

N.B. The 1786 Constitutions have seldom been published, so the majority of the members of the Ancient and Accepted Rite in England and Wales are unaware of their provisions. These are important as they are the guiding rules which all Supreme Councils throughout the world acknowledge. They start with a long preface which includes the reorganisation of the degrees of the Rite of Perfection and which was given in the last Chapter. Other parts of the preface are given later. Many of the Articles are purely administrative and might appear in any set of masonic regulations. A complete copy of the Articles from the Latin version of the Constitutions is given in Appendix VI.

WE, Frederick, by the Grace of God, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, etc etc etc.

Sovereign Grand Protector, Grand Commander, Grand Master and Protector throughout the world of the very ancient and very respectable Society of Ancient Freemasons, or united Architects, otherwise known as the ORDER of the Royal and Military Free Art of Stonemasons or Freemasonry.

To all the Illustrious and Well-Beloved brethren now present, let us see

Tolerance

Unity

Prosperity

It is clear and undisputable that, faithful to the important obligations imposed upon US in accepting the office of Protector of the very ancient and very respectable Institutions, known in our time under the name of the Society of the Liberal Art of Stonemasons or ORDER OF ANCIENT AND UNITED FREEMASONS, we have dedicated ourselves, as all will know, to cherishing it with our special care.

\* \* \*

New and pressing representations have been addressed to US from

*cont. →*

every side, and have convinced US of the need to impose a powerful obstacle in the way of the spirit of intolerance, sectarianism, schism and anarchy which innovators now seek to introduce among the brethren. Their schemes are nearly ready. They are either imprudent or wrong; presented under false colours; their aims in altering the free art of Freemasonry tend to distract it from its objective and must inevitably cause the disintegration and ruin of the Order. In view of all that is happening in neighbouring kingdoms, we realise that intervention on OUR part has become inevitable.

These reasons, and other causes no less serious, force on US the duty of assembling and uniting all the RITES of SCOTTISH Masonry whose doctrines are, as we know, nearly the same as those of the ancient Institutions which have the same objects and which, being but branches of one and the same tree, only differ in a few words, easy to reconcile.

These RITES are those known by the names of the Ancient Rite, of Heredom or of Hairdom, of The East of Kilwinning, of St Andrew, of The Emperors of the East and West, of the Princes of the Royal Secret or of Perfection, of the Philosophical Rite and finally of The Primitive Rite, the latest of all.

Adopting, therefore, as the foundation of our beneficial reforms, the title of the first of these Rites and the number of degrees in the last, WE now DECLARE them now and for ever united in single ORDER which, professing the Beliefs and pure Doctrines of ancient Freemasonry, includes all the systems of the SCOTTISH ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED RITE.

\* \* \*

And so that the present decree can be faithfully and permanently executed, WE order our Beloved, Valiant and Sublime Knights and Prince Masons to watch that it is carried out.

Given at Our Palace, at Berlin, on the day of the Calends, first of May, the year of Grace 1786, and of our reign the 47th.

Frederick.

**Signature of Frederick the Great. This signature does not appear on any known high degree document.**

## Appendix VI

# THE CONSTITUTIONS OF 1786

*Note* The Latin version of 1834 was translated into French by Charles Laffon de Ladebat. The version below is an English translation of the latter. It may therefore differ slightly in wording from the translation normally found in America, which seems to be a direct translation from the Latin.

UNIVERSI TERRARUM ORBIS SUMMI ARCHITECTONIS  
GLORIA AD INGENIIS.

CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES  
OF  
THE GRAND AND SUPREME COUNCILS  
of  
Grand Inspectors General, Patrons, Chiefs and  
Commissioners  
of  
THE ORDER OF THE 33°.  
and last degree of the Ancient and  
Accepted Scottish Rite  
and  
REGULATIONS  
for the government of all Consistories,  
Councils, Colleges and other Masonic  
bodies under the jurisdiction of the  
aforesaid Councils.

IN THE NAME OF THE VERY HOLY AND GREAT ARCHITECT  
OF THE UNIVERSE.

ORDO

AB

CHAO.

With the approbation, in the presence of and under the auspices  
of His August Majesty FREDERICK (Charles) II, King of Prussia,

Margrave of Brandenburg, etc., Very Puissant Monarch, Grand Protector, Grand Commander etc., of the Order etc., etc., etc.,

The Sovereign Grand Inspectors General in Supreme Council assembled.

