbalistic ritual favoured by Cagliostro, they elected to work with the Templar Rite. Cagliostro thus provided them with Masonic shelter only; he himself held the first three degrees of English Masonry and the higher degrees of German Masonry, which was heavily influenced by the Templar tradition.

Misraïm is the Hebrew name for Egypt, the only reminder of the Egyptian Rite whose Grand Lodge lent them status. The rite quickly spread to Milan, Genoa, and Naples, and appeared in France with Michel Bédarride, who had received his degrees in Naples in 1810, from Brother de Lassalle. It can, in fact, claim some illustrious Masonic names at its head: Count Muraire, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, the Duke of Leicester and Lieutenant General Baron Teste.

The Misraïm Rite soon became the Masonic Grand Lodge that handed on vital knowledge to the Carbonari; at the time, this rite could count twenty-two lodges in Paris, six in Lyon, six in Metz, five in Toulouse, three in Bordeaux, three in Geneva, three in Lausanne and one in Courtray.

The order, which was violently anticlerical and antiroyalist, was abolished by the Restoration police. Underground for eighteen years, revived in 1838, the Misraïm Rite was to move towards a merger with the Memphis Rite in 1899.

The Memphis-Misraïm Rite

Until 1899, the Memphis and the Misraïm Rites went along companionably in parallel, caught up in the same, very particular situation: both rites began to collect (as double members) Masons of both the Grand Orient of France and the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite who were interested in research bearing on the esoteric aspects of Masonic symbolism, gnosis, the kabbala, as well as Hermetic philosophy and the occult. Thus, these two rites are the heirs and depositories of the old initiatory lodges of the 18th century: Philalethes, Philadelphians, the Hermetic Rite and the Primitive Rite.

All this represents ninety divers degrees to the Misraïm Rite and ninety-two to the Memphis Rite. How were they to administer and make use of all of this disparate whole? When Garibaldi was appointed Premier Grand Master General ad Vitam for the entire world (since the Brothers had not suffered political persecution in the world outside as they had in France), a sort of classification was established, not at all hierarchical originally, but

quickly to become so.

In fact, the ninety-five degrees of the Memphis-Misraïm Rite should be viewed as an ambulatory where old degrees are found, and not as a scale of values. The agreement with the Grand Orient of France in 1863 and that of 1896 with the Grand Symbolic Scottish Lodge – later the Grand Lodge of France – bear only on the thirty-three traditional degrees (The Rite of Perfection, followed by the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite). The Grand Lodges of the Memphis-Misraïm Rite are obliged to perform the following degrees:

9 th degree	Master Elect of the Nine
18 th degree	Knight of the Rose Croix
30 th degree	Knight Kadosh
32 nd degree	Prince of the Royal Secret
33 rd degree	Sovereign Grand Inspector General

The 66th, 90th and 95th degrees are honorary degrees conferred on old Masons to reward them for their valour and their fidelity. The other degrees (Secret Master, Royal Arch, etc.) are optional and are conferred at will by the Brothers of the higher degrees.

Today, the Memphis-Misraïm Rite can count about 5,500 Masons, of whom most live in South America. It has about seventy symbolic lodges for the first three degrees (aside from the Grand Lodges), in France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Venezuela, Haiti, Australia, etc. and one women's Grand Lodge.

After Garibaldi had been Grand Master General, the position was held successively by Théodor Reuss (also Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Germany), Dr Gérard Encausse (Papus), Charles Détré (alias Teder), Jean Bricaud, Constant Chevillon, Charles Henry Dupont, and Robert Ambelain, the last from 1960. A large General Assembly of the South American lodges decided in 1964 that it should be obligatory for the seat of the Grand Master General to be in Paris, and a General Assembly of the European lodges ratified this decision in 1965. The General Assembly of South America had also expressed the wish that the Grand Master General obligatorily be French.

This rite made the definition of the 'Masonic religion', consisting of the general morality of honest men as detailed in Anderson's Book of Constitutions of 1723, its own. Its symbolic lodges work either with the Templar Rite (Misraïm), or with the Egyptian Rite (Memphis), but on their altars they add the Ruler to the traditional combination of the Square and the Compass.

The York Rite or American Rite

1. The York Rite

This term designates the 'style' of Masonry generally practised in the United States; the degrees of the York Rite, above the three symbolic degrees and excluding the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, are:

Royal Arch Degrees

4 th degree	Mark Master
5 th degree	Past Master
6 th degree	Most Excellent Master
7 th degree	Royal Arch or Holy Royal Arch

Cryptic Degrees

8 th degree	Royal Master
9 th degree	Select Master
10 th degree	Super-Excellent Master

There is an 11th degree – Thrice Illustrious Master – conferred by some jurisdictions.

Chivalric or Templar Orders

Knight of the Red Cross
Knight Templar
Knight of St John
Knight of Malta
These orders – the Master Orders of Christian Knighthood – constitute what is known as Chivalric Masonry.

