

Global History and Freemasonry: 300 years of Modernity, Sociability and Imperialism

Historia global y masonería: 300 años de sociabilidad, modernidad e
imperialismo

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Palabras clave

Orden global; relaciones e identidades internacionales; historiografía; redes sociales; eurocentrismo.

Abstract

In the second half of the eighteenth century, members of European Commercial Companies founded the first Masonic lodges overseas over the many port cities within the global system of market relations. From that moment on and as imperialisms intensified, new lodges were founded, which associated a large number of mostly European foreigners and, as of the second half of the nineteenth century, natives also became members. Consequently, this essay proposes to interpret, from a Global History perspective, how imperialisms conditioned the insertion of Freemasonries beyond Europe, and how it functioned as a network of international sociability.

Resumen

En la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII, miembros de las compañías comerciales europeas organizaron las primeras logias masónicas de ultramar en las distintas ciudades portuarias insertas en el sistema global de relaciones de mercado. A partir de ese momento y a medida que se intensificaron los imperialismos, se fundaron nuevas logias, que asociaron a una importante cantidad de extranjeros europeos en su mayoría y, desde la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, de nativos. En consiguiente, este ensayo propone interpretar desde la historia global cómo los imperialismos condicionaron la inserción de las masonerías más allá de Europa, y de qué manera funcionó como una red de sociabilidad internacional.

I.

In a lecture delivered in 1950, Fernand Braudel defended the idea that History is the daughter of its time and, therefore, the way in which it is constructed is determined by its historical present¹. The context of this assertion was after World War II, times of profound

¹ Fernand Braudel, *Historia y Ciencias Sociales*, trans. Josefina Gómez Mendoza (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1970), 19-22.

changes in the international panorama that, among other things, cried out for an academic and an intellectual renewal in the ways of understanding Humanity. Bruce Mazlish² explains that this moment gave rise to a conjuncture of gradual loss of the intellectual and political Western primacy. Moreover, as the world expanded and became more connected, the Eurocentric notion³ was strongly attacked by postcolonial and multicultural tendencies, giving rise to the World History. However, History soon played its role within the process of major transformations: Globalization⁴.

Globalization immediately deconstructed the coordinates of space and time. Its hastened pace in the development of science, technology, consumption and communications has revolutionized social consciousness, including the historical one. Consequently, the social needs arose to renew the ways in which we understood and explained ourselves. During this time, one of the answers given by Historiography was Global History, a proposal of analysis in global terms of connections and social contacts in the long-term⁵.

What has been the influence of Globalization in the conception of historical processes? How could the analysis of the social construction of Freemasonry be reconsidered theoretically and methodologically? These were the problems to be historicized, while the global social processes of the last 300 years are the laboratory of analysis.

Therefore, this essay consists of two parts. First, an analysis of the process of construction of History from the advent of Modernity till the proposal of Global History and second, a synthesis of the global expansion and development of Freemasonry.

II.

One of the main reasons that explain the historiographical problems indicated above relates to the origin of the historian's craft. The construction of History –in its modern sense– began as part of the development of Modernity. This, as in other social aspects, has brought a sense of lethargy to knowledge, as well as to the understanding,

² Bruce Mazlish, "On History Becoming History: World History and New Global History" (2001): 1-8, <http://web.mit.edu/newglobalhistory/docs/mazlish-on-history-becoming-history.pdf>

³ Dominique Perrot and Roy Preiswerk, *Ethnocentrism and history: Africa, Asia, and Indian America in western textbooks* (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1978). Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

⁴ The term Globalization was proposed by the economist Theodore Levitt in order to explain the high degree of development achieved by consumption and marketing. Theodore Levitt, "The Globalization of Markets," *Harvard Business Review* 61, no. 3 (May-June 1983): 92-102.

⁵ Manuel Pérez García, "'Re-orientando' historias nacionales: los nuevos retos de la historia global en el mundo académico chino," *Orientando. Temas de Asia Oriental, Sociedad, Cultura y Economía* 4, no. 7 (octubre 2013-marzo 2014): 29-64.

understanding and interpretation of non-European history. Therefore, it is pertinent to make an historical overview of the concept of History, especially since one goal of this essay is to think or meditate a methodology that overcomes the limitations indicated when historicizing Freemasonry.