Have, after deliberation, sanctioned the following decrees which are, and ever will be, their CONSTITUTIONS, STATUTES AND REGULATIONS for the government of the Consistories and other Masonic Lodges under the jurisdiction of the said Inspectors General.

#### ARTICLE I.

All the articles of the CONSTITUTIONS, Statutes and Regulations laid down in the year 1762 by the nine Commissioners of the Grand Councils of Prince Masons of the Royal Secret, which are not contrary to the present regulations, are retained and will be observed; those which are contrary will be abrogated and considered as if expressly abolished.

#### ARTICLE II.

§ I. The thirty-third DEGREE confers on Masons, who are legally invested with the position, the titles, position, privileges and authority of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the ORDER.

§ II. The particular aim of their mission is to instruct and enlighten their brethren; to institute among them Charity, Unity and Fraternal Love; to maintain correctness in the work of each degree and to ensure that this is observed by all the Members; to ensure respect and, on all occasions, to respect and defend the Tenets, Doctrines, Institutions, Constitutions, Statutes and the Regulations of the ORDER, and especially those of High Masonry, and finally to apply themselves everywhere to works of Peace and Benevolence.

§ III. A meeting of members of this Grade is entitled a COUNCIL OF THE THIRTY-THIRD DEGREE or of Puissant Grand Inspectors General of the ORDER: this Council being composed as follows:

1°. In places correct for the establishment of a Supreme Council of this Degree, the most senior Inspector in rank is herewith authorized to promote another brother to the same dignity, after having assured himself that the latter has truly merited it by his character, his knowledge and the ranks with which he is invested, and he will administer the oath to him.

2°. These two brothers jointly and in the same manner confer the degree on another brother.

§ IV. THE SUPREME COUNCIL will then be constituted.

But no other Candidates will be admitted unless they obtain an

*i.e.  
respect +  
defend,  
no inherent  
Rights  
"to change"*

\* unanimous vote, each member giving his vote aloud, starting with the youngest, that is the most recently joined.

One negative vote among the members deliberating, if the reasons are considered adequate, will reject the candidate. This rule will be observed in all similar cases. \*

### ARTICLE III.

§ I. In the circumstances given above, the two first brethren raised to this degree have the *right* to the first two officers of the SUPREME COUNCIL, that is: the Very Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander, and the Very Illustrious Lieutenant Grand Commander.

§ II. If the first of these officers dies, abdicates or absents himself permanently, he will be replaced by the second Officer who will choose his own successor from among the other Grand Inspectors.

§ III. If the second officer abdicates, dies or absents himself permanently, the first officer will take as his successor another brother of the same rank.

§ IV. The Very Puissant Sovereign will also nominate the Illustrious Minister of State of the Holy Empire, the Illustrious Grand Master of Ceremonies and the Illustrious Captain of the Guard: and he will designate in the same manner, brethren to fill other vacant duties or which become vacant.

### ARTICLE IV.

Every Mason, possessing the necessary qualities and capacity who is raised to this Sublime Degree, will pay in advance, into the hands of the Very Illustrious Treasurer of the Holy Empire, a contribution of *ten gold Fredericks*, or of *ten gold Louis, old money*, or the equivalent in the money of the country.

When a brother is initiated to the thirtieth, thirty-first or thirty-second degree, a sum of the same value and kind will be required from him for each step.

The SUPREME COUNCIL will supervise the administration of these funds and will use them for the benefit of the ORDER. i.e. as Trustees\* for the Order.

### ARTICLE V.

§ I. EACH SUPREME COUNCIL will consist of nine Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the thirty-third degree, of which four at least must profess the dominant religion of the country.

§ II. When the Very Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander and the Lieutenant Grand Commander of the ORDER are present, three

i.e. others  
to be  
christian

members will be enough to compose the SUPREME COUNCIL for the transaction of the business of the ORDER.

§ III. In each great Nation, Kingdom or European Empire, there will only be one SUPREME COUNCIL of this degree.

In the States and Provinces which compose North America [*Amérique Septentrionale*] either on the mainland, or in its islands, there will be two Councils, situated as far as possible from each other.

In the States and Provinces which compose South America [*Amérique Méridionale*] either on the mainland, or in its islands, there will also be two Councils as far as possible from each other.