The American Rite (Philosophical or Templar)

Knight of Malta
Knight of the Temple
Knight of the Red Cross

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre

Knight of the Christian
Knight of the Holy and Thrice Illustrious Order of the Cross
Knight of the Celestial Rose
Knight of the Guardians of the Conclave

The French Rite

The French Rite, in symbolic Masonry, is the rite practised in France by the Grand Orient. It was defined in 1801 by the Regulator, that is by the Grand Orient of France, but it has since been substantially modified.

The Grand Lodges and Supreme Councils of Lebanon

General

Since the introduction of Freemasonry to Lebanon, 237 lodges have been registered in the country, as mentioned above. It is estimated¹⁸ that today about fifty are functioning regularly. Meanwhile, three organizations only, so far as is known, have obtained authorization from the Lebanese Government to engage in specifically Masonic activities. These are:

The Grand Orient of Lebanon, authorized 27 November 1964

The Lebanese Grand Lodge For Freemasons Accepted in Lebanon, which includes the York Rite lodges, authorized on 18 March 1969

The United Supreme Council of Lebanon, authorized 13 July 1988

These authorizations have not been renewed since they were issued. Neither, however, have they been annulled. The holders are thus entitled to claim to be the sole legal representatives of Freemasonry in Lebanon. This claim is strongly contested by the other Lebanese Grand Lodges.

All the other Grand Lodges are registered only as benevolent societies, as mentioned above. They are nonetheless authorized in fact to engage in regular Masonic activities. They are, nonetheless, authorized in fact to engage in regular Masonic activities on a permanent basis throughout the country.

The Grand Lodges⁴

The Sannine Grand Lodge

Established: 19 July 1903

Members: Lodge closed down in 1949

Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite

Grand Master: Last Grand Master Farès Mouchrik in 1949

Chronology

The Sannine 969 Lodge, one of the oldest in Lebanon, was established on the 19th of July, 1903 under the patronage of the Scottish Grand Orient. It was named in honour of its founder and president Farès Mouchrik (1868–1949), a native of the village of Dhour Choueir in the Metn dominated by Mount Sannine, one of the highest peaks in the Lebanon.

The first meeting of this lodge took place on the 3rd of February, 1903 and the Scottish Supreme Council officially recognized its existence on the 4th of January, 1904.

The Sannine Lodge expanded rapidly and a number of important Lebanese and Syrian figures joined it. To cite the best known: Selim Mansour Katoul, Gebrael Nassar, Wadih Berberi, Jamil Hobeika, Khalil Aoun, Kamal al Dallal, Eliaho Dayan, Elias Matar Rahbani, Elias Mouchrik, Farès Badr, Nakhleh Khalil Naffaa, Amin Talih, Selim Zeitouni, Hanna Rached.

Other no less important figures were frequent visitors to the lodge. These include: Selim Abdallah, Mikhaël Chahadeh, Doctor Iskandar Baroudy, the Emir Taher al-Jazairy (brother of the Emir Abdel-Kader al-Jazairy) and Fadlallah Abou Halka.

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The Sannine Lodge soon distinguished itself by original initiatives that placed it at the forefront of Lebanese Freemasonry.

In 1904, its president, Farès Mouchrik and a Brother Daoud Moujaes together founded the Masonic periodical *Al-Nour*. It was later moved to Egypt, where it became a recognized mouthpiece of the Lebanese and Egyptian Freemasons.

In 1905, the Sannine Lodge organized an exhibition of Lebanese industrial and agricultural products. This event, the first of its kind at the time, was opened by the Ottoman representative to Mount Lebanon, Mozzafar Bacha.

In 1906, a public library containing 187 works of general interest, was opened at Dhour Choueir on the initiative of the lodge.

It should be pointed out that at Dhour Choueir in 1907, the basic work on English Freemasonry, *Loi Générale des Franc-Maçons* was translated into Arabic and published at the expense of the Sannine Lodge. The book was translated by the joint efforts of Elias Mouchrik, Daoud Moujaes, Melhem Haddad, Rachid Raad and Mourad Saliby, all members of the lodge.

The exemplary leadership of Farès Mouchrik was publicly recognized in 1931. The municipality of Dhour Choueir honoured him in his lifetime, raising a statue in the main square of the village. Charles Debbas, the President of the Republic, Mohamed Jisr, the President of the Chamber of Deputies and several other government ministers were present at the inauguration of this monument.

In 1935, the Municipality of Dhour Choueir went further, naming the main street of the village after Farès Mouchrik.

In 1990, however, under pressure of events and of the local political parties, the statue of Farès Mouchrik was taken down. It is now in the possession of one of his descendants. As to the street, that, too was renamed in 1999 for the same political reasons. It was given the name of a young girl who lost her life during the struggle against the occupying Israeli forces in the south of Lebanon. It may be noted that this last decision has still not been ratified officially by the Lebanese Government.