In the Judeo-Christian world, the history of the world was initially part of the philosophy of history, where the concept of “world” was nothing more than an appellation of Humanity. These “stories of the world” were intended to explain the fate or destiny of the human species, when in the Middle Ages this global power was reserved to the Christian god. The “world rationality thesis” was proposed during the Renaissance and reached its climax with the Enlightenment –the conjuncture of the genesis of the processes of ideological construction of Freemasonry–⁶, and in particular with the idea of the progress proposed by Immanuel Kant.

On this historical context (the seventeenth century), Christoph Keller proposed the concept of “Universal History”, as a hegemonic way of understanding history from Occidentalism. This one, eventually, ended up explaining the facts related to the evolution of humanity in four ages: the Ancient (from the invention of the writing to the fall of the Roman Empire), the Middle (by ending with the fall of the Byzantine Empire), the Modern (until the French Revolution) and the Contemporary (until the present day). The idea of “universality” contained in this proposal stemmed from the assumption of ecumenical pretensions of Christianity by guiding all human activity towards a single history⁷.

The conception of Universal History continued to develop from the ideas of the most outstanding thinkers of Enlightenment. What is worth keeping in mind from this proposal is that, although it began to include in its vision, spaces, and themes other cultures, different from the European ones, it kept on reproducing a Eurocentric standpoint. The philosopher and economist Adam Smith, for example, in his famous work *The Wealth of Nations*⁸, considered that the economic and cultural wealth of China was unmatched in Europe. Smith highlighted the Chinese agricultural system, the industrious and fertile agricultural fields, the cheapness of rice production compared to that of the wheat in Europe, the breadth of its markets and the size of its population. In addition, Smith characterized China as an elite, asserting that it was the richest nation in the world, but at the expense of a poverty-stricken majority. In this divergence between the Chinese and

⁶ José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, *La masonería* (Zaragoza: Alianza Editorial, 2001). Margaret Jacob, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Facts and Fictions* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Dévrig Mollés, *La invención de la masonería. Revolución cultural: religión, ciencia y exilios* (La Plata, Argentina: Editora de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2015).

⁷ Mazlish, “Ecumenical, World, and Global History,” in *World History: Ideologies, Structures and Identities*, eds. Philip Pomper, Richard H. Elphick and Richard T. Vann (Malden Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), 42.

⁸ Adam Smith, *Investigación sobre la naturaleza y causa de la riqueza de las naciones* (1776), ed. Edwin Cannan, intr. Max Lerner and trans. Gabriel Franco (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984), 70, 182, 331.

European worlds, Hispanic America is key for Smith –thanks to its silver–, since it allowed the access to the richest and most diverse markets, connecting as never seen before to the most remote regions of the world⁹.

Furthermore, during this time, Kant, the Sinophobic theorist of the “yellow race”¹⁰, Kant, posited the history of the world as a rational attempt to understand the evolution of different cultures and civilizations towards the full development of its potentialities. In this proposal, Europe is at the avant-garde of the process¹¹. The Reason why Kant was replaced by *Weltgeist* [the Spirit] of Georg W. F. Hegel, arguing that the last temporality of the history of humanity had reached its end, where its unrest can no longer go beyond its struggle to be recognized as superior or equal to others¹². In this vision, European civilization had reached its zenith, whereas the “Others” could only chase Europe.

Years later, Leopold von Ranke¹³, father of positivist history, argued that the balance in the history of the world comes with European expansion, minimizing its interpretation to the development of the Reason or *Weltgeist* with Europe at the summit. So, what else can be written about other than Europe? This seems to be the internal logic of Eurocentrism in the historiography of the European world until the nineteenth century and also the explanation of why nation-states have maintained a basic narrative unity.

Some decades later of Kant and Hegel’s approaches, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained the advent of capitalism, among other factors, through the expansion of a world market propitiated by the European arrival to America and the industrial revolutions¹⁴. Indeed, they argued that rapid technological improvement attracted everyone to “civilization,” including the most “barbaric” nations. In this way, big industry connected different societies to each other, merging local markets into one world, extending civilization and progress everywhere and ensuring that what happens in the “civilization” will have repercussions in every others nations (namely, “the Barbarians”)¹⁵.

