

FREEMASONRY DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

STRASBURG STATUTES

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE MASONS OF STRASBURG

1459



THE

***CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE MASONS
OF STRASBURG***

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"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and of our gracious Mother Mary, and also of her blessed servants, the holy four crowned martyrs of everlasting memory: considering that true friendship, unanimity, and obedience are the foundation of all good; therefore, and for the general advantage and free will of all princes, nobles, lords, cities, chapters, and convents, who may desire at this time or in future to build churches, choirs, or other great works of stone, and edifices; that they may be

the better provided and supplied, and also for the benefit and requirements of the masters and fellows of the whole craft of Masonry, and masons in Germany, and more especially to avoid in future, between those of the craft, dissensions, differences, costs, and damages, by which irregular acts many masters have suffered grievously, contrary to the good customs and ancient usages maintained and practiced in good faith by the seniors and patrons of the craft in ancient times. But that we may continue to abide therein in a true and peaceful way, have we, masters and fellows all, of the said craft, congregated in chapters at Spries, at Strasburg, set or not, then shall such master not pull down the set stones, nor in and at Regensburg, in the name and on behalf of ourselves and of all other masters and fellows of our whole common craft above mentioned, renewed and revised these ancient usages, and kindly and affably agreed upon these statutes and fraternity; and having by common consent draw n up

the same, have also vowed and promised, for ourselves and all our successors, to keep them faithfully, as hereafter stands writ:

"a. Firstly: If any of the articles in these statues should prove to be too strict and severe, or others too light and mild, then may those who are of the fraternity, by a majority, modify decrease, or increase such articles, according to the requirements of the time, or country, or circumstance. He resolutions of those who shall meet together in chapters after the manner of this book shall thenceforth be observed, in accordance with the oath taken by every one. '

"b. Item: Whoever of his own free will desires to enter into this fraternity, according to the regulation as hereafter stands writ in this book, shall promise to keep all the points and articles, for then only can he be of our craft. Those shall be masters, who can design

and erect such costly edifices and works, for the execution of which they are authorized and privileged, and shall not work with any other craft, unless they choose so to do. Masters as well as fellows must conduct themselves honorably, and not infringe upon the rights of others, or they may be punished, according to these statutes, on the occasion of every such transgression.

"c. Item: Whatever regular works and buildings are now in progress of erection by journey work-namely, Strasburg, Cologne, Vienna, and Passau, and other such works, and also in the Lodges which belong to them, and, according to custom, have been hitherto finished by journey work, such buildings and works as before mentioned shall be continued by journey work, and in no wise by task work; so that nothing be cut short of the work, to the damage of the contract as far as possible.

"d. Item: If any craftsman who has had regular work should die, then any craftsman or master, skilled in Masonry, and sufficient and able for work, may aspire to complete said work, so that the lords owning or superintending such building may again be supplied with the requirements of Masonry. So also may any fellow who understands such Masonry.

"e. Item: Any master may, in addition to his own work, undertake a work abroad, or a master who has no such work may likewise undertake it, in which case he may give such work or building in good faith, in journey work, and continue it as best he can or may, so that the work and progress be not interrupted, according to the regulations and customs of Masonry. If a master fails to satisfy those persons who committed the work to him, and reliable information be given thereof, then shall the said master be called to account by the craft,

corrected, and punished, after having been sentenced; but if the lords are not willing so to do, then may he do it as they choose, be it by task or journey work.

"f. Item: If any master, who has had such a work or building, die, and another master comes and finds such stone-work, be the stonework any wise cast away the hewn and unset stones, without previous counsel and agreement with other craftsmen, so that the owners and other honorable persons, who caused such edifice to be builded, be not put to unjust expense, and that also the master who left such work not be defamed. But if the owners choose to have such work removed, then he may have it done, provided he seeks no undue advantage thereby.

"g. Item: Neither shall the master, nor those who have undertaken such work, hire out anything that relates to or concerns hewn stones and what belongs to them,

be it stone, lime, or sand; but to break or hew by contract or by journey work he may be allowed without risk.