The Grand Orient of Lebanon

Established: 1934 (legal authorization 1964)

Members: 9 Lodges (4 in Beirut, 5 in Tripoli)

Rite: Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite

Grand Master: Deeb Younes

Chronology

At the end of the seven-year period of tutelage imposed by the National Grand Lodge of Egypt, the 22nd of July, 1930, the Worshipful Grand Masters (*les Vénérable Grands Maîtres*) of the lodges of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine joined and asked the National Grand Lodge of Egypt to grant them their Masonic independence. This request was accepted and as far as Lebanon was concerned, resulted in the establishment of an independent Grand Orient of Lebanon.

On the 30th of October, 1934, to show his great respect for Lebanese Freemasonry, the Grand Master of the National Grand Lodge of Egypt sent his Secretary General, Mohamed Rafaat Bey, to bear decision No. 637 by which he fully recognized the independence of the Grand Orient of Lebanon.

In 1940, after the declaration of the Second World War, the French authorities, in conformity with orders issued by the French Government for all territories under its jurisdiction, ordered the closure of all the lodges in Lebanon whatever Grand Lodges they were answerable to.

At independence in 1943, the Grand Orient of Lebanon, the Grand Lodge of Lebanon and the Syro-Lebanese Grand Lodge resurfaced.

The Grand Orient resumed its activities under the direction of a new Grand Master, Sami el-Solh, who was succeeded by Sélim Bey Turk, Mouhamed al-Bacha Chaabane and Camille Berbéri.

On the 13th of October, 1963, the Lebanese Government recognized the authority of the Grand Orient of Lebanon over all the Masonic Grand Lodges in the country. This decision was confirmed by an official letter (N° 941 of 4 November 1964) from Takeddine el-Solh, the Minister of the Interior. The Minister also authorized an international congress of Freemasonry, to be held in Beirut from the 23rd to the 31st of August, 1965.

Despite this recognition by the Lebanese government, the Grand Orient was never able to extend its authority over the whole of Lebanese Freemasonry.

On the 10th of July, 1969, the Loge des Trois Etoiles resigned from the Grand Orient of Lebanon following administrative problems linked to the way in which the Grand Orient was run. It received authorization from the Supreme Council to work as a Grand Lodge.

The Grand Orient of Lebanon had to stop its activities at the beginning of the war, from 1975 to 1978. Camille Berbéri was Grand Master at the time, and the Sovereign Grand Commander was Moustafa al-Moukadam.

In 1978, Grand Master Habib Roustom, together with the Brothers of the Al-Nabil N° 71 Lodge, reactivated the Grand Orient and installed himself in new premises at Haddath.

In 1980, following contacts between Grand Commander Moustafa al-

Moukadam and the officers of the Al-Nabil Lodge, it was decided that the Grand Orient of Lebanon should be expanded. A large number of Brothers joined as a result of a recruitment and publicity campaign. They organized their first meeting at Hazmieh on the 1st of July, 1980 in the presence of 250 Brothers, under the direction of Rachid Bey el-Solh,²¹ the Grand Master of the Grand Orient, a politician very well known in Lebanon.

Rachid el-Solh, former President of the Council, had to resign from his responsibilities in the Grand Orient because of many attacks by his political opponents, who notably accused him of acting against religion.

In the 1980s, the Grand Orient of Lebanon gave birth to a women's lodge with twenty-five Sisters, all wives of Freemasons. The Worshipful Mistress (*la Vénérable Maîtresse*) of this lodge was Thérèse, the wife of Moustafa al-Moukadam. Among the Sisters of this lodge were:

Viviane, wife of Georges Abi Saleh
Zalfa, wife of Rafic Shérfane
Alice, wife of Farès Raad

1981 saw the expansion of the Grand Orient, which then included sixteen lodges, all practising the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite.

At the Paris conference in 1984, the Grand Orient was represented by its Grand Orator (*Grand Orateur*) Georges Abi Saleh and the Worshipful Grand Master (*Vénérable Grand Maître*) Naji Wehbé. At the end of the conference, letters were addressed to all participants, enjoining them to support the Lebanese cause on their return home. A delegation from the Grand Orient informed the President of the Republic, Amine Gémayel, of its efforts in Paris on behalf of Lebanon.

From 1988, the activity of the Grand Orient began to decline following a quarrel that broke out among the Brothers after the sale of their premises in Hazmieh.

The activities of this Grand Lodge were thenceforward reduced to a minimum because many Brothers left it. Moustafa al-Moukadem remained at the head of the Grand Orient of Lebanon in Beirut with a few Brothers until 1998, when a new election took place. It should, however, be added that in Tripoli a Grand Lodge with Bader Khatib as its Worshipful Grand Master and four symbolic lodges under its jurisdiction continued to function, claiming to be the Grand Orient.