⁹ Smith, *La riqueza de las naciones* (1776), 198-199.

¹⁰ Julia Ching, “Chinese Ethics and Kant,” *Philosophy East and West* 28, no. 2 (1978): 161-172.

¹¹ Jörn Rüsen, “Following Kant: European idea for a universal history with an intercultural intent,” *Groniek. Historisch Tijdschrift* 160 (2003): 359-368.

¹² Francis Fukuyama, *El fin de la historia y el último hombre*, trans. P. Elías (Barcelona: Planeta-Agostini, 1994), 254.

¹³ Leopold von Ranke, “The Role of the Particular and the General in the Study of Universal History (A Manuscript of the 1860s)”, trans. Wilma A. Iggers, in *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers y Konrad von Moltke (New York: Routledge, 2010), 24-26.

¹⁴ In fact, the accumulation of capital from around the world has existed in Europe at least since the sixteenth century. Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 178-185; and Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 166-209.

¹⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Vol. 6, 1845-1848* (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 345.

These positions intensified with the turn of the century¹⁶. For example, Max Weber, perhaps dissatisfied with his explanations about the origin of capitalism¹⁷, turned his gaze to the nations east of the European continent¹⁸. Why weren't there any industrial revolutions in China or Hindustan? –He seemed to have asked himself. The sociologist concluded that the corporate regime of ownership and the bureaucratic system in them did not allow for the development of competition. According to Weber, the Calvinist individualism evolved from the ethics of the ancient Hebrews, it allowed interpreting the accumulation of and competition for wealth as part of predestination and divine blessing.

From Smith, through Kant, Hegel and Ranke; to Marx, Engels and Weber, the development of Eurocentrism can be clearly seen as a boom experienced by the industrial revolutions and represented as superior in technological, scientific and ethical terms over other cultures. And, although historiography of at least the last twenty years has denied¹⁹ it in more complex explanations from a mere Oriental Despotism or Asiatic Mode of Production²⁰, what is interesting to highlight is how these conceptions have completely determined the Western ways of constructing History.

From these ideas, the history of the world projected Europe as “center” towards the past, with the aim of “demonstrating” its “predestination” as the end and center of Universal History. In this process, we find that three theoretical-interpretative representations were constructed: Orientalism²¹, Occidentalism (Eurocentrism) and “Southern Europe”. Regarding these three, as Enrique Dussel²² has pointed out, Eurocentric Occidentalism became the European-American philosophical and political axis

¹⁶ Although there are already the critics of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, who pointed out that European or Western civilization has not been, nor will it be, the culmination of civilization. These authors put their gaze towards other civilizations in the understanding of the future of humanity. And while there is no open critic of Eurocentrism, they collaborated in expanding of the vision of historiography from the European world. Their key works on the subject: Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (Vienna, 1918 and Munich, 1922); Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press 1948).

¹⁷ His classic work: *Die protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus* (1904-1905). A English translation: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's Press, 1958).

¹⁸ See: *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (1915), *Das antike Judentum* (1917-1921) and *Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (1921). It can be consulted the translation into English by Hans H. Gerth: *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1951); *The Religion of India: the Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York: Free Press, 1958); and *Ancient Judaism* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1952).

¹⁹ Frank, *ReORIENT*, 178-185. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 166-209.

²⁰ Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

²¹ Many times romanticized in his encounter with European imperialism, as in the legendary “Ballad of East and West” (1895) of Rudyard Kipling: “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat; but there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, when two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!”.

²² Enrique Dussel, “China [1421-1800]. Razones para cuestionar el Eurocentrismo”, *Archipiélago. Revista Cultural de Nuestra América* 11, no. 44 (2004): 7-13.

from the late eighteenth century to the present and, if not, what better examples than the “Global War on Terrorism” or *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington²³.

Universal History was strengthened with the development of European imperialisms to the point that it was common to find its conception in the academia until the 1970s. However, this was the product of an era that had two world wars during the first half of the twentieth century so, as noted at the beginning of this essay, there was a need for a new way of interpreting social phenomena. This was the genesis of World History, a proposal that had among its greatest exponents Braudel and the *L'École des Annales*, and Immanuel Wallerstein.

