

## UNDERSTANDING SYMBOLIC AND MASONIC HISTORICAL GARDENS: NEW INSIGHTS INTO A NEGLECTED CATEGORY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

*Andréa A. Kroon / Jan A.M. Snoek*

The Schwetzingen castle and garden in Germany are viewed as an important cultural and historical landmark on both a national and international level. Efforts to have the castle and gardens formally recognized as protected cultural heritage required historical research in 2005. Existing literature on the garden already hinted at some form of masonic symbolism being present, but in the past art and garden historians had not been able to fully identify it or agree on its meaning. The cross-disciplinary research carried out by art historians and academic experts on western esotericism and freemasonry in support of the preservation campaign in 2005 however, revealed that the Schwetzingen garden was executed according to a remarkable and intricate symbolic design in which masonic iconography was richly and purposefully applied. The site could be identified as one of the oldest and best preserved masonic gardens in Europe, which illustrates the social, cultural and religious history of Germany. As one of the most important western esoteric landmarks on an international level it definitely deserves a protected status, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

The 'hidden' symbolism in the garden, which is discussed in several articles in this volume, would have been clear to 18<sup>th</sup> century visitors. They were accustomed to thinking in symbols and reading visual clues in the landscape, a skill that most of today's visitors no longer possess. The very fact that this skill has been lost, contributed to many misinterpretations and omissions in academic research concerning not only the Schwetzingen garden, but also many other historical gardens in Europe. For the editors of this volume the case study of the Schwetzingen garden was an incentive to organize a conference on the subject of symbolism in 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens. The conference, the papers of which are collected in this volume, aimed to clarify common misinterpretations and stimulate cross-disciplinary research and international co-operation between experts in the field of religious studies, western esotericism, iconography, art history and garden design.

### *Masonic symbolism as a decorative element*

Many scholars and students stumble upon freemasonry in their research of a historical garden or site, but are unfamiliar with the history of this movement or the results of recent research into this topic within religious studies. Therefore, a basic introduction into the subject should not be omitted from this volume.

Freemasonry crossed the Channel from Great Britain in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Freemasons were organized in local clubs, called lodges, each with a democratically chosen chairman, the Master of the Lodge, and a national board of representatives, the Grand Lodge. A candidate was initiated in the degrees (= initiation levels) of Entered Apprentice, Fellow of the Craft and Master Mason, usually over a period of several years.<sup>1</sup> The initiation rituals took place in an enclosed space, which was called lodge, temple or workplace.<sup>2</sup> As freemasonry developed into a mainstream social organization during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it produced a distinct visual language consisting of both symbols and narrative scenes relating to the masonic ritual.

Building symbolism is a central theme in the rituals of freemasonry. For instance, a candidate is symbolized by a rough stone, which needs to be shaped into a perfect cube. The perfectly cubic stone is used in the symbolic building of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 5-9.9; 2 Chron. 2-7), the temple of living stones (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:1-10). Building tools, such as the compass and square, are also given a symbolic meaning within that context. Next to building symbolism, light- and center-symbolism are also applied, as well as symbolism based on the Old and New Testament. This reflects the importance of the Bible to western society at the time freemasonry developed.

Masonic iconography was first applied to the illustrations of ritual texts and the design of officers' jewels. The earliest lodges met in rented rooms in pubs and clubs, which were furnished and decorated for each meeting. Therefore this decoration had to be mobile. As the number of members grew, this allowed the accumulation of capital through membership fees, and by 1800 many lodges could afford to rent or built their own buildings. This in turn allowed for a more permanent decoration of the lodge. Buildings were decorated with architectural sculpture, wall and ceiling paintings, and works of art, all depicting allegories of masonic virtues or symbols related to the ritual.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century Freemasons gradually started to use personal objects which were subtly decorated with masonic symbols, such as pipes and cigarette cases. These could be shown within the closed environment of the lodge, but also within an intimate circle in the 'profane' world, where the owner wanted to identify himself as a mason. By 1800 it was socially

---

<sup>1</sup> The development of masonic rituals and degrees is a complex history in itself, which cannot be discussed within the limits of this article. See for instance Vibert 1925-1926 and more recent publications such as: Bernheim 1998, Mollier 2004, Noël 2002, Snoek 2002, Snoek 2003a, Snoek 2003b, Snoek 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'lodge' is used to name a local organization of freemasons, as well as their building and the room within the building, where rituals take place. Some scholars consider the use of the term 'temple' incorrect, because it suggests a consecration of the space or its use as place of religious worship, which is not consistent with the practice of freemasons.

accepted and even fashionable to be a member of a lodge. A wide range of domestic and decorative objects was now decorated with masonic symbols, ranging from elegant dinner services to fire screens.