"h. Item: If masons be required for hewing or setting stone, the master may set such at work, if they are able, so that the lords be not hindered, and those who are thus employed shall not be subject to these regulations unless of their own free will.

"i Item: Two masters shall not share in the same work or building, unless it be a small one, which can be finished in the course of a year. Such a work he may have in common with him that is a brother.

"k. Item: If any master accepts a work in contract and makes a design for the same, how it shall be builded, then he shall not cut anything short of the design, but shall execute it according to the plan which he has

shown to the lords, cities, or people, so that nothing be altered.:

"1. Any master or fellow who shall take away from another master of the fraternity of craftsmen a work on which he is engaged, or who shall endeavor to dispose him of such work, clandestinely or openly, without the knowledge or consent of the master who has such work, be the same small or great, he shall be called to account. No master or fellow shall keep fellowship with him, nor shall any fellow of the fraternity work for him, so long as he is engaged in the work which he has thus dishonestly acquired, nor until he has asked pardon, and given satisfaction to him whom he has driven from his work, and shall also have been punished in the fraternity by the masters, as is ordained by these statutes.

"m. Item: If any one accepts in whole or in part any work which he does not understand how to execute, not having consulted any craftsman thereon, nor having applied to the Lodge, he shall in no wise undertake the work; but if he attempts to do so, then shall no fellow take work with him, so that the lords be not put to expense by such ignorant master.

Item: No workman, nor master, nor Parlirer, nor fellow-craft, shall instruct any one, whosoever, who is not of our craft, in any part, if he has not in his day practiced Masonry

"o. No craftsman nor master shall take money from a fellow for teaching or instructing him in anything belonging to Masonry, nor shall any arlirer or fellow-craft instruct any one for money's sake; but if one wishes to instruct the other, they may do so mutually or for fraternal affection.

"p. Item: A master who has a work or a building for himself may have three apprentices, and may also set to work fellows of the same Lodge-that is, if his lords so permit; but if he have more buildings than one, then shall he have no more than two apprentices on the afore-mentioned building, so that he shall not have more than five apprentices on all his buildings.

"Item: No craftsman or master shall be received in the fraternity who goes not yearly to the Holy Communion or who keep not Christian discipline, or who squanders his substance at play; but should any one be inadvertently accepted into the fraternity who does these things as aforesaid, then shall no master nor fellow keep fellowship with him until he desists therefrom, and has been punished therefor by those of the fraternity.

"No craftsman nor master shall live in adultery while engaged in Masonry; but if such a one will not desist therefrom, then shall no travelling fellow nor mason work in company with him, nor keep fellowship with him.

"q. Item: If a fellowcraft takes work with a master who is not accepted into the fraternity of craftsmen, then shall the said fellow not be punishable therefor. So also, if a fellow take work with a city master, or with another master, and be there set to work, that may he well do, so that every fellow may find work; but nevertheless such fellow shall keep the regulations as hereinbefore and hereinafter written, and shall also contribute his fee to the fraternity, although he be not employed in the Lodges o f the fraternity, or with his fellow brethren.

"But if a fellow would take unto himself a lawful wife, and not being employed in a Lodge, would establish himself in a city, and be obliged to serve with a craft, he shall on every ember-week pay four pennies, and shall be exempt from the weekly penny, because he be not employed in the Lodge.

"r. If a master have a complaint against another master, for having violated the regulations of the craft, or a master against a fellow, or a fellow against another fellow, any master or fellow who is concerned therein shall give notice thereof to the master who presides over the fraternity, and the master who is thereof informed shall hear both parties, and set a day when he will try the cause: and meanwhile, before the fixed or appointed day, no fellow shall avoid the master, nor master drive away the fellow, but render services mutually until the-hour when the matter is to be heard and settled. This shall all be done according

to the judgement of the craftsmen, which shall be observed accordingly. Moreover, the case shall be tried on the spot where it arose before the nearest master who keeps the Book of Statutes, and in who district it occurred.

"s. Item: Every Parlirer shall honor his master, be true and faithful to him, according to the rule of Masonry, and obey him with undivided fidelity, as is meet and of ancient usage. So also shall a fellow.