The novelty of the conception of World History fell within its scope: no particular events were analysed, but socio-natural spaces were created by the cultural and economic ties of its inhabitants²⁴. In addition, Braudel's proposal on new historiographical temporalities: *l'évènement*, *la conjoncture* and *la longue durée*, was key in the development of a methodological basis of World History²⁵. In this sense, the awareness of the plurality of socio-historical time is fundamental, since the “world” of the Neolithic hunter-gatherer differs from that of a Chinese alchemist of the second century, an Indian Buddhist monk of the tenth century, a Renaissance painter or a Latin American Freemason at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the mid-1970s, Wallerstein proposed the category of analysis “World-System”, where from the interplay between a center and its peripheries different regions of the planet become geographically integrated²⁶. This proposal has been used as a hermeneutical resource for understanding various historical moments.

However, despite the theoretical-methodological advances of World History, since this is also a construct of Modernity, it continues to drag the vices of Eurocentrism. And it is at this point that the idea of an historical interpretation in global terms emerges. Indeed, the first person to draw attention to this was Geoffrey Barraclough in his book *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences: History*²⁷, where he proposes a return to the macro relation/narration of world history, criticizes Eurocentrism and proposes the idea that every civilization should be interpreted impartially, while recognizing their contributions to social development.

The context of this proposal is key upon a time in which different entities (States,

²³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

²⁴ One of the best examples landed from this historiographical conception corresponds to Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949).

²⁵ Braudel, *Historia y Ciencias Sociales*, 60-106.

²⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

²⁷ Geoffrey Barraclough, *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences: History* (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 153.

leagues of nations, multinationals, cultural movements, etc.) take part in the creation of a new “civilization”, presenting a more visible, tangible scenario in which it is possible to fight the limitations imposed by ethnocentric perspectives²⁸. In fact, it is under this circumstance that Global History has made devoid of a historiographical school pertaining to some national tradition in particular²⁹. This, in turn, has allowed Historiography to overcome the narrow perspective of the nation-state and the empire-approach perspectives and to extend its lens of analysis to *trans*, civilizing and cultural levels, East-West or West-East. This has led to the development of a whole new historiographical methodology focused on the analysis of connections, relationships and contacts between different territorial units worldwide³⁰.

The analytical foundations of the Global History are the following: (i) the problem of historicity and the temporal depth of Globalization (global social processes in the last 300 years in the case of Freemasonry as an object of study); ((ii) the weakening of the capacity of action of the nation-states (or kingdoms and empires) and the consequent development of new forms of interpretation that transcend the alleged limits of different cultures (the dynamics of sociability of Freemasonry and the detractors reactions); and (iii) the modification of space-time coordinates by multiplying the number of areas where social relations take place (overseas worlds or ports and islands, for example)³¹. Therefore, the analysis of historical processes, in global terms, expands the possibilities of spatialities and temporalities, and produces an historical awareness –and global if desired–more critical of the different social realities.

Global History advocates for the study of multiple interactions, beyond the divisions of a state, a kingdom or an empire; at diverse scales and in global terms³²; that is to say, a return to the great syntheses but not to Universal History, since postmodern criticism has been interiorized with more strength than World History, it is looked upon to transcend Eurocentrism –or any other *ethos* centrism– and to include the variety of histories “*others*” (Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc.)³³. In this way, the global goes beyond

²⁸ Mazlish, “Comparing Global History to World History”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28, no. 3 (1998): 385-395.

²⁹ This is noteworthy, since globalization has altered in a synchronized way the diachrony of the historiographic developments from the countries of greater weight to those of minor in this disciplinary field. Hugo Fazio Vengo, “La historia global y su conveniencia para el estudio del pasado y del presente”, *Historia Crítica. Edición Especial* (2009): 300-319.

³⁰ Pérez García, “‘Re-orientando’ historias nacionales”, 45.

³¹ Cécile Révauger and Saunier éd.s., *La Franc-Maçonnerie dans les ports* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2012).

³² This in answer to the change suffered from a World History to the production of heterogeneous, fragmented and indeterminate case studies, products of the postmodern critique of the 1960s and 1970s. Mazlish, “Global History in a Postmodernist Era?”, in *Conceptualizing Global History*, eds. Mazlish y Ralph Buultjens (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 116.