For men like Prince ('Kurfürst') Carl Theodor and the architects in his employment, applying masonic symbolism to the Schwetzingen garden design would have been a logical and accepted practice. It was a way of identifying themselves as educated, intelligent, sophisticated and modern men, and subtly conveying their membership of a lodge to others. The garden design offered an intellectual challenge or new insight to visitors, most of whom would have at least recognized general biblical, mythological and allegorical references, while many initiates would have also recognized the more subtle clues left by their 'brethren'. Today's visitors are much less equipped to meet this challenge, because they are unfamiliar with the symbolism that was fashionable during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Iconography of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees***

The ritual of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree or Master Mason evolves around the myth of Hiram Abiff, who (according to masonic legend) was the overseer of the building works of Solomon's Temple and met with a violent death. The Hiramic myth is probably inspired by the biblical figure of Hiram, the copper worker, who was sent to king Solomon by his namesake, king Hiram of Tyrus, to assist in the building works (1 Kings 7:13-45; 2 Chron. 2-4). The ritual of the degree of Master Mason is in fact a reenactment of the Hiramic myth, which involves the symbolic death and rebirth of the candidate.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the interior of the masonic lodge was decorated as a stage for the reenactment of the Hiramic and other myths. The wall and ceiling decorations served as a decor, the furniture and ritual objects as props, and ritual clothing and regalia as costumes. Early manuscript rituals show that the placement of furniture and the decoration of the lodge developed into a fixed pattern. Every object had its own place and symbolic meaning during the initiation ceremony. As can be seen in a series of seven engravings *Assemblée des Francs-Maçons pour la réception des Maîtres* (1745), the action centered around the tracing board (fig. 1).

A tracing board is a depiction of the most important symbols of the particular masonic degree. It was supposed to be drawn on the floor and destroyed after each ceremony, but for convenience sake a permanent version was often used, such as a painting or tapestry. Other essential elements in the setting are the three candles around the tracing board, which symbolize the masonic triad Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The chair of the Master of the Lodge is located in the (symbolical) east of the lodge. In front of him is a small table with a Bible, square and compasses, which had the function of an altar. Later, a separate altar was placed between the table of the Master of the Lodge and the Tracing Board. The columns with the

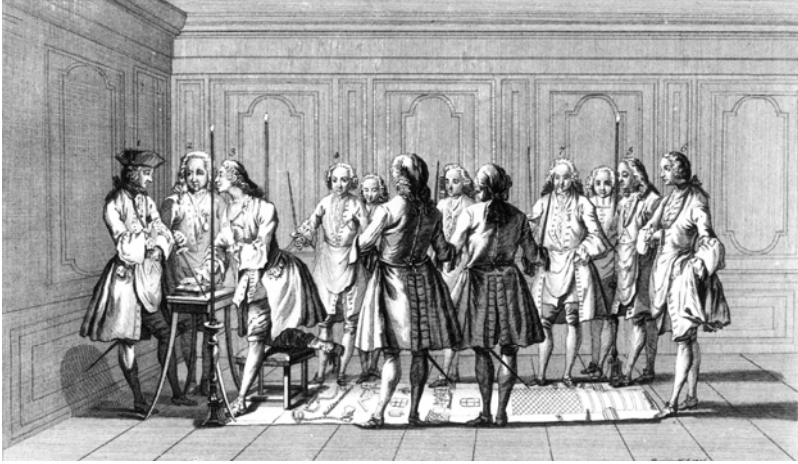


Fig. 1: A candidate taking the oath during his reception as a freemason, copper engraving from the series by Johann Martin Bernigeroth, *Assemblée des Francs-Maçons pour la Réception des Apprentifs*, 1745.

initials J and B, which had originally only been depicted on tracing boards, somehow materialized into real columns at the entrance of the lodge. These represented the columns in front of Solomon's Temple: *Jachin* on the right and *Boaz* on the left.<sup>3</sup>

Illustrations of tracing boards for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree appeared in manuscript rituals, as well as 18<sup>th</sup> century printed 'exposures' of freemasonry (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> The tracing boards of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree commonly depict the two columns J and B with a staircase of seven steps between them; a mosaic pavement; a square, compasses, level and plumb-line; a rough stone, a perfect ashlar and a tracing board; a blazing star, a cord with knots, and three windows; the sun and the moon. The tracing board of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree commonly depicts a coffin, skull and crossbones, and a sprig of acacia, on the one hand references to the death of Hiram Abiff, and on the other to immortality. The images reproduced in these exposures, as well as the later ritual texts published by different masonic organizations, formed the basis of the masonic iconography that was also applied to decorative schemes in art, architecture and design. Many architects and artists, who were members of a lodge, were inspired by such

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 7:21; 2 Chron. 3:17.

<sup>4</sup> For example *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi* (1745), *La Désolation des Entrepreneurs Modernes du Temple de Jerusalem* (1747) or *Le Maçon Démasqué* (1751).

