

# ACADÉMIE DES SUBLIMES MAÎTRES DE L'ANNEAU LUMINEUX

**(Academy of the Sublime Masters of the Luminous Ring)**

**(1780)**

**By Robert Burns Lodge 59**

The Académie des Sublimes Maîtres de l'Anneau Lumineux (Academy of the Sublime Masters of the Luminous Ring) was a masonic order founded in France in 1780 by Baron Blaerfindy, a Scottish master-at-arms. As the original quote indicates, this Academy was one of many masonic orders that proliferated in the late 18th century, drawing inspiration from esoteric and occult philosophies such as Pythagoreanism. This research paper will analyze the history, structure, and esoteric character of the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres, elucidating its place in the rich tapestry of European masonic movements in the Enlightenment era.

## **Founding and Early History**

The Académie des Sublimes Maîtres de l'Anneau Lumineux was founded in 1780 by Baron Grant Blaerfindy, a Scottish Freemason residing in France who held the military rank of master-at-arms (mestre-de-camp) (1). Blaerfindy was inspired by Pythagorean philosophy and mysticism to create the Academy as an appendant masonic order imparting esoteric wisdom to its initiates through a symbolic journey of three degrees.

In 1784, just four years after its founding, the new order was officially attached to the Masonic Lodge "La Parfaite Union" in the city of Douai (2). This connection with an established Masonic lodge lent further legitimacy and an institutional home to Blaerfindy's esoteric Academy. The early union with La Parfaite Union also indicates that the new initiatory order was quickly accepted by mainstream Freemasonry in France.

## **Structure and Ritual Symbolism**

The Académie des Sublimes Maîtres was organized into three initiatory degrees, which ceremonially conferred sacred wisdom upon candidates through the heavy use of Pythagorean philosophy and symbolism intermingled with masonic rituals and themes (3).

The first two degrees focused on the historical aspects of the order, with Pythagoras identified as a founder of Freemasonry through his ancient school of esoteric wisdom in Crotona, Italy (4). This mythical connection to Pythagoras would have resonated strongly

with occult-minded masons in the Age of Enlightenment, when grand theories tying Freemasonry to the ancient mystery schools were popular.

The third and final degree focused on the mystical teachings and doctrines of the order, building upon the historical narrative of the first two degrees (5). This tripartite structure mirrors Masonry's own three-degree system of initiation, demonstrating how Masonic lodges served as structural templates for newly invented esoteric and occult orders in 18th century Europe.

The name of the order itself contains layered occult symbolism. The "Luminous Ring" of the title evokes Pythagoras' mystical views on the solar system, geometric shapes, and the symbolic power of numbers. The number three held special significance for Pythagoreans, embodied in the Académie's three initiatory degrees. Light and luminosity also carried spiritual connotations for occultists during the Enlightenment, so the designation of the Academy's central symbol as a shining ring illustrates its embrace of esoteric solar mysticism (6).

### **Secrecy and Esotericism**

Masonic lodges in the 18th century emphasized secrecy, which helped foster an environment where esoteric philosophies could take root and flourish behind closed doors. As an appendant order of Masonry during this era, the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres likewise shrouded its rituals and doctrines in secrecy accessible only to initiated members. The playoffs of Pythagorean mysticism that structured the Academy's degrees required this veil of secrecy, as the "forbidden" knowledge imparted could only be fully grasped through cumulative stages of initiation.

The founders of the Académie claimed access to ancient lost wisdom from Pythagoras and other mystery schools, a hallmark of Western esotericism. The notion that powerful secret knowledge from antiquity could be rediscovered and mastered served as a siren call for eighteenth-century Rosicrucians, Theosophists, and amateur occultists alike (7). While obviously exaggerated, these pretensions to profound ancient knowledge gave the new Academy an elevated, elite aura. Its promised initiation into Pythagorean science and astronomy would surely have intrigued intellectually inclined Masons, helping boost the order's early popularity and diffusion.

Numerology and geomancy, both central to Pythagorean cosmology, feature heavily in the structure and rituals of the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres, underscoring the order's mystical and esoteric character. The tripartite system of three initiatory degrees relates directly to the mystical import of the number three according to Pythagorean sacred

geometry (8). Astronomical calculations and numerological speculations also shaped the Academy's solar mysticism of rings, circles, and celestial enlightenment. Through this rich tapestry of symbols, rituals, and occult philosophies, the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres codified and transmitted esoteric knowledge to its members.

### **Connections to Eighteenth-Century Esoteric Currents**

Situating the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres within the wider milieu of Enlightenment-era esotericism illuminates its connections to larger occult trends in the Western mystical tradition. Several currents of esoteric thought directly shaped Blaerfindy's masonic Academy of the Luminous Ring.

First, the renewed interest in Pythagoreanism as a font of ancient esoteric wisdom catalyzed the entire project of establishing an initiatory order focused on Pythagoras. The mystical Brotherhood of Pythagoras captivated occultist imagination in the 1700s, spurring massive interest in Neo-Pythogorean writings and ceremonial orders (9). Freemasonry's early integration of Pythagorean ideas and symbols enabled the further diffusion of this esoteric current.

Second, the Rosicrucian revival of the late 17th and 18th centuries profoundly influenced Masonry's growing attraction to mystical philosophies. Various masonic rites incorporated explicitly Rosicrucian elements, while Rosicrucian lodges began interacting more deeply with established Masonic orders. This increasing blend of Rosicrucianism with Masonry profoundly shaped the milieu that birthed the mystically-oriented Académie des Sublimes Maîtres (10).

Third, Theosophy and Illuminism, two major currents of esoteric thought in the Enlightenment, contributed to the occult speculation and synthesis embraced by the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres. Drawing upon these synergistic esoteric movements, the Academy crafted an elevated mystical worldview for its initiates, founded on synthesizing ancient wisdom traditions and infused with solar mysticism.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres de l'Anneau Lumineux represents a fascinating intersection of Masonry, Pythagoreanism, and esoteric mysticism in the rich tapestry of eighteenth-century occult movements. Its three initiatory degrees of solar mysticism and pseudo-Pythagorean history reveal Enlightenment Freemasonry's growing attraction to ancient esoteric philosophies from Egypt, Greece, and elsewhere. Through its unique synthesis of esoteric currents, the Académie des Sublimes Maîtres occupied an

important place in the transmission and codification of occult knowledge within elite Masonic circles during the Age of Enlightenment.

## References

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Masonic Lodge Located in Las Vegas, Nevada.  
Grand Lodge of F.:& A.:M.: of Nevada.