"And when a travelling fellow-craft desires to travel farther, he shall part from his master and from the Lodge in such wise as to be indebted to no one, and that no man have any grievance against him, as is meet and proper.

"t. A travelling fellow, in whatever Lodge he may be employed shall be obedient to his master and to the

Parlirer, according to the rule and ancient usage of Masonry, and shall also keep all the regulations and privileges which are of ancient usage in the said Lodge, and shall not revile his master's work, either secretly or openly, in any wise. But if the master infringe upon these regulations, and act contrary to them, then may any one give notice thereof.

"u. Every craftsman employing workmen in the Lodge, to whom is confided these statues, and who is duly invested with authority, shall have power and authority in the same over all contentions and matters which pertain to Masonry, to try and punish in his district. All masters, Parlirers, and apprentices, shall obey him.

"x. A fellow who has travelled, and is practiced in Masonry, and who is of this fraternity, who wishes to serve a craftsman on a portion of the work, shall not be

accepted by that craftsman or master, in any wise for a less term than two years.

"y. Item: All masters and fellows who are of this fraternity shall faithfully keep all the points and articles of these regulations, as hereinbefore and hereinafter stands written. But if anyone should perchance violate one of the points, and thereby become punishable, if afterward he be obedient to the regulation, by having complied with what has been sentenced upon him, he will have done sufficient, and be released from his vow, in regard to the article wherefor he has been punished.

"z. The master who has charge of the Book shall, on the oath of the fraternity, have a care that the same be not copied, either by himself or by any other person, or given, or lent,-so that the Book remain intact, according to the resolution of the craftsmen. But if one

of the craftsmen, being of this fraternity, have need or cause to know one or two articles, that may any master give him in writing. Every master shall cause these statutes to be read every year to the fellows in the Lodge

"Item: If a complaint be made involving a greater punishment as for instance, expulsion from Masonry- the same shall not be tried or judged by one master in his district; but the two nearest masters who are intrusted with the copies of the statutes, and who have authority over the fraternity, shall be summoned by him, so that there may be three. The fellows also who were at work at the place where the grievance arose shall be summoned also, and whatsoever shall be with one accord agreed upon by those three, together with all the fellows, or by a majority thereof in accordance with their oath and best judgement, shall be observed by the whole fraternity of craftsmen.

"Item: If two or more masters who are of the fraternity be at variance or discord about matters which do not concern Masonry, they shall not settle these matters anywhere but before Masonry, which shall judge and reconcile them as far as possible, but so that the agreement be made without prejudice to the lords or cities who are concerned in the matter,

"1. Now, in order that these regulations of the craft may be kept more honestly, with service to God and other necessary and becoming things, every master who has craftsmen at work in his Lodge, and practises Masonry, and is of this fraternity, and afterward each year four "Blapparts"; namely, on each ember-week one Blappart or Bohemian to be paid into the box of the fraternity, and each fellow four Blapparts, and so likewise an apprentice who has served his time.

"2. All masters and craftsmen who are of this fraternity, who employ workmen in their Lodges, shall each of them have a box, and each fellow shall pay into the box weekly one penny. Every master shall faithfully treasure up some money and what may be derived from other sources, and shall each year deliver it to the fraternity at the nearest place where a book is kept, in order to provide for God's worship and to supply the necessaries or the fraternity.

"3. Every master who has a box, if there be no Book in the same Lodge, shall deliver the money each year to the master who has charge of the Book, and where the Book is there shall also be held divine worship. If a master or fellow dies in a Lodge where no Book is kept, another master or fellow of the said Lodge shall give notice thereof to the master who has a Book; and when he has been informed thereof he shall cause a mass to be said for the repose of the soul of him who has

departed, and all the masters and fellows of the Lodge shall assist at the mass and contribute thereto.

"4. If a master or fellow be put to any expense or disbursement, for account of the fraternity, and notice be given of how the same occurred, to such master or fellow shall be repaid his expenses, be the same small or great, out of the box of the fraternity; if also any one gets into trouble with courts or in other matters, relating to the fraternity, then shall every one, be he master or fellow, afford him aid and relief, as he is bound to do by the oath of the fraternity.