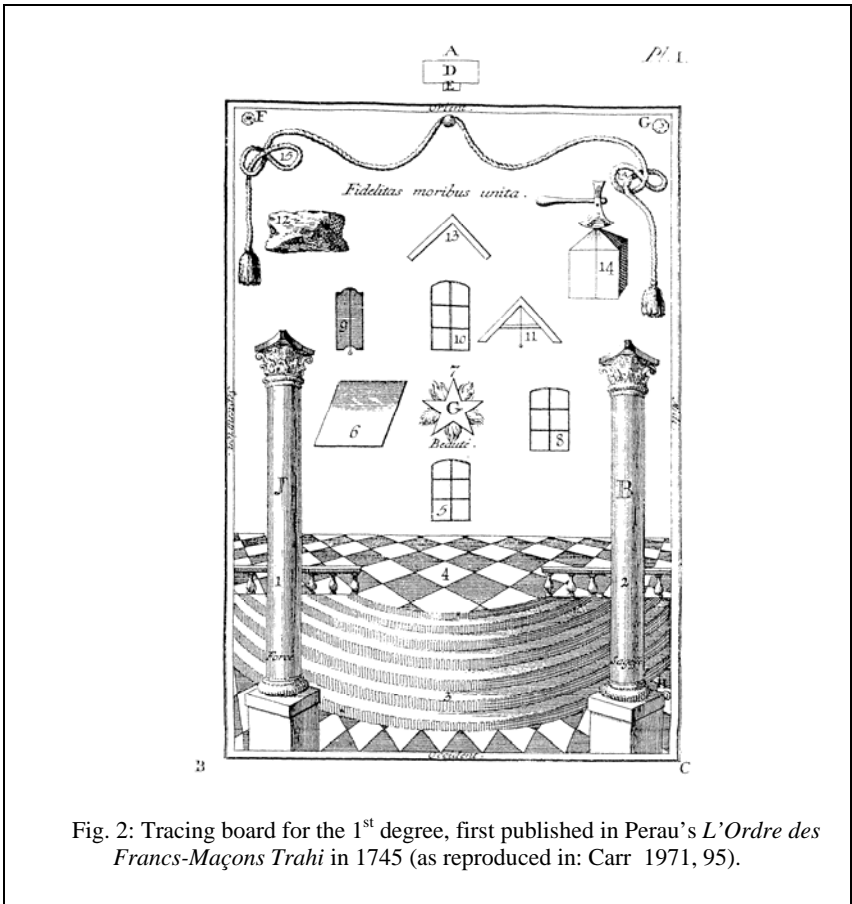


Fig. 2: Tracing board for the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, first published in Perau's *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi* in 1745 (as reproduced in: Carr 1971, 95).

images when working on private or public commissions. These illustrations were so widely spread in Europe and its overseas colonies that they even appear on porcelain objects from China and lacquer ware from Japan imported around 1800.

Some symbols, such as the 'blazing' ('flaming') five-pointed star, which is found in the Schwetzingen Mosque, are exclusive to freemasonry. But many others, such as the sun, moon and stars, are universal in meaning and clearly predate the development of masonic iconography. They should not be interpreted as a 'clue' for masonic influence when found individually. It is the combination of specific symbols reminiscent of those on a tracing board and elements from the ritual that can be an important clue to the masonic connotations of a design.

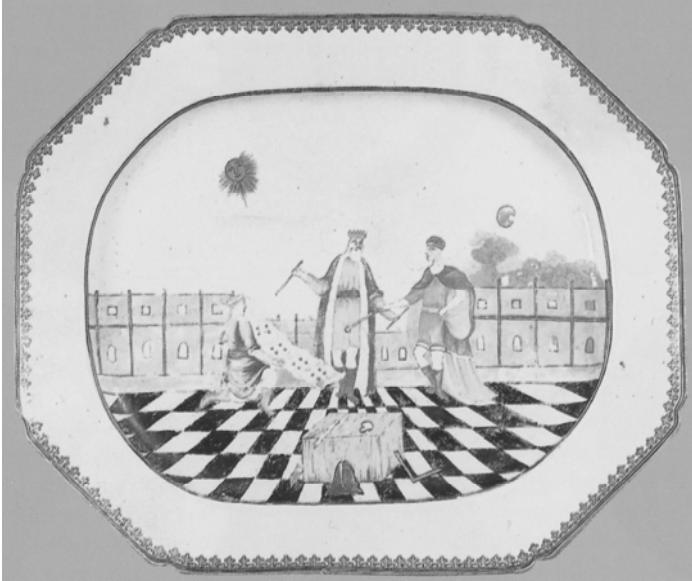


Fig. 3.a: Porcelain plate, exported from China in the 1760's, decorated with a variation on the theme of *Salomon inspecting the building plan*. Collection Grand Loge de France, Paris (as reproduced on a postcard).



