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**Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire**, *L'Europe des francs-maçons, XVIIIe-XXIe siècles*. Paris: Éditions Belin, 2002. 320 pp. Notes & bibliography. 15.50 € (pb). ISBN 2-701102835-8.

Review by Margaret C. Jacob, University of California at Los Angeles.

Most French historians do not realize that vast, unexamined archives were returned to Paris in 2000 from Moscow. Among them were over 750 large boxes of masonic manuscripts stolen by the Nazis from the Grand Orient on rue Cadet in June 1940. About thirty percent of the material is from the eighteenth century, another forty percent from the nineteenth; the rest from the twentieth. This remarkable perambulation, we might say, became possible as a result of the late eighteenth-century fantasies of the Abbé Barruel. He claimed that the freemasons had caused the French Revolution, and then in the nineteenth century the Jews got added to the plot about a conspiracy to subvert traditional authority. Scratch the surface of any far right movement—right down to our own Pat Robertson—and you will find supposed traces of the Jewish-masonic conspiracy that undermines all civilized values. So convinced of this were the Nazis that in 1940 they could not get to rue Cadet fast enough to confiscate masonic records and haul them off to Berlin to an institute established there to piece together the details of the conspiracy. As the Red Army approached, the documents were rushed to a chateau in Silesia, found, and in 1945 spirited off to Moscow where they were then hidden, only unearthed in the early 1990s. Finally, as debt mounted, the Russians were forced to return to various western European countries the spoils of war; they will probably never see what was stolen from them by the retreating German army.

In this treasure trove of documents French masonic historians have been busily at work, although some old habits are still present in the new research. Seldom do its practitioners venture out of France. Well, you might ask, why should they if they are writing French history? The problem with doing French masonic history, particularly in the early period as Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire attempts in the opening of this book, is that the story begins in England and Scotland. The lodges were imported into France, sometimes via the Low Countries, from a variety of British sources. Unfortunately, the Moscow documents, although wonderfully rich for Bordeaux, for the Scottish Rite, for women's freemasonry, and much else, have little to tell us about the origins of the French lodges. Beaurepaire, who is a very accomplished member of the new generation of masonic historians, has, alas, chosen to hold the "party line" about Jacobites and English ambassadors coming to Paris (hence obviating his own foreign travel.) He thus excludes from the story of freemasonry's continental origins any of the Whig and freethinking connections made by French Huguenots in The Hague, men like Rousset de Missy and Prosper Marchand. This makes the story of freemasonry's spread less exciting and complicated than it could have been. He also fails to make much of the new evidence from the Moscow archives, proving that there had been a lodge for women in Bordeaux as early as 1746. The masonic story he tells is still a very masculine one.

Beaurepaire has produced a general survey of freemasonry in Europe from the 1720s to the 1930s. It is a good, general work intended for the intelligent reader, and it ranges across the whole of Europe. Its glossary of terms is particularly useful for non-masonic users, as are the maps. But Beaurepaire is also a formidable scholar superbly trained by Daniel Roche, among others. The international community of scholars would like to see him take on the complexities of the story of freemasonry's role in the Radical

Enlightenment, enter into the historiographical challenge presented by documents written in French but found in London and Leiden and try to assess their provenance and nature, and not simply pretend that they do not exist or are not relevant to the story he wants to tell. We would also like him, however briefly, to follow the life of one lodge in depth, as is now possible from the Moscow archives for *La Loge Anglaise* in Bordeaux, and to show how the turmoil of the 1790s and beyond affected it in order to show what it was like to live the Enlightenment from the 1730s when the lodge was persecuted by Cardinal Fleury to the time of Napoleon when it was slowly reconstituted under a centralized authority. But I ask too much. The book is a European-wide survey that gracefully communicates a mass of information about freemasonry and that has no counterpart at present in English. French scholarship on freemasonry aimed at the general reader is still more sophisticated than what can be found in the Anglo-American book market, and we have some catching up to do.

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