On the 26th of May, 1998, new elections were organized in the premises of the Grand Orient of Tripoli, and the Grand Master Deeb Younes was elected President of the Grand Orient of Lebanon with nine symbolic lodges under its jurisdiction, four in Beirut and five in Tripoli. The head office of the Grand Orient of Lebanon, situated in Tripoli until 1999, was installed at Mkalles in Beirut in the beginning of the year 2000.

In May 1999, new elections were held in Tripoli with a view to a general reorganization of the Grand Orient.

Deeb Younes kept his position as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge. Ghandi al-Hawa was nominated Grand Commander of the Supreme Council. Moustapha al-Moukadem was nominated Grand Honorary Commander of a Grand Council established during this meeting. He died on the eleventh of September, 1999.

The Grand Orient of Lebanon set itself up as the sole legal authority representing Freemasonry in Lebanon. According to the declarations of its representatives, it was to work, with the support of the legal authorities, to unify and reorganize all of Lebanese Freemasonry. At present, however, the Lebanese Government is not yet ready to grapple officially with the problem of Freemasonry, and prefers to retain a prudent *status quo*.

The Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World

Established: 1936
Members: This Grand Lodge has been inactive since 1975
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Last Grand Master Mohamed Ali
Address: Last known address at Haddath

In 1936, two years after the establishment of the Grand Orient and parallel to this event, the Worshipful Grand Master Georges Rizkallah proceeded to establish the Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World, which adopted the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite. It was officially registered with the Ministry of the Interior only in 1943.

Like all the Masonic lodges in Lebanon, it was closed by the French mandatory authorities during the Second World War and did not resume its activities until Lebanon became independent in 1943.

According to its archives, the Worshipful Grand Master the Emir Saïd el-Jazairi succeeded Georges Rizkallah at the head of the Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World. In 1950 he was replaced by Adib el-Ferzly, who was himself succeeded by the Worshipful Grand Master Honeine Kattini, who for many years had occupied the position of General Secretary of this Grand Lodge. Under the direction of Honeine Kattini, the the Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World expanded significantly. He undertook major reforms within the Grand Lodge and toured the European lodges to make the activities of his Grand Lodge in Lebanon known there.

These manoeuvres bore fruit: in 1960, several European Grand Lodges officially recognized the existence and legality of the Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World.

Honeine Kattini was then elected Honorary Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Italy, and President of the Memphis-Mesraïm Rite in the United States, where he was also made an honorary member of the Royal Arch.

When he died in 1970, he was succeeded as Worshipful Grand Master of his lodge by Dr Mohamed Ali el-Roz, who presided until 1975 when, following internal divisions, it split into two branches. One chose Elie Béchir el-Awar as Worshipful Grand Master, and the other elected Mohamed el-Midani.

The Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Arab World was put out of action at the beginning of the Lebanese war, because of the difficulty of getting its members together, separated as they were by the line of demarcation. Daher Dib, one of its Masters, together with some of its members, afterwards established the Grand Lodge of the Cedars.

The Lebanese Grand Lodge

Established: 1939
Members: Unknown
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Antoine Saab

Chronology

The first Grand Lodge in Lebanon was the Lebanese Grand Lodge established in 1939. At the time, its Grand Master was Georges Bey Rizkallah. Most of the national lodges as well as the lodges that worked under the auspices of foreign lodges stemmed from it. Among these lodges, some even kept their original names, sometimes adding another.

In 1988, after the death of Georges Diran Nersi, conflicts broke out within the lodge and were not resolved until the election of the Grand Master Georges Saab on the 23rd of December 1989. Work has now resumed as usual in all the symbolic lodges that hold regular meetings.

The 1988 conflict divided this Grand Lodge into four parts; each departed under the direction of one of the following Grand Masters:

Antoine Yazigie
Jamil Saadé (Unified G.L.)
Antoine Saab (Lebanese G.L.)
Samir Zaghrini

The Lebanese Grand Lodge is recognized by most of the regular lodges in the world. Antoine Saab was nominated Great Hero, Count of Lebanon and the Middle East by the Memphis-Misraïm Rite, the decree being signed by the Great Hero, the Count-General Jean Carlosrie. He is one of the founders of the World Masonic Union for Disciplined Masonry, established in Mexico on the 19th of March, 1995.

The Lebano-Syrian National Grand Lodge

Established: 2 March 1949
Members: This Grand Lodge then had 27 symbolic lodges

Rite: York Rite
 Grand Master: Hanna Abi Rached, then Mohamed Bey al-Baker in 1975, at the beginning of the Lebanese war.
 Since the Lebanese war, this Grand Lodge ceased to exist.

Chronology

The Lebano-Syrian National Grand Lodge had its beginnings in 1943 at the end of the French Mandate over Syrian and Lebanese territory.

A group of Grand Masters, still linked to the National Grand Lodge of Egypt, separated from it to establish the Lebano-Syrian National Grand Lodge.

Of these Grand Masters, the following names are still remembered:

Ahmad Moukhtar Naja, Hussein Laza, Jalal Ahdab, Mohamed Sélim Démachkié, Moustafa Fakhri, Wadih Hanna, and Youssef Naja.