Fig. 3.b: Tympanon of the temple of Minerva in the Schwetzingen garden, relief by Franz Conrad Linck (1730 -1793), ca. 1769, detail (as reproduced in: Fuchs & Reisinger 2001, 129).

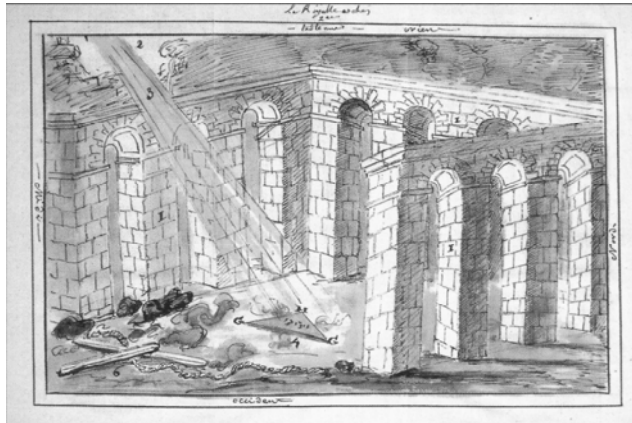


Fig. 4: Lodge interior for the degree of Royal Arch as depicted in manuscript *Maçonnerie des Hommes*. 18<sup>th</sup> century. Collection C.M.C. 'Prins Frederik', The Hague (as reproduced in: De Graaf e.a. 1996, 77).

Just one example of how a narrative scene with a masonic context could easily translate into a more general decorative scheme, is *Salomon inspecting the building plan for the temple*, a theme, first depicted in an illustration of a German book from 1731, which can be found on 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese export porcelain (fig. 3.a). A variation of this theme, which could still be recognised by Masons, is *Minerva inspecting the building plan* (for the garden?), found on the tympanum of the Minerva temple in the Schwetzingen garden (fig. 3.b).

### ***Iconography of the higher degrees***

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries many other masonic degrees developed: the so-called 'higher' degrees, which offered a deeper insight or follow-up to the symbolism of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. Some became popular and were formally incorporated into ritual systems (called 'Rites'), others were soon abandoned. Most of these 'higher' degrees dealt with the mythical events after the death of Hiram, and were also based on (Biblical) construction stories: the building and destruction of Solomon's temple, the recovery of the Master's Word in the debris, the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubabel, or the death, resurrection and assention of Christ (who's body is referred to as a temple in John 2:21). By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ritual handbooks were printed by various masonic organizations, which offered instructions

on the ritual, regalia and decoration of the lodge for each degree.<sup>5</sup> Some of these designs depict temple ruins (fig. 4), grottos, landscapes and open fires that were meant to be built as scenery in the lodge room. The illustrations and descriptions in these handbooks contributed to the already vast masonic iconography, and formed the inspiration for many follies in gardens with a masonic theme.

### *Common misunderstandings*

During the process of producing this volume, a number of things emerged. In the first place, many of the authors expressed that they felt rather incompetent to discuss the theme of the conference—regardless of their expertise in various relevant fields of study—because so far masonic gardens have hardly been the subject of academic study, and thus there exists almost no relevant literature, no body of reference. For one of our intended authors it was in the end even a reason to withdraw, which is regrettable because this results in the absence of the Netherlands in our overview of the masonic gardens in Europe. Unfortunately the argument is justified and no doubt the result of the lack of attention the symbolism of esoteric movements has received in the academic world in the past. The foundation of academic chairs for the study of western esotericism and freemasonry (see the second Appendix) has initiated a change rather recently, but it will probably take some time before students in such disciplines as art history will be trained equally thoroughly in esoteric symbolism as they are in Christian symbolism.

Also, the symbolism possibly present in the images described by the authors in this volume, was not always recognised. For example, Cristina Ruggero describes the garden designed for the society of the ‘Arcadian shepherds’ in Rome and writes: “Auf jedem Niveau sind dann abwechselnd ein oder zwei Brunnen angebracht”. When we look at the picture concerned, however, it turns out to be five springs, arranged in the form of the five dots on the corresponding side of a dice: four in a square and one in the centre, a form which in the 18th century was related to the five wounds of Christ, found as such also in e.g. the garden in Schwetzingen.

Existing literature does offer a large number of descriptions of (elements of) historical gardens, but most of them just do not mention the esoteric elements which are to be found in quite a number of them (probably because the authors simply did not recognise them), let alone provide an informed interpretation or explanation. Most publications which dare to give such explanations present extremely speculative theories and show a lack of basic knowledge of the symbolism of the esoteric movement

---

<sup>5</sup> For example *Le Régulateur du Maçon* (1801); *Le Régulateur des Chevaliers Maçons* [1801]; [Vuillaume]: *Manuel Maçonnique, ou Tailleur des divers Rites de Maçonnerie*, Paris 1820; E.-F. Bazot: *Le Tailleur-Expert*, Paris 1836.



involved. Uncritical copying of the few statements which have been made with some firmness in the past, has resulted in the popping up of similar statements in many publications, although hardly any author succeeded in verifying them.

