

Academic Society for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism

The Academic Society for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism aims to advance research and scholarship into the various manifestations of freemasonry and fraternalism.

The journey towards the establishment of research into freemasonry and fraternalism as an academic topic started more than two hundred and fifty years ago. When four lodges in London decided to form the first Grand lodge in 1717, an amazing development in associational life in Europe began.

Freemasonry in our understanding has yet to be subsumed under a larger scope of analysis – fraternalism, an element of human culture and nature that represents the idea of organized community. Fraternal associations, from the Garden of Epicurus via the guilds of the Middle Ages to communities on the Internet, share common features and inner dynamics. Freemasonry is a well developed and documented fraternal organization and it makes sense to study it in its own right. However, we will probably never reach a full understanding of one of the most fascinating and thought-provoking phenomena in human culture if it is not properly contextualized. Hence we invite contributions in both the specialised field of freemasonry and the wider field of fraternalism.

As freemasonry and related organizations attracted intellectuals it is not surprising that many of them had a deep interest in researching its history, origin and symbolism. Members of these organisations produced investigations and surveys on these topics, leading in the nineteenth century to the establishment of internal research organizations such as the lodge of research Quatuor Coronati in London. But it was not until a century later that freemasonry finally became an academic subject. It is thanks to the groundbreaking contributions by scholars during the last decades of the twentieth century that academia became aware of a long-neglected topic. Since then, academic chairs and centres devoted to freemasonry have been established, and a growing number of researchers in various fields – ranging from eighteenth century scholars to religious and art historians – devote themselves to the fascinating world of fraternal organizations.



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Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism is the first collaborative academic journal in its field. It is published by Equinox Publishing on behalf of the Academic Society for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism. The journal focusses upon associational life in general, and freemasonry in particular, and its role in the development of societies and ideas over time, integrating studies in this area into the more general theoretical and methodological boundaries of liberal arts disciplines (e.g. anthropology, art and music history, the history of ideas and religions, classics, comparative literature, history, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology). Particular attention will be given to articles and reviews, which reflect how research into freemasonry and fraternal organizations link with broader theoretical issues such as nationalism, gender or performance.

Attention to aspects of freemasonry and fraternalism outside Europe is of special interest.

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Contents of Volume 2.1, a special issue on American Freemasonry and Fraternalism, guest edited by Aimee E. Newell

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