³³ Fazio Vengo, “La historia global”, 300-319.

the object of study, since it seeks to contest historiography and disciplinary fragmentation, integrating Macrohistory and Microhistory, and combining homogeneity with heterogeneity, but also attenuating the excess of Westernization present in the ordinary historical thought (imaginary). Besides, it has the intention to relativize the historically established “facts”, and thus shackle the existing political, economic and cultural boundaries. Paraphrasing George Corm³⁴, artificially created by the label of European culture: Modernity.

Therefore, Global History requires the analysis of social networks³⁵ and the movement of transnational communities on a global level. This would help in the dismantling of the strong Eurocentric ideological burden that has characterized the historian’s craft. Which, doesn’t mean that the goal a hybridization of narratives of different scales, local, national, continental or transcontinental. First of all, it deals with the identification of connections, approximations and social divergences through spaces and temporalities, overcoming economic, political and cultural borders³⁶.

The construction of historical events, in global terms, would be incomplete without the consideration of the various professional and political scenarios of academia in the world. Its non-consideration has prevented World History from overcoming Eurocentrism when it comes to historicizing. Therefore, the Global History needs a “global historian”, a “nomad” by definition, specialized in different languages and dedicated to work in archives around the world; without a doubt, this means a lot of work.

With the acceleration of global transformations in the international system of the late twentieth century, Global History was institutionalized in academia. In this process, the California School and the University of London have been outstanding. The first one comprises a remarkable group of economic historians and Sinologists³⁷, focused on the analysis of Western economic progress and its hegemony in the modern world. Their works are also characterized by the strong questioning of Eurocentrism in History³⁸. In the case of the second, it has become the vanguard of the organization of curricular activities, such as seminars (1996 and 2000), a Master’s degree (2000), the network of researchers The Global Economic History Network (2003)³⁹ and the publication *Journal of Global*

³⁴ Georges Corm, *La fractura imaginaria. Las falsas raíces del enfrentamiento entre Oriente y Occidente*, trans. María Córdón Vergara (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2004), 164.

³⁵ Ricardo Martínez Esquivel, “Prosopografía y redes sociales: notas metodológicas sobre el estudio de la masonería en Costa Rica”, *REHMLAC+* 7, no. 2 (diciembre 2015-abril 2016): 1-27, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15517/rehmlac.v7i2.22689>

³⁶ Dirlik, “Performing the World”, 391-410. Pérez García, “‘Re-orientando’ historias nacionales”, 43-44.

³⁷ Among those who are Kenneth Pomeranz, R. Bin Wong, Jack Goldstone, James Lee, Dennis Flynn, Arturo Giraldez, Richard Von Glahn, Robert Marks, John Hobson, Jack Goody, Jim Blaut and Andre Gunder Frank.

³⁸ Peer Vries, “The California School and beyond: how to study the Great Divergence?”, *History Compass* 8 (2010): 730-751.

³⁹ *The Global Economic History Network* born in cooperation with the California School (Irvine and Los Angeles) and the universities of Leiden and Osaka. For 2011, it included members from universities in Great

History (2006)⁴⁰. Today there are also programs on the subject at Columbia University and the universities of Leipzig, Vienna, Wrocław, Roskilde, Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Renmin University of China (Beijing)⁴¹.

What has been the situation in the studies of the history of Freemasonry? The analysis of Freemasonry has functioned as a laboratory of global dimensions of Modernity manifested in cultural practices, sociability and associative spaces. Freemasonry, in its civilizing discourse, reflects many aspects of imperialisms, their networks and their political, economic and cultural itineraries. However, since the Global History, it has been identified only the latest works of Jessica Harland-Jacobs⁴², Dévrig Mollès⁴³ and the author of this essay⁴⁴. However, how could the development of Freemasonry be delineated from the Global History's assumptions?

III.

Freemasonry, as a Modern sociability since its origin was built in global terms, as its networks overcame the imperial, regional, state and national borders, whether for economic, military, political, cultural, religious or fraternal interests. And with the development of imperialism, during the last three centuries, obtained their social role in the processes of empire building and Globalization.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, members of European commercial companies began the organization of the first Masonic lodges overseas. From this moment on and along the intensification of imperialism, new lodges were founded, which associated a large number of mostly European foreigners and, a century later, natives. Consequently, the imperialisms conditioned the expansion and insertion of Freemasonry as part of a network of international sociability fully interpretable from the theoretical-methodological propositions of Global History.

Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, the United States, Turkey, India and Japan. Website: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/Research/GEHN/Home.aspx>

⁴⁰ Website: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=JGH>

⁴¹ Tatyana L. Shestova, "Global History as a Trend of Global Studies", in *Globalistics and Globalization Studies*, eds. Leonid E. Grinin, Ilya V. Ilyin and Andrey V. Korotayev (Volgograd: 'Uchitel' Publishing House, 2012), 101-106.

⁴² Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "Global Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Empires, and Globalization", *REHMLAC. Hors série n°1. Special Issue UCLA-Grand Lodge of California* (October 2013): 70-88, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rehmlac/article/view/22543/22685>

⁴³ Mollès, "L'histoire globale et la question maçonnique: éléments pour une analyse", *REHMLAC* 6, no. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2014): 1-32, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rehmlac/article/view/15225/14524>

⁴⁴ Martínez Esquivel, "Imperialismos, masones y masonerías en China (1842-1911)", in *300 años: masonerías y masones, 1717-2017. Tomo V. Cosmopolitismo*, eds. Martínez Esquivel, Yván Pozuelo Andrés and Rogelio Aragón (Mexico City: Palabra de Clío, 2017), 94-119.

The processes of construction of Modernity in America, Asia and Africa coincided with the emergence of the British Empire as the single global hegemonic power. The Enlightenment, but above all the Industrial Revolution, led it to rebuild a new order around it. Between 1799 and 1815, the Napoleonic wars stopped the advance of imperialisms, and the restoration of the political order as a consequence of the Congress of Vienna (1815) led to the development of a renewed global structure of international relations on European agendas.

In this context, “the peripheral worlds” were fed by imperialist modernities, and later by others tempered by the ideals of progress, the market and the nation –the last one with its link to modern state building-process–. Therefore, the analysis of Freemasonry in the long-term should be contemplated as part of the construction of a global order and as part of its relations with the history of America, Asia, and Africa, since these sociabilities presented an international character of the insertion of Modernity through imperialism.

Since then, Freemasonry has been present in various political, economic and cultural processes around the world, often actively participating, but in others, only in the imaginaries of individuals and institutions. The Masonic lodges meant a relational and identity space for some members of the elites with liberal and enlightened principles, since they identified with its speeches and enjoyed the multiple militancy offered by Modernity, in terms of sociabilities and ideas⁴⁵.

Given this conception of Civility, with the decline of the Ancient Regime during the eighteenth century, as well as the beginning of a series of revolutions in Europe and the American Continent from its northern part, the empires of the Atlantic World⁴⁶ were shaken at a conjuncture where, due to the Masonic utopia of the “Universal Republic”, the ancient guild of stonemasons was associated to the political revolution for the sake of Modern civilization and, consequently, to the suspicion of conspiracy. This, consequently, had led to strong suspicions of conspiracy. However, as it is well explained by Eric J. Hobsbawm –considered ignorant on the subject⁴⁷– even great specialists in the field such as José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli⁴⁸ and Margaret Jacob⁴⁹, have been associated with politicians and intellectuals engaged in processes of secularization and laicization, who

⁴⁵ Mollés, “Triangle atlantique et triangle latin: l’Amérique latine et le système-monde maçonnique (1717-1921), Éléments pour une histoire des opinions publiques internationales” (PhD diss., University of Strasbourg, France, 2012).

⁴⁶ John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006). Federica Morelli, Clément Thibaud and Geneviève Verdo comps., *Les empires atlantiques. Des lumières au libéralisme (1763-1865)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

⁴⁷ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Rebeldes primitivos. Estudio sobre las formas arcaicas de los movimientos sociales en los siglos XIX y XX*, trans. Joaquín Romero Maura (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1983), 245-246.

⁴⁸ Ferrer Benimeli, *La masonería*, 78-82.

⁴⁹ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 52-72.

identified themselves with the value system of the lodge, and have thus been labelled to have links with Freemasonry.