An example is the claim that gardens with esoteric symbolism have been used for the practice of rituals. Such a statement can be found in many publications and therefore many authors will be inclined to quote them, assuming it is reliable information. The editors of this volume know of no primary sources documenting beyond doubt that any esoteric garden has ever been used for ritual practices – other than just social festivities, such as a festive board or a ball. But that could (and would) take place in any nice and large enough garden. When initiation rituals were performed at an aristocratic home (which was certainly done during the 18th century), they seem to have been practised in the first place in a convenient room in the main building (the castle or its equivalent), not in the garden or in one of its ‘follies’. Such a room had no need for any specific symbolism, because as long as sufficient space was available, the necessary attributes could be brought in easily. In general, therefore, the symbolism in these gardens seems to have a rather different function, namely to evoke memories of the initiation experience which the intended observer had previously lived. This does not exclude that initiation rituals have ever been performed in a garden or a ‘fabrique’ (indeed, quite a number of these charming buildings *could* well have been used for it, and it is conceivable that in the future evidence will be found that some gardens were actually used for it – this cannot be dismissed beforehand, and since human beings tend to do everything which is possible, it is indeed not unlikely). However, as long as no unambiguous evidence is available, it should not be excluded that these sites were *not* used for this purpose. In this and similar situations, true scholarship is having the courage to admit that, at least for the moment, one simply does not know.

Another issue is the scope of esoteric currents involved. As it turns out, Freemasonry is in fact the only significant movement which has given rise to gardens with esoteric symbolism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, Freemasonry has many forms. Some movements – such as the Gold und Rosenkreuzer (with their alchemical inclination) and the Illuminati (with their enlightenment orientation) – are by non-specialists often regarded as non-masonic, whereas in fact they are. The Gold und Rosenkreuzer were originally an independent movement, but in their rules it was stipulated that they had to reform their Order every 10 years. At one of these occasions, either in 1757 or 1767, it was transformed into a masonic high degree system, and it is in this form that it exercised influence on symbolism in gardens. The Illuminati, founded in 1776, were linked to a masonic lodge in 1779, which was founded by the Grand Lodge “Royal York” in Berlin and was then made independent by Adam Weishaupt, Grand Master of the

Illuminati. The following year the Order won the experienced Freemason Adolph Knigge, who created for it the most complicated high degree system ever formulated. It was in this form that the Illuminati turned out to be attractive for many German Freemasons, especially those who, after the degree system of the Strict Observance had been replaced by the French Martinist 'Rectified Scottish Rite' (RSR) at the Convent of Wilhelmsbad in 1782, searched for an alternative masonic Order, because they did not feel attracted to the new system. Illuminati, being freemasons, would understand the symbolism in masonic gardens.

A group of masonic systems which is often overlooked is that of Orders which initiated not only men but (also or only) women, such as the Order of the Mopses or the Adoption lodges. The Mopses were in the 1740s and 1750s a rival system to the usual masonic lodges, whereas the Adoption lodges operated within the masonic system proper. Both systems, however, had each their own symbolism. And since several women who designed masonic gardens (for example in Poland, see e.g. the contributions by Curl and Michalska) were themselves members of such lodges, this aspect must be taken into account when we interpret them.

This raises the issue of the diversity of masonic symbolism. There are some symbols which are found in many or even all masonic systems, but there are also those which are specific to particular degrees of particular systems. For example: a symbol which is found in all masonic systems is the Temple of Solomon with its characteristic attributes, such as the two columns Jachin and Boaz and the stairs of seven steps between them, and the 'mosaic pavement' – often in the form of light and dark square tiles. To the symbols found in gardens, which are much more specific, belong for example the broken column (to be found in the fourth degree – Scots Master – of the Strict Observance and the Rectified Scottish Rite), the two crossed broken columns Jachin and Boaz in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross (in several other Scots Master degrees), the Grotto (in the fourth degree – Elected Master – of the French Rite, as well as the fourth or Scots Master degree of the Strict Observance and the Rectified Scottish Rite). Therefore it is important when interpreting symbols in such gardens, to identify the masonic system (Rite) involved. What complicates the matter even further is that many masons were members of more than one Rite and would combine, for example, chivalric symbolism of the Strict Observance with alchemical symbolism of the Gold und Rosenkreuzer.