The following lodges, located in Lebanon and Syria, joined this new Grand Lodge:

1- Syrian Lodges:

Omayya Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Moustafa Fakhri
Al-Ittihad Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Moustafa Hajj Yes
Al-Ahrar Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Adib Al Kadissi
Omar Ben Khoutab Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Bahjat Al Masri
Khaled Ben Walid Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Nadim Al Wifaé
Al-Rachid Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Jalal Al Ahdab
Maher Lodge	Damascus	W. M. Chafic Chaker

2- Lebanese Lodges:

Al-Wafaa N° 2 Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Hussein Laza
Al-Istiqlal N° 3 Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Youssef Naja
Al-Wahda N° 4 Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Rached Bilani
Al-Maaref Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Wadih Hanna
Al-Riad N° 9 Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Mohamed Saleh Barakat
Lebanon N° 10 Lodge	Beirut	W. M. Honeine Kattini

Two Supreme Councils were established at once:

One, for the Syrian branch, in Damascus. Its president was Abou al-Kheir al-Kawass. The other, for the Lebanese branch, in Beirut, had Chafic Chaker as its president.

The position of Grand Master of the Lebano-Syrian National Grand Lodge was held successively by Moustafa Fakhri and Mohamed Bey al-Midan.

The Lebano-Syrian National Grand Lodge split in two on the 1st of December, 1946, following an internal quarrel. One part was directed by Béchir el-Awar as Grand Master, the other had Fouad Osseirane as its

Grand Master.

In 1995, the branch that had followed Béchir el-Awar suffered its own upheaval when a part of the lodge, led by Mohamed Bey al-Midan and Abed al-Rehman, seceded.

With the birth of the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) in 1958, and before the refusal of Lebanon to join that union, the Lebano-Syrian Grand Lodge in Syria was closed. Fouad Osseirane, the Grand Master, then took over the direction of the Syrian branch, while the Lebanese branch, directed by Béchir al-Awar, joined the Grand Orient of Lebanon.

It should be noted that several lodges in Syria and in Lebanon maintained their links with the Grand Lodge of Egypt after its dissolution.

The Lebano-African National Grand Orient

Established:	1962
Members:	In abeyance at present
Rite:	Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master:	Fouad Kabalaoui (deceased in 1987)
Observations:	Although its name is still mentioned, this Grand Orient officially ceased its activities in 1987.

Chronology

The mother lodge of England was responsible for the establishment of the National Grand Lodge of Egypt and the Arab World.

The last Grand Master of this lodge was Taha Bey Makhlof, the uncle of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian president.

On the 23rd of December, 1958, Taha Bey Makhlof agreed to sponsor the Lebanese Fouad 409 Lodge, with Fouad Kabalaoui as Worshipful Master. Fouad Kabalaoui founded the Lebano-African National Grand Orient on the 31st of July, 1962, and this in turn gave rise to many symbolic lodges, of which the best known are:

The Fouad N° 409 Lodge	The Chouala Lodge
The Al-Islah Lodge	The Al-Amine Lodge
The Tyre N° 11 Lodge	The Damascus Lodge (working in Syria)

Original documents of the Lebano-African National Grand Orient can still be found in the Grand Lodge of the Reform, also founded by Fouad Kabalaoui.

The Worshipful Master Vartan Kouramajian, who now is a member of the Supreme Council of the Orient of Canaan, was a Brother of the Lebano-African National Grand Orient, as was the Worshipful Master Toufic Trad of the Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge.

This Lebano-African National Grand Lodge officially disappeared from the

list of Grand Lodges active in Lebanon after the death of its Grand Master Fouad Kabalaoui in 1987. The Brothers, however, continue to use the name, although it is considered to be an irregular lodge.

The Three Stars Grand Lodge

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Established: 1967
Members: 6 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Boghos Aramian

Chronology

The Three Stars Grand Lodge was established on the 14th of May, 1967 in Beirut, having evolved from the Three Stars symbolic lodge, which then answered to the Grand Orient of Lebanon. This symbolic lodge obtained Masonic authorization to form a Grand Lodge, as well as legal authorization to operate in Lebanon (N° 280 A.D. of 26/07/1972).

It started with three symbolic men's lodges and one women's lodge. these are:

Lodge N° 1 (Men's lodge, working in Arabic)
Lodge N° 2 (Men's lodge, working in French)
Lodge N° 3 (Men's lodge, working in Armenian)
Lodge N° 4 (Women's lodge, working in Arabic)

The Founders of this Grand Lodge were:

Léon Bayramian, Joseph Karajinian, Wahan Ghazarian, Georges Dilangy, Boghos Hamozian, Mounir Assassa, Astonopolian Aram and Boghos Aramian.

In 1977, the Worshipful Master, Boghos Aramian, was nominated Grand Master in a ceremony presided over by the Sovereign Grand Commander Abdel Majid Mortada; the ceremony took place in Amman in Jordan because of the war. On this occasion Boghos Aramian was received by King Hussein of Jordan, a Brother Mason, who congratulated him on his nomination and on his work in Lebanon and abroad.