"5. If a master or fellow fall sick, or a fellow who is of the "fraternity, and has lived uprightly in Masonry, be afflicted with protracted illness and want for food and necessary money, than shall the master who has charge of the box lend him relief and assistance from the box, if he otherwise may, until he recover from his

sickness; and he shall afterward vow and promise to retribute the same into the box. But if he should die in such sickness, then so much shall be taken from what he leaves at his death , be it clothing or other articles, as to repay that which has been loaned to him, if so much be there.

THESE ARE THE STATUTES OF THE PARLIRERS AND FELLOWS

"No craftsman or master shall set at work a fellow who commits adultery, or who openly lives in illicit intercourse with women, or who does not yearly make confession, and goes not to the Holy Communion, according to Christian discipline, nor one who is so foolish as to lose his clothing at play,

"Item: if any fellow should wantonly take leave of a Grand Lodge or from another lodge, he should not ask for employment in the said Lodge for a year to come.

"Item: If a craftsman or master wishes to discharge a travelling fellow whom he had employed, he shall not do so unless on a Saturday or on a pay evening, so that he may know how to travel on the morrow, unless he be guilty of an offence. The same shall also be done by a fellow-craft.

"Item : A travelling fellow shall make application for employment to one but the master of the worker or the Parlior, neither clandestinely nor openly, without the knowledge and will of the master.

"No craftsman or master shall knowingly accept as an apprentice one who is not of lawful birth, and shall earnestly inquire thereof before he accepts him, and

shall question such apprentice on his word, whether his father and mother were duly united in lawful wedlock.

"Item: No craftsman or master shall promote one of his apprentices as a Parlirer whom he has taken as an apprentice from his rough state, or who is still in his years of apprenticeship.

"Neither shall any craftsman or master promote any of his apprentices as a Parlirer whom he has taken from his rough state, notwithstanding he may have served his years of apprenticeship, if he has not travelled for the space of one year.

"If any one who has served with a Mason (Murer) comes to a craftsman and wishes to learn of him, the said craftsman shall not accept him as an apprentice unless he serve as such for three years.

"No craftsman or master shall take an apprentice from his rough state for a less term than five years.

"If, however, it happen that an apprentice should leave his master during the years of his apprenticeship, without sufficient reasons, and does not serve out his time then no master shall employ such apprentice. No fellow shall work with him, nor in any wise keep fellowship with him, until he has served his lawfull time with the master whom he left, and has given him entire satisfaction, and brings a certificare from his master aforesaid. "No apprentice shall ransom himself from his master unless he intends to marry, with his master's consent, or there be other sufficient reasons which urge him or his master to this measure.

"If an apprentice deems that he has not been justly dealt with by his master, in any way they may have

agreed upon, then may the apprentice bring him before the craftsmen and masters, who are in that district, so that an explanation and redress may take place as the case may be.

"Item: Every master who has a Book in the district of Strasburg, shall pay every year, at Christmas, a half-florin into the box of Strasburg, until the debt is paid which is due to that box.

"And every master who has a Book, and whose building is finished, and who has no more work whereon he can employ the fellows, shall send his Book, and the money in his possession, which belongs to the fraternity, to the workmaster at Strasburg.

"It was resolved on the day at Regensburg, four weeks after Easter, in the year, counting from God's birth, one thousand four hundred and fifty nine on St. Mark's

day, that the workmaster JOST DOTZINGER, of Worms, of the building of our dear Lady's minster, the high chapter of Strasburg, and all of his successors on the same work, should be the supreme judge of our fraternity of Masonry, and the same was also afterward determined on at Spires, at Strasburg, and again at Spires in the year MCCCCLXIV. on the 9th day of April.'

"Item: Master LORENZ SPENNING, of Vienna, shall also be chief judge at Vienna.

"And thus a workmaster or his successors at Strasburg, Vienna, and Cologne these three are the chief judges and leaders of the fraternity; they shall not; be removed without just cause, as was determined on, the day at Regensburg, 1459, and at Spires in 1464.