On the other hand, this diversity may allow us to identify the system(s) to which a particular garden owner may have belonged to, if this is not already known in advance. For this is not always the case. Especially in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there must have been a rather large number of masons of whose membership we have no documentary evidence, especially among those aristocrats who were initiated in private lodges of family or friends. Yet, it is inconceivable that such expensive possessions as

symbolic gardens would have been created without the person paying for it having any understanding of what was represented there. It seems equally unlikely that a landscape architect was able to apply complex masonic iconography without being familiar with its meaning and context. We must therefore assume that masonic gardens were created by masons. In our opinion one is justified to interpret a garden as masonic in at least three situations:

- 1) if from original documents the explicitly masonic intentions are known with which the garden was designed;
- 2) if it is known that the owner and/or architect of the garden was a Freemason (in which case one should be careful, however, because a Freemason does not have to include masonic symbolism in his garden); and
- 3) if the garden is so obviously enriched with masonic symbolism that one cannot understand its design other than by accepting that its creators (the owner and the architect) were so intimately acquainted with such symbolism that they must have been Freemasons themselves (e.g. in the case of Schwetzingen).

One should be aware, however, that symbolism in gardens is a very general phenomenon, and non-masonic symbolism can be found in many 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens. Furthermore, the same object (say a Chinese bridge) may be just practical, have a general symbolic meaning (connecting opposites), have a specific but non-masonic meaning (such as representing Asia in a garden which wants to be a micro-cosmos), or it may be justified to interpret it from a masonic point of view (for example in the context of the sixth degree of the French Rite: the Knight of the Sword and the East, where it stands for the bridge on the way from Babylon – the other world, to Jerusalem – this world), depending on what symbolism is found in the rest of the garden. Also all these meanings do not exclude each other, they may well have been layered and intended to be read simultaneously: it is never either one or the other, but always the one as well as the other. Yet, if there is no other indication that a garden is intended to be interpreted from a masonic perspective, such a bridge, for example, on its own can not be interpreted as a masonic symbol either. In short: one ought to be careful not to over-interpret elements seen in the gardens one investigates.

### ***The contributions***

This volume opens with a contribution by James Stevens Curl, who gives an overview of symbolism in gardens from the time of the Romans – such as the garden of the *Villa Adriana* at Tibur (Tivoli) of the Emperor Hadrian (117-138) – until the late 18th and early 19th century. Innovative in this contribution is above all the attention which the author pays to the relation

between England's historical development and the creation of the 'English' garden style in the early 18th century, supported by examples of numerous gardens in England. A novelty is also the recognition of the influence of 'Ossianic' references and imagery in the masonic gardens in Poland, in the section on *Arcadia*. Furthermore two German gardens – at Wörlitz and above all Schwetzingen – are discussed extensively.

Michael Symes analyses of one of the major groups of symbols found in many gardens of the 18th century, namely those related to death and melancholy. It includes such items as tombs, a representation of Philemon and Baucis, a hermitage, or ruins. These symbols are not restricted to masonic gardens, but especially during the Romantic period the accent of the third or Master degree shifted towards death, and masonic gardens would follow this shift.

Caroline Holmes introduces the symbolism of plants and planting in eighteenth century gardens. Obviously this symbolism, broadly related to classical and Christian texts, was neither restricted to, nor excluded by masonic gardens. So far it seems that no publication exists which attempts to interpret the symbolism of plants in masonic gardens, which therefore remains for the moment a desideratum. It is obvious, however, that in gardens related to degrees (such as the 7th degree of the French Rite) and orders (especially the Gold und Rosenkreuzer) in which the central symbol was a Rose-Cross (a cross with a rose on it) the rose would also be used to refer to this symbol. And since Holmes concludes that "Key to much of this understanding [of symbolism of plants] is metamorphosis with its direct parallel in transfiguration", the applicability for expressing masonic initiatory themes is clear.

The architect Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736) is the central artist in Cristina Ruggero's contribution. He designed symbolic gardens, filled with statues, 'fabriques' and other objects, which were not implemented as such, but his drawings clearly influenced later actual gardens. Ruggero writes: "Unter den verschiedenen Bautypen heben sich kulissenartig Tempelfronten, Monopteroi, Pyramiden, Mausoleen, Mäuerchen, Brunnen, Obeliskten, Reste von Hallen, Triumphbögen, Treppenanlagen ab, die zu undefinierten, offenen Gebäuden aufsteigen, Brücken und Schiffe, bemooste Architektur- und Dekorationsteile; manchmal finden sich auch Architekturkulissen für Gärten und Grottenblicke. Im Vordergrund beleben diese ‚capricci‘ auf dem Boden willkürlich verteilte Säulenschäfte, Bruchteile von Kapitellen, Architraven oder anderen Baugliedern sowie gezielt aufgestellte Reiterstatuen auf Podesten, Sarkophage auf Sockeln, Vasen, Urnen, Rüstungen, Trophäen, Kohlebecken, Masken, Sphingen, Löwen, Elefanten, Krokodile und Delphine". Anyone familiar with illustrations of masonic ritual manuscripts from the 18th century will at once recognise much of it in this text. Besides, he was a member of several societies, such as the 'Arcadian shepherds' in Rome. There is no documentary evidence that he

was a Freemason himself. But around 1719-1720, he travelled to London where he could have come into contact with the masonic movement and two albums with his drawings were made for the important Freemason Lord Burlington (1729/30) and the esoterist August the Strong, King of Poland (1732).