There will only be one Supreme Council in each Empire, Sovereign State or Kingdom of Asia, Africa, etc., etc. *Australian Chapters pre-1985 holden under Scottish Supreme Council where given option not to have to join post 1985 Aust. Sup. Con.*

#### ARTICLE VI.

The SUPREME COUNCIL does not always exercise its authority directly over Degrees below the seventeenth or *Knight of the East and West*. According to circumstances and situations, it can delegate it, even tacitly; but its right cannot be waived and all the Lodges and all Councils of Perfect Masons, whatever their degree, are hereby required to recognize, in those who have received the thirty-third degree, the authority of the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Order, to respect their prerogatives, to give them the honours to which they are entitled, to obey them and finally to submit with confidence to all the demands they make for the good of the ORDER, in virtue of its laws, of the present Grand Constitutions and the authority delegated to its Inspectors, whether this authority be general or special or even temporary and personal.

#### ARTICLE VII.

EVERY COUNCIL and every Mason of a degree above the sixteenth has the right of appeal to the SUPREME COUNCIL of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General who can allow him to appear before them and be heard in person.

When it concerns an 'affair of honour' between Masons irrespective of degree, the matter will be brought directly before the SUPREME COUNCIL who will decide in the first and last instance [i.e. without appeal ?].

#### ARTICLE VIII.

A Grand Consistory of Prince Masons of the Royal Secret will choose its President from among the holders of the thirty-second degree

\*  
i.e.  
a hearing.  
Full  
inherent  
"natural  
justice"  
appeals.

who compose it; but in every case, the acts of the Grand Consistory will have no authority until they have first been sanctioned by the SUPREME COUNCIL of the thirty-third degree, which, after the death of his August Majesty the King, Very Puissant Monarch and Commander General of the ORDER, will inherit the Supreme Masonic authority and will exercise it throughout the whole of the State, Kingdom or Empire which will have been placed under its jurisdiction.

#### ARTICLE IX.

In countries under the jurisdiction of a SUPREME COUNCIL of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, regularly constituted and *recognized by all other SUPREME COUNCILS*, no Sovereign Grand Inspector General or Deputy Inspector General can exercise his authority unless he has been recognized by the same SUPREME COUNCIL and received its approval.

*i.e. SGIG has no independent authority; other than acting as part of his Supreme Council.*

#### ARTICLE X.

No Deputy Inspector General, even if he has been admitted and received his patent or whether by virtue of the present Constitutions, he is in due time admitted, may confer on anyone the degree of Knight Kadosh or other higher degree, or give patents.

*Powers always limited to my action with full authority of his Supreme Council.*

#### ARTICLE XI.

The degree of *Knight Kadosh*, as well as the thirty-first and thirty-second degrees, will only be conferred on Masons who have been judged worthy, and that in the presence of at least three Sovereign Grand Inspectors General.

#### ARTICLE XII.

When it pleases the Holy and Great Architect of the Universe to call to HIMSELF his August Majesty the King, Very Puissant Sovereign Grand Protector, Commander and True Keeper of the ORDER etc., etc., etc., each SUPREME COUNCIL of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, already regularly constituted and recognized, or who will in due course be constituted and recognized by virtue of these present Statutes will be, by absolute right, legally invested with all the Masonic authority of which his August Majesty is now invested. Each SUPREME COUNCIL will use this authority when it is necessary and wherever it may be, throughout the country placed under its jurisdiction; and if, for reasons of illegality, it is necessary to protest, whether about Patents or the powers given to Deputy Inspectors

General, or on any other subject, a report will be sent to all the SUPREME COUNCILS of the two hemispheres.

### ARTICLE XIII.

§ I. Every SUPREME COUNCIL of the thirty-third Degree can delegate one or more of the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the ORDER who belong to it, to found, constitute and establish a COUNCIL of the same degree in all the countries referred to in the present Statutes, on condition that they will obey punctiliously what is laid down in the third paragraph of Article II above, as well as in other parts of the present Constitutions.

§ II. The SUPREME COUNCIL can also give power to its Deputies to issue patents to Deputy Inspectors General, who must at least have regularly received all the degrees possessed by a Knight Kadosh, delegating each part of their supreme authority as may be necessary to constitute, direct and supervise Lodges and Councils from the fourth to the twenty-ninth degree inclusive *in countries where there are no other lodges or Councils of the Sublime Degree*, legally constituted.