"This is the district that belongs to Strasburg; all the country below the Moselle, and Franconia as far as the Thuringian forest, and Babenberg as far as the episcopate at Eichstatten, from Eichstatten to Ulm, from Ulm to Augsburg to the Adelberg and as far as Italy; the countries of Misnia, Thuringia, Saxony, Frankfort, Hesse, and Suabia, these shall be obedient.

"Item: To Master LORENZ SPENNING, workmaster of the building of St. Stephen, at Vienna, appertains Lampach, Steiermarch, Hungary, and the Danube downward.

"Item: Master STEFFAN HURDER, architect of St. Vincent's at Berne, shall have the district of the Swiss Confederacy.

"Item: To Master CONRAD, of Cologn, master of the chapter there, and to all his successors likewise, shall

appertain the other districts downward, whatever there be of buildings and Lodges which belong to the fraternity, or may hereafter belong to it.

"If any master, Parlirer, fellow-craft, or apprentice acts contrary to any of the hereinbefore or hereinafter written points or articles, and does not keep them collectively or individually, and reliable information be obtained thereof., then he or they shall be summoned before the fraternity, by reason of such violation, and shall be called to account therefor, and shall be obedient, to the correction or penalty which is sentenced upon him, for the sake of the oath and vow which he has pledged unto the fraternity. And if he slights the summons without honest reason, and does not come, he shall yet give what has been sentenced upon him as a penalty for his disobedience, although he be not present. But if he will not do so, he may be brought before ecclesiastical or civil courts at the place

where they be held, and may be judged according to what may be right in the matter.

"Item: Whoever desires to enter this fraternity, shall promise ever to keep steadfastly all these articles hereinbefore and hereafter written in this Book; except our gracious lord the Emperor, or the King, Princes, Lords, or any other Nobles, by force or right, should be opposed to his belonging to the fraternity; that shall be a sufficient excuse, so that there be no harm therein. ut for what he is indebted for to the fraternity, he shall come to an agreement thereon with the craftsman who are in the fraternity.

"Although by Christian discipline every Christian is bound to provide for his own salvation, yet it must be duly remembered by the masters and craftsmen whom the Almighty God has graciously endowed with their art and workmanship, to build houses of God and

other costly edifices, and honestly to gain their living thereby, that by gratitude their hearts be justly unto true Christian feelings, to promote divine worship, and to merit the salvation of their souls thereby. Therefore to the praise and honour of Almighty God, His worthy Mother Mary, of all her blessed saints, and particularly of the holy four crowned martyrs, and especially for the salvation of the souls of all persons who are of this fraternity, or who may hereafter belong to it, have we the craftsmen of Masonry stipulated and ordained, for us and all our successors, to have a divine service yearly, at the four holy festivals and on the day of the holy four crowned martyrs, at Strasburg, in the minster of the high chapter, in our dear Lady's chapel, with vigils and soul masses, after the manner to be instituted.

"It was determined upon the day at Spires, on the ninth day of April, in the year, counting from God's

birth, 1464 that the workmaster, JOST DOTZINGER, of Worms, workmaster of the high chapter at Strasburg, shall have an assembly of craftsmen in his district, when three or four masters shall be taken and chosen, to come together on a certain day, as they may agree, and what is there determined on by a majority of those who are so congregated in chapters, and who are then present, and how they may decrease o r increase some articles, that shall be kept throughout the whole fraternity.:i;

"The day shall be on St. George's day in the sixty-ninth year. ;

"These are the masters who were present on the day at Spires, on the ninth day of April in the year 1464.

"Item: JOST DOTZINGER, of Worms, workmaster of our dear Lady's minster of the high chapter at

**Starasburg; Item: Master HANS VON ESSELINGEN;
Item: Master VINCENCIE VON CONSTANTZ; Item:
Master HANS VON HEYLTBUTRN; Item: Master
PETER VON ALGESHEIM, Master at Nuhausen; Item:
WERNER MEYLON, of Basle, on behalf Of Master
PETER KNOBEL; of Basle, etc., etc.**

*Follow a long list of the names of Masters and
Fellows, the dates of their reception, etc.,*