Despite events that convulsed the country, several lodges were established during the years of the war, and the Three Stars Grand Lodge continued its Masonic activities under the leadership of Boghos Aramian. The most notable of the lodges established at this time are:

Ararat N°6, Saint John the Baptist N°16 (established in 1994), Isis N°14, Abraham N°17 (established in 1997 mixed and Francophone), Melkart N°9, Hiram N°18 (established in 1998).

The Three Stars Grand Lodge works under the auspices of the Supreme Council for Lebanon and Overseas which, together with the United Supreme Council and the Grand Orient of Lebanon, signed a declaration of common principles on the 7th of July, 1992, in view of a large-scale

reorganization of Lebanese Freemasonry.

The mixed Abraham Lodge is administratively dependent on the Grand Lodge of the Three Stars, which respects its Masonic independence. The objective of the Grand Lodge, broadly open to all faiths, is to²⁷ enlarge itself in order to establish, in the near future, the first Lebanese women's Grand Lodge and the first Lebanese mixed Grand Lodge within the country.

The Three Stars Grand Lodge is the official representative in the Middle East of the Grand College of the Rites of the Supreme Council of the Sons of Haiti of the U.S.A., (Washington State), since the 6th of March, 1988.

A large number of Brothers of the Three Stars Grand Lodge have joined the Universal League of Freemasons (ULF).

The Beit-El Grand Lodge

Established: 1976
Members: 5 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite and Ancient Canaanite Rite
Grand Master: Jamil Najjar

Chronology

The history of this Grand Lodge begins in 1976, when about a dozen Brothers, anxious for a revival, got together to establish a new symbolic lodge called Heliopolis N° 22 Lodge.

At first, this lodge was presided over by the oldest Brother, Edward Gamar, then Jamil Najjar was voted in as Grand Master in regular elections.

In the beginning, this new lodge received help and advice from the Grand Sovereign of the Karibims, Brother Jean Abou Naoum, who decided to found the new Heliopolis Grand Lodge; the first Grand Master was Jamil Najjar.

In March 1988, this Grand Lodge in turn became the Beit-El Grand Lodge, which has remained under the direction of Jamil Najjar as Grand Master.

In 1999 the Beit-El Grand Lodge was still flourishing, with many Brothers in the five symbolic lodges under its jurisdiction, namely:

Heliopolis N° 22 Sanchuniation Meleager N° 7
Hermon Akhenatom N° 1

In addition to its regular Masonic activities, the Beit-El Grand Lodge undertakes many social and medical functions, which are much appreciated locally.

It should also be noted that this Grand Lodge has an important library that contains unique ancient documents concerning the Phoenician and Canaanite origins of Freemasonry.

The Beit-El Grand Lodge maintains many contacts with international Freemasonry. For example, it recently participated in the international congress held in Brazil on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the 'Grand Minas Gerais' with which it signed a pact of amity.

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Currently correspondence with some Australian Brothers is in progress, with a view to establishing a symbolic lodge in Australia working under the jurisdiction of the Beit-El Grand Lodge.

It should be noted that in 1999 as well, the Beit-El Grand Lodge signed a pact of amity with the Three Stars Grand Lodge and that it has subscribed to the Universal League of Freemasons (ULF).

The Sun Grand Lodge

Established: 1972, with the name Universal Van Charity Lodge
Members: 7 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Ohannes Vartabédian

Chronology

The Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon was founded in 1972 by Mardiros Boyadjian, its Grand Master. It was originally an Armenian Grand Lodge and was called the Universal Van of Charity Grand Lodge. It included three Armenian language symbolic lodges. It took the name of Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon in 1973.

The Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon was one of the principal founders of the Orient of Canaan, a Supreme Council that looked after all relations with Grand Lodges internationally.

In 1993, a divergence in points of view between several Grand Lodges drove the Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon to withdraw in order to keep its neutrality.

It then began to make contact with international Grand Lodges which had come into being through pacts of amity with the Italian Grand Orient, the Grand Lodge of Italy, the Brazilian Grand Lodges under the auspices of the Brazilian Masonic Confederation (COMAB), the Grand Orient of Uruguay and the St Anthony of the Laurantides Grand Lodge (Quebec).

The following blue lodges work under the jurisdiction of the Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon:

The Saint John N° 1 Lodge	The Nour Loubnan N° 1 Lodge
The Nour Loubnan N° 3 Lodge	The Van Lodge
The Sevan Lodge	The Lafayette Lodge
The Saint John of the East Lodge	

The Sun Grand Lodge of Lebanon is in the process of integrating the Confederation of United Grand Lodges of Europe.