In addition, another element that led to speculative Freemasonry to equip it with the ideals and with the predominant social structures in its time, was that since its birth it was recognized as a model of sympathetic and preferential sociability. This one made this association basically a phenomenon of the *bourgeois* and the wealthy and the educated sectors. In general, its members have stemmed from the *bourgeoisie*; this is because in its beginnings (the eighteenth century) this entity housed the rising merchant *bourgeoisie* excluded from the aristocratic sociability centers.

During the emergence and consolidation of the British Empire as a center of global order, Freemasonry played a significant role in the education of the elite, functioning as an ideological vehicle of Modernity and playing a protagonist role in the promotion of the establishment, maintenance and control of the empires⁵⁰. Consequently, Freemasonry was consolidated as an institutional force, key in the promotion of identities within the framework of imperialism. Both in practice and in ideology, their extensive networks fostered intercultural connections that were maintained alongside empires. Masonic networks connected imperialist networks around the Atlantic and the Pacific. With their pro cosmopolitan discourses, Freemasonry constituted a seemingly optimal space for the formation of intercultural networks, and collaborated in the reaffirmation of imperial and colonial hegemonies. The Masonic networks, apparently, could be global, but never universal⁵¹.

As soon as Freemasonries expanded, its internal dynamics were also diversified, it became independent from each other and an exaggerated variety of Masonic rites emerged. In the eighteenth century, after the appearance of the United Grand Lodge of England, grand lodges were also organized during that century in Scotland, Ireland, York and Charleston in the United States. All of them gave birth to the pluralization of Freemasonry. Soon afterwards, overseas lodges were organized in Gibraltar, the Caribbean, the ten colonies of North America, the Coast of Mosquitos in Central America, Argentina, Chile, the East Indies, Cape Senegambia, Egypt, South Africa, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, the islands of Reunion and Mauritius, and New South Wales⁵². However, this expansion did

⁵⁰ Paul John Rich, *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London: Regency Press Ltd., 1989). Harland-Jacobs, "All in the Family: Freemasonry and the British Empire in the Mid-Nineteen Century", *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (2003): 448-482. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire. Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁵¹ Harland-Jacobs, "Hands across the Sea: The Masonic Network, British Imperialism, and the North Atlantic World", *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (1999): 243-244.

⁵² A. A. Cooper, *The Freemasons of South Africa* (Johannesburgo: Human & Rousseau 1986), 16-17. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 21-63. Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood. Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Virginia: University of North Carolina Press

not mean a Masonic project or unit in any sense. In fact, despite its global nature, Freemasonries, historically, have been characterized by internal differences and divisions, as well as by emerging in accordance with the national interests of its place of origin.

By the nineteenth century, Freemasonries consolidated its presence in the colonies and other overseas territories thanks to imperialist expansion. The various Masonic authorities expanded their influence by appointing great provincial masters or by organizing ultramarine lodges and grand district lodges through the transoceanic routes between the continental masses. Freemasonry came with imperialisms to Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, the three Americas and the Caribbean.

A key factor in understanding the spread of Freemasonry during the second half of the nineteenth century was the development of the British Treaty System. This consisted of an extension of the British global order established in Asia, with the aim to eliminate local institutional structures and replace them with the forced creation of legal frameworks to guarantee the security of foreign interests. With this, a dynamic of global exchanges between Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Ottoman Empire, Calcutta (India), Siam, Hanoi (Vietnam), China and Japan was imposed⁵³, transforming its port spaces and consolidating the development of commercial, labor, diplomatic, military, missionary and of course, Masonic networks. From the Caribbean and the coast of California, through the islands of Hawaii, Tahiti and Fiji to Batavia (now Jakarta), Japan, China and India, Masonic networks participated in the reconstruction of the Pacific world as a tool partaking in the development of the British global order⁵⁴.

The expansion of the Masonic structures led to the appointment of great provincial masters in Sumatra, Ceylon, Punjab, the Ottoman Empire⁵⁵, Aden or Egypt⁵⁶; as well as to the organization of new district grand lodges in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Natal, Transvaal in South Africa, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria and East Africa. These events coincided with the advance of imperialism in Asia and Africa. The British global order arrived by the hand of Freemasonry, thanks to its functions of social insertion, sociability and identity.