After these general introductions – none of which is dedicated to one country, let alone one specific garden – follow three contributions on the garden in Schwetzingen, created between 1748 and 1795 for Carl Theodor, Prince (Kurfürst) of the Palatinate, by Nicolas de Pigage. Whereas in other gardens on the continent (as opposed to England, but also Norway – see Dietze), usually the older ‘French’ formal garden was demolished when an ‘English’ garden was put in its place, at Schwetzingen the ‘French’ garden was designed at a time when the ‘English’ type was already well-known, a first ‘fabrique’ (the Minerva temple) was built in it, and when eventually an ‘English’ garden was implemented in Schwetzingen, it was added to the ‘French’ one in such a way as made perfect sense of the lay-out of the entire garden.

Monika Scholl takes two examples from this extremely rich garden to demonstrate that the reproach often made to Carl Theodor, that he just bought what he could acquire cheap to fill the garden with it, without much of a plan behind it, is based on a fundamental misconception. As it turns out, there is, quite on the contrary, a deliberate and very complicated masterplan, soon after the end of the 18th century already incomprehensible, governing the entire garden. Carl Theodor did buy good quality items if he could acquire them relatively cheap, but only if they fitted well into the garden plan.

This theme is then taken up by Jan Snoek who gives some further examples of the underlying plan, or rather mutually related underlying plans. On the one hand different structures in the lay-out of the garden are related to different forms of symbolism involved, including Christian-mystical, masonic, and power symbolism. On the other hand, the different ‘fabriques’ in the ‘English’ part of the garden are shown to not only have each its own layers of meaning, but also all together turn out to represent a process which can be read as dawn – day – evening – night, or as birth – life – death – eternal life, or again as initiatory rebirth / baptism – the life of the initiate – dying with Christ – eternal bliss, depending on the degree of understanding of the observer.

Finally, Udo Simon describes the Arabic texts, present at the walls of the ‘mosque’. Most are copied from collections of Arabic proverbs published by western scholars in the 17th and 18th century. However, the vast majority of the texts in the ‘mosque’ are of a general ethical nature, not related to any religion in particular, and not specifically Koranic or Islamic. Simon concludes: “Unverkennbar ist die Tendenz, eine Elite der Tugendhaften und nach Weisheit Strebenden anzusprechen und

heranzubilden. Die Beschäftigung mit Sprichwörtern des Orients ... erreichte im Zuge der Aufklärung, die nach alle Kulturen verbindenden Quellen der Weisheit suchte, einen Höhepunkt”.

The largest section of the volume describes masonic gardens throughout Europe. It gives examples of masonic gardens in Italy (in particular Venice; by Patrizia Granziera), Belgium (Schönenberg, the Royal Palace at Laeken; by Wim Oers), Norway (by Annegreth Dietze), Denmark (Louisenlund, Jægerspris and Sanderumgaard; by Erik Westengaard), Poland (by Agata Michalska), and France (Desert de Retz near Paris; by Frank Albo) respectively. Most of these contributions discuss only one or several gardens and try to interpret them in some detail, whereas Dietze gives an overview of a wide range of Norwegian gardens.

The last section contains two somewhat different contributions. Sascha Winter describes gardens with graves. During the 18th century, several German aristocrats, especially Freemasons, were buried in their gardens. They include Johann Moritz von Nassau-Siegen, Wilhelm Graf zu Schaumburg-Lippe (†1777), King Fredrick II. of Prussia (†1786), the father of Carl Heinrich August Reichsgraf von Lindenau († 1792), Herzog Ernst II. von Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg († 1804), and Friedrich Wilhelm Fürst zu Hessenstein († 1808). It is remarkable that many of them also ordered to be buried in the middle of the night, without any form of ceremony, in fact in a way highly reminiscent of Hiram Abiff's burial by his murderers according to the masonic myth central to the third degree, and this can be interpreted in a consistent way. Hiram Abiff would have been the architect of the temple of Solomon. But according to the Bible, the plans for that temple were designed by God (I Chron. 28:19). Thus, Hiram represented God. By being buried like Hiram, the person concerned was therefore – as in the third degree ritual – identified with Hiram, and ultimately with God, in exactly the same way in which, based on the text of Romans 6:4, someone baptised is identified with Christ in his being buried, thus allowing for the hope to be also identified with him in his resurrection.

Finally, Berit Ruge writes about the ‘Neue Garten’ (New Garden) of Friedrich Wilhelm II. in Potsdam, who's symbolism is influenced by the Gold und Rosenkreuzer. As stated above, this was a particular, alchemically oriented, masonic high degrees system; therefore it should not surprise to find some ‘normal’ masonic symbols in this garden as well. Still, the alchemical and Rosicrucian symbolism is clearly different from what will normally be found in other gardens.