The Grand Lodge of the Cedars N° 7 and of the Freemasons

Established: 1976
Members: 4 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Raymond Batanian

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Chronology

This Grand Lodge was established in 1976 by the Grand Master Raymond Batanian, who later became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Cedars from 1984 to 1986. It includes four symbolic lodges:

The Ricardos Lodge
The Heliopolis Lodge
The St John Lodge
The Al-Adali Lodge

It joined the Orient of Canaan on the 26th of June, 1986.

The Grand Lodge of the Cedars

The Grand Lodge of the Cedars was founded in 1978 from the fusion of the following lodges:

The Lodge of the Cedars N° 7
The Al-Inkaz Lodge N° 3
The Mount Lebanon Lodge

At the time of its establishment the Grand Lodge of the Cedars moved into the vacant premises of the Grand Lodge of Lebanon and the Arab World. After an election, Daher Dib became the first Grand Master of this Grand Lodge. His successors were Jean Sfeir (1982–1984), Raymond Batanian (1984–1986), and Sélim Abou Chabké (1986–1996). The present Grand Master is Antoine Saleh.

Immediately after it was formed, the Grand Lodge of the Cedars established amicable relations with the Grand Lodge of France and the Supreme Council of France and participated regularly, through the Orient of Canaan, in all the international conferences that brought together the Supreme Councils of Europe, Latin America and Africa every two years.

In 1997, the Grand Lodge of the Cedars concluded an agreement with the Grand Orient of France with a view to an assurance of amity between the two Grand Lodges, which encouraged visits between the Brothers of these Grand Lodges and was the impetus behind many cultural exchanges. This accord still functions.

In 1995, the Supreme Council of the Grand Lodge of the Cedars established a College of Degrees, with the aim of improving the education of the Brothers in the first three degrees. The first president of the college was Georges Nader. In 1998, Roger Haddad succeeded him in this position.

The Symbolic Lodges

At the time it was established, the Grand Lodge of the Cedars consisted of the following symbolic lodges:

The Lodge of the Cedars N° 7	The Nour Horrib Lodge 30
The Adonis N° 1 Lodge	The Acacia N° 3 Lodge
The Mount Lebanon Lodge	The Opera Lodge
The Acacia N° 1 Lodge	The Al-Nahda Lodge
The Tyre N° 1 Lodge	

In 1999 the following symbolic lodges still constituted the Grand Lodge of the Cedars:

The Mount Lebanon Lodge	The Acacia N° 1 Lodge
The Tyre N° 1 Lodge	The Acacia N° 3 Lodge
The Adonis N° 1 Lodge	The Opera Lodge
The Nour Horrib Lodge	The Al-Nahda Lodge
The Al-Horiat Lodge (established in 1995)	

The Grand Lodge of the Cedars organized an international conference in Beirut on the 28th of April, 2000 and brought together the representatives of the Grand Orient of France, the Women's Grand Lodge of France, The Women's Grand Lodge of Belgium and the Grand Lodge of Italy. According to the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Cedars, this Grand Lodge is the only Grand Lodge in Lebanon with the authority to have contacts with the Grand Orient of France. Several other Grand Lodges contest this assertion.

The Solomon Grand Lodge

Established: 1980
Members: This Grand Lodge no longer had any symbolic lodges in 2000
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Elias Hachem

Chronology

This lodge, established in 1980 by Elias Hachem, is still in existence. Its activities, however, are not regular, although it has many members who assemble only for important events.

According to some Lebanese Freemasons, this lodge has preserved a degree of importance despite the reduction in its activities. We were asked to include it because of the symbolic place it still occupies on the scene of Lebanese Freemasonry.

The Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge

Established: 1981
Members: 3 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite

Grand Master: Toufic Trad

Chronology

The Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge was established on the 22nd of March, 1981, during the Lebanese war, by Brothers anxious to contribute to a revival of Lebanese Freemasonry and to help the needy of all faiths throughout the country.

At the time it was established, the Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge consisted of the following symbolic lodges:

Al-Inkaz N° 3	Al-Salam N° 5	Souleiman N° 7
Saint John N° 9	Al-Rabih N° 11	Al-Kanna N° 15
Al-Raja N° 17		

At this time also, the Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge established relations with the following local Grand Lodges:

The Lebano-African Grand Orient
The Lebanese Union Grand Lodge
The Grand Lodge of Lebanon for the Arab World

In 2000, the Al-Inkaz Grand Lodge was still an active lodge, with Toufic Trad as Grand Master. It still had three symbolic lodges.

Abroad, it has been recognized by the Grand Lodge of the Arab World in Jordan.

The Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Reform

Established: 1981
Members: 3 symbolic lodges in 1999
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Vartan Kouramajian

Chronology

The Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Reform was founded in 1981 by the Grand Master Vartan Kouramajian, who was originally the Worshipful Master of the Lodge of the Reform N° 1, which belonged to the Lebano-African National Grand Orient. After the death of Fouad Kobalaoui, the Grand Master of the Lebano-African National Grand Orient, Vartan Kouramajian decided to continue his Masonic activities; during the war, he installed himself in the Christian quarter of the capital, where he founded the Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Reform, which consisted of five symbolic lodges:

The Lodge of the Reform N° 1	The Al-Ikhlâs Lodge N° 2
The Al-Wafaa Lodge N° 3	The Al-Amine Lodge N° 4
The Rafi Lodge N° 5	

Publications

Acacia, edited by the Grand Orient of Canaan and published by the Society for Masonic Studies of Beirut, under the signatures of Antoine Assi and Mohamed al Majzoub.