§ III. The manuscript ritual of the Sublime Degrees will only be entrusted to the two senior officers in each COUNCIL, or to a brother charged with constituting a Council of the same degree in another country.

### ARTICLE XIV.

In all masonic ceremonies of the Sublime Degrees and in every solemn procession of Masons possessing these degrees, the SUPREME COUNCIL will walk last and the two first officers will follow after all the other members, being immediately preceded by a great Standard and the Sword of State (*Glaive*) of the ORDER.

### ARTICLE XV.

§ I. A SUPREME COUNCIL must meet regularly during the first three days of each third new moon. It will meet more often if the business of the ORDER requires it or if there is an urgency.

§ II. In addition to the solemn feasts of the ORDER, the SUPREME COUNCIL will have three special ones each year: on the Calends (first day) of October, the 27th of December and the Calends (first day) of May.

### ARTICLE XVI.

§ I. In order to be recognized and to enjoy the privileges attached to the thirty-third degree, each Sovereign Grand Inspector General will be provided with Patents and credentials of which an example can be

*i.e. at least quarterly not annually.*



found in the ritual of the Degree. These letters will be given to him on condition that he pays into the Treasury of the Holy Empire the sum which each SUPREME COUNCIL will decide for its jurisdiction, as soon as it is constituted. The said Sovereign Grand Inspector General will also pay a Frederick or a Louis, ancient money, or the equivalent in the coin of the country, to the Illustrious Secretary as payment for his work, for sending the above-mentioned letters and for affixing the seal.

§ II. Every Sovereign Grand Inspector General will keep, in addition, a Register of his actions: each page of this will be numbered, the first and last page being so marked and initialled to prove his identity. The Grand Constitutions, the Statutes and the General Regulations of the sublime Art of Freemasonry will be inscribed in this Register.

The Inspector will be held responsible for entering all his actions as they occur, or risk repudiation or even suspension.

Deputy Inspectors General are required to do the same or incur the same penalties.

§ III. They will show each other their Registers and their Patents, and they will inform each other of the places where they are both known. (*Mutuellement reconnus*)

#### ARTICLE XVII.

A majority of votes is necessary to legalize the actions of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, in places where there is a SUPREME COUNCIL of the thirty-third degree legally constituted and recognized. In consequence, in a country under a SUPREME COUNCIL, no single one of these Inspectors can act on his own authority, at least not without having obtained the authority of the said SUPREME COUNCIL, and in the case of an Inspector belonging to another Jurisdiction, at least of having been recognized by a declaration, to which is applied the name of EXEQUATUR.

ie. by  
unanimous  
vote - in  
Australian  
Regulations.

{Contrary to  
craft traditions}

#### ARTICLE XVIII.

All the money received to meet the expenses—*that is to say the fees of candidates (Receptions)*—and which are collected to cover the initiation expenses of the Degrees above the sixteenth up to and including the thirty-third, will be paid into the Treasury of the Holy Empire to the custody of the Presidents and Treasurers of the Councils and of the Sublime Lodges of those Degrees, as well as to the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, of their Deputies, of the Illustrious Secretary and Illustrious Treasurer of the Holy Empire.

ie. held in  
Trust for  
the lodges/  
chap. am.

i.e. Full Fiduciary -  
Trustee Date  
to account to  
Lodges/Chapter  
annually.

The SUPREME COUNCIL will regulate and supervise the administration and use of these sums. It will render each year a faithful and correct account and will ensure that this is brought to the notice of the Lodge under it.

ORDERED, MADE and APPROVED in *Grand* and SUPREME COUNCIL of the thirty-third Degree, regularly constituted, convoked and assembled, with the approbation and in the presence of His Very August Majesty, Frederick, second of that name, by the Grace of God, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, etc., etc., etc., Very Puissant Monarch, Grand Protector, Grand Commander, Universal Grand Master and True Keeper of the Order.

The day of Calends—first of May A.L. 5786 and of the Christian era, 1786.

(Signed)

:	(?)	:	Stark	:	(?)
:	(?)	:	H. Willhelm	:	D'Esterno
:	(?)	:	Woellner	:	

APPROVED and given at our Royal Residence at Berlin, the day of the Calends—first May, year of Grace 1786, and of our reign the 47th.

Seal

Signed Frederick.

Note The signatures shown as (?) were reported as no longer legible.

Signature of Frederick the Great. This signature does not appear on any known high degree document.