The volume closes with an overview of addresses, relevant to the study of Western Esotericism in general and Freemasonry in particular.

### ***The future of masonic heritage***

The application of masonic (ritual) symbolism in the decoration of art, architecture and (garden) design, is a unique expression of western culture.

It reflects the social, cultural and religious history of our society. While most categories of landmarks and monuments are classified, registered and protected, we do not have an overview of how many 18<sup>th</sup> century masonic gardens have been preserved on a local, national or international level. It is evident, that the Schwetzingen garden is one of, if not *the* most well preserved and oldest masonic gardens in Europe. But as such, it has no protected status.

Art historians, landscape architects and conservation specialists usually have no knowledge of masonic iconography and are unable to recognize it in a historical garden design. This makes the few surviving historical gardens especially vulnerable, as even well-meant restoration efforts can unknowingly damage or destroy ‘hidden’ masonic elements in a design.

Art and heritage organizations have based their policies for the protection of cultural heritage on traditional art historical approaches which in turn are based on predominantly Christian iconography. This approach does not reflect the much wider religious and social diversity that has been characteristic of western society since the Renaissance. If we do not incorporate the care for the remaining examples of masonic and other esoteric heritage into our research and conservation policies, heritage laws and subsidy schemes, these will not reflect the rich historical differentiation of western culture.

Action and interdisciplinary cooperation between art historians, heritage organizations and experts on freemasonry and western esotericism are urgently needed to prevent the loss of an important part of our collective cultural heritage.

#### ***About the authors***

*Andréa A. Kroon is an art historian and associate of Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen Art Historical Project Management. She has contributed to publications and exhibitions on Dutch art around 1900 and is currently working on the PhD-project The Influence of Dutch Freemasonry on the Cultural Exchange with Asia (1735-1853) and the Material Culture Resulting from this Exchange at the Leiden University. Kroon is co-founder and chairwoman of the OVN, foundation for the advancement of academic research into the history of freemasonry in the Netherlands.*

*Jan A.M. Snoek is researcher at the Institute for the Scientific Study of Religions at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He received a Ph.D. in the Sciences of Religions from the University of Leiden (The Netherlands) in 1987. His scholarly research focuses on methodology and theory in the study of rituals, as well as on the history and development of masonic rituals. Currently, he works on a monograph on Transferring Masonic Rituals from Male to Mixed and Female Orders. Snoek is co-founder and board member of the OVN.*

### **Bibliography**

- Bernheim 1998** Alain Bernheim: "La Stricte Observance", *Acta Macionica* 8 (1998) 67-97.
- Carr 1971** Harry Carr (ed.), *The Early French Exposures 1737-1751*, (Quatuor Coronati Lodge) London 1971.
- Fuchs & Reisinger 2001** Carl Ludwig Fuchs & Claus Resinger, *Schloß und Schloßgarten zu Schwetzingen*, (VMA Verlag) Wiesbaden 2001.
- De Graaf e.a. 1996** D.P. de Graaf e.a.: *De stijl der Vrije Metselaren. Een maçonniek platenboek*, (Stichting Ritus en Tempelbouw) 's-Gravenhage 1996.
- Mollier 2004** Pierre Mollier: *Le Régulateur du Maçon 1785 / «1801». La fixation des grades symboliques du Rite Français: histoire et documents*, (éditions A l'Orient) Paris 2004.
- Noël 2002** Pierre Noël: "Les Grades Bleus du REAA; Genèse et développement", *Acta Macionica* 12 (2002) 25-118.
- Snoek 2002** Jan A.M. Snoek: "The Earliest Development of Masonic Degrees and Rituals: Hamill versus Stevenson" in: Matthew D.J. Scanlan (ed.): *The Social Impact of Freemasonry on the Modern Western World* (The Canonbury Papers 1), (CMRC) London 2002, 1-19.
- Snoek 2003a** Jan A.M. Snoek: "The Evolution of the Hiram Legend in England and France", *Heredom* 11 (2003) 11-53.
- Snoek 2003b** Jan A.M. Snoek: "Swedenborg, Freemasonry, and Swedenborgian Freemasonry: An Overview" in: Mikael Rothstein & Reender Kranenborg (eds): *New Religions in a Postmodern World* (RENNER Studies on New Religions 6), (Aarhus University Press) Aarhus 2003, 23-75.
- Snoek 2004** Jan A.M. Snoek: "Drei Entwicklungsstufen des Meistergrads", in *Quatuor Coronati Jahrbuch für Freimaurerforschung* 41 (2004) 21-46.
- Vibert 1925-1926** L. Vibert: "The development of the trigradal system" (1925) and "The evolution of the second degree" (1926) in: H. Carr (ed.), *The collected 'Prestonian Lecture' 1925-1926*, (Lewis Masonic) London 1967.