Rissalat al-Arz al-akbar, Published by the Grand Lodge of the Cedars from 1993. It appears that this publication is now in abeyance.

Al Banaoun (The Masons) 1986–1988

In 2000, the monthly review *Saout al-Noukhat* addressed the entire ensemble of the Freemasons of Lebanon, all tendencies and all rites intermingled.

In 1999, only three symbolic lodges were still active. They are:
The Lodge of the Reform N° 1 The Al-Ikhlâs Lodge N° 2
The Al-Wafaa Lodge N° 3

The Lebanese Grand Lodge of the Reform joined the Supreme Council of the Orient of Canaan on the 1th of November, 1982.

The Majed Loubnan Grand Lodge

Established: 1986
Members: 7 symbolic lodges, of which 6 are now in abeyance
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Jean Sfeir

Chronology

The Majed Loubnan Grand Lodge was established in 1986 by Jean Sfeir, its Grand Master and former Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Cedars, from which he resigned for personal reasons in 1986. From the beginning, the Majed Loubnan Grand Lodge had the following five symbolic lodges:

Adonis Lodge N° 3, Worshipful Master Jean Sfeir
Meliopolis Lodge, Worshipful Master Jamil Najjar
Amir Loubnan Lodge, Worshipful Master Elie Damouni
Beryt Lodge, Worshipful Master Walid Abou Jaoudeh
Al-Horia Lodge, Worshipful Master Chafic Gébara

Until 1991, this lodge used the premises of the Three Stars Grand Lodge for its meetings.

In 1999, this Grand Lodge possessed only one symbolic lodge: the Adonis N° 3 Lodge.

The other lodges are in abeyance.

It may be noted that there is a symbolic Majed Loubnan Lodge in the Sun Grand Lodge.

United Grand Lodge of Lebanon

Established: 2000
Members: 7 symbolic lodges
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Grand Master: Jamil Saadé

Chronology

This Grand Lodge was established on the 8th of March, 2000 by the Grand Master Daher Dib, Grand Commander of the United Supreme Council of Lebanon. After his departure from the Grand Lodge of the Cedars, Daher Dib brought together, from various Masonic *milieux* in Lebanon, a large number of Brothers anxious for a revival (see p. 2-3 in this issue).

NOTES

1 Churchill, Col. [C. H.], *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842–1852*, London, Saunders and Otley, 1853, facsimile edition Reading: Garnet, 1994, 3 vols.

2 It was also known as the Templar Rite because it chose to work with the rite actually called Templar, founded by Baron de Hund and strictly following Templar observance.

3 Count Cagliostro (1743–1795) Italian adventurer. He travelled throughout Europe, was in contact with esoteric Masonic lodges, and had great success in practising the occult sciences in Paris.

4 These Grand Lodges are listed in the order in which they were established.

At the time it was established, the Grand Lodge of the Cedars consisted of 7 blue lodges, all working in Arabic, all still active in 2000. They are:

The Al-Horiya Lodge
The Suleiman Lodge
The Nour Moussa Lodge
The Tyre N° 3 Lodge
The Amir Lebnan Lodge
The Eugarite Lodge

New York Grand Lodge

Rohic Timonian (Grand Secretary)

The Orient of Canaan

A Supreme Council was elected on the 12th of June, 1980, consisting of:

Jean Abou Naoum	Sovereign Grand Commander
Jean Sfeir	Grand Commander (1993–1998)

The United Supreme Council of Lebanon

Established: 13 July 1988
Decree N° 9/10/AD of the Ministry of the Interior
Rite: Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite
Sovereign Grand Commander: Daher Dib

Chronology

This Supreme Council was established on the 13th of July, 1988 by the Grand Masters Daher Dib, Moussa Prince and Karima Chaaya, a Lebanese Sister.

Since its establishment, this Supreme Council has carried out many exchanges with Masonic authorities internationally. The United Supreme Council of Lebanon was selected to organize the sixteenth international Rencontre of the Scottish Jurisdictions in the year 2000 in Lebanon. This event had to be deferred because of the local situation at the time.

On the 8th of May, 2000, the United Supreme Council of Lebanon established the United Grand Lodge of Lebanon as well as a college of rites.

The first women's lodge in Lebanon was founded in 1954, despite all obstacles. It was called the Women's Ideal Grand Lodge because of its ties to the Lebanese Ideal Grand Lodge, established on the 2nd of March, 1949 by Georges Hanna Abi Rached according to the York Rite.