Chapel Hill & London, 1996), 50-84. Mollès, “Triangle atlantique et triangle latin”. Felipe Santiago del Solar, *Las Logias de Ultramar. En torno a los orígenes de la Francmasonería en Chile 1850-1862* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Occidente Historia, 2012). Claude Wauthier, “A Strange Inheritance: Africa’s Freemasons”, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (1997), <http://mondediplo.com/1997/09/masons>

⁵³ Jürgen Osterhammel, *La transformación del mundo: Una Historia Global del siglo XIX*, trans. Gonzalo García (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2015), 398-409.

⁵⁴ To expand about the reconstruction of the Pacific World from the eighteenth century due to the geopolitical and commercial expansion of European imperialism, it could consult the work of David Iglar, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵⁵ Dorothe Sommer, *Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Fraternity and its Influence in Syria and the Levant* (London: Tauris, 2013).

⁵⁶ Karim Wissa Source, “Freemasonry in Egypt 1798-1921: A Study in Cultural and Political Encounters”, *Bulletin British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 2 (1989): 143-161.

With the arrival of the twentieth century, the global Masonic dynamic was characterized by the expansion of American and Scottish Freemasonries. The Grand Lodge of Scotland organized two district grand lodges in Shanghai and Hong Kong, in the Caribbean⁵⁷, the United States, Canada, Madras, Bombay, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa⁵⁸, places where there were already English, Dutch, Swedish and French Freemasonries. In the Latin American case, the development of Freemasonry was characterized by its participation in the constructions of nation-states, an event that requires further scholarly research. For the period between world wars, the networks determined by the crossing of the squadron and the compass, figured in the landscape of the nations⁵⁹.

IV.

In synthesis, Global History proposes to analyze different social processes in global terms, which, in research that includes Freemasonry as an object of study, would permit to combat the common vices in the Social Sciences concerning the methodological nationalisms and the Eurocentric approaches.

During the last three centuries, Freemasonry was part of the prevailing global order, by incorporating and legitimizing its norms and hegemonic ideologies deep within political value systems. It also integrated participants from different imperial networks, from commercial enterprises, to diplomats, members of the armed forces and even religious missionaries. In addition, when the Masonic initiation of natives in “the peripheral worlds” was approved, Freemasonries, due to its entry requirements, co-opted the elites of these societies, individuals who mostly presented a “westernized profile”, including many cases of conversion to Christianity, but above all, people inserted in the dynamics of markets established by the British global order throughout the nineteenth century.

Therefore, the implementation of the methodological approaches of Global History enables us to deconstruct the traditional delimitations of Freemasonries, while bringing us closer to understand and interpret its theoretical dynamics from different foci. One might think, for example, of the networks of associative units of the overseas Chinese between the Pacific and Caribbean worlds: the Chee Kung Tong 致公堂⁶⁰, in the syncretic Pocomia

⁵⁷ Ferrer Benimeli, “Vías de penetración de la masonería en el Caribe”, *REHMLAC* 1, no. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2009): 2-19, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/REHMLAC/article/view/6853/6540>

⁵⁸ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 41.

⁵⁹ Mollés, “Le système-monde maçonnique à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale: une analyse archéologique”, *REHMLAC* 6, no. 2 (diciembre 2014-abril 2015): 12-32, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rehmlac/article/view/18196/22736>

⁶⁰ José Luis Chong, “Chinos masones”. La logia Chee Kung Tong 致公堂 en México”, *REHMLAC* 7, no. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2015): 141-157, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/REHMLAC/article/view/19949/20105>

lodges of the Caribbean Creoles, in new interpretations for the “Revolutionary Brotherhoods” during the processes of independence in America⁶¹; or in the development of the Esoteric and Mystical Theosophical Freemasonry led from Adyar, India. All this is important, since in spite of this sociability being the associative materialization of the ideals of Modernity, Global History could collaborate in observing the divergences and otherness of Freemasonries, its “others”, that is, the true socio-historical construct that it has been for the last 300 years.

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⁶¹ Del Solar, “Secreto y Sociedades Secretas en la crisis del Antiguo Régimen. Reflexiones para una historia interconectada con el mundo hispánico”, *REHMLAC* 3, no. 2 (diciembre 2011-abril 2012): 132-156, <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/REHMLAC/article/view/6578/6269>

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