

Under the Auspices of the Grand Lodge Alpina of Switzerland
(www.freimaurerei.ch)



Portrait of the

ARG

Alpina Research Group



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THE ALPINA RESEARCH GROUP (ARG)

The ARG is an association founded in September 1985 at Bern (Switzerland), whose aim is to unite Master Masons interested in doing research in various domains: symbolism, ritual, philosophy, history, literature, arts, as well as exploring the future.

The ARG was officially recognized by the Grand Lodge of Switzerland in 2002 as the unique research body in the country. As an independent institution, it functions autonomously and involves close relationships with other research Lodges in Europe and overseas.

The ARG has been officially linked with the *Quatuor Coronati* Research Lodge in Bayreuth, Germany, since 1992. It has also been an associate member of the Australia and New Zealand Masonic Research Council (ANZMRC) since 2004.

From the very beginning, the ARG has sought to function in the three official languages spoken in Switzerland. Its working language is presently French, whereas the two other tongues (German and Italian) occupy a secondary role for the moment. However, English is increasingly in the limelight.

Switzerland is a small country, with a large ambition for internationalism. Similarly, the ARG nurtures a will for narrowing the distance between Masons geographically far apart, but sharing the same taste for research.

ACTIVITIES

The ARG of course aims a good part of its activity to support the instruction of Swiss Apprentices, Fellow Craft and Master Masons. But its research activities involve sought-after breakthroughs in all aspects of Masonry and its relationship with the profane world. Tradition in this respect means consolidating past discoveries and experience in the light of progress. However, the historical background of Masonry is only a part of the research body. Modern psychological work for example is currently making large contributions to the understanding of the initiating process.

Frequent exchange with other Masonic research bodies at large makes it possible to broaden the scope of work being pursued inside Switzerland and vice-versa.

Globally, the ARG is active in the following fields:

- Publishing a twice-yearly magazine named *Masonica* available to its members
- Organizing conferences twice a year in Lausanne, either by its active members or foreign speakers
- Publishing its *Newsletter* two to three times a year
- Preparing instruction material, under the mandate of Grand Lodge, i.e. the *Catechisms* for the first three degrees in three languages (2005-2010), and a more than 500-page *Guide for the new Mason*, also in three languages (first printed in 1998, new edition to be published 2016)
- Sending its own conference specialists to other Swiss cities and abroad; in Fall of 2025, by special invitation of the ANZMRC, our Webmaster and ARG past president **Michel Jaccard toured more than 24 Research Lodges** in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Setting up workshops to examine present-day subjects
- Writing university-level articles for foreign Masonic research publications
- Establishing a pool of facts with an ever broadening Web presence
- Analysing underlying mental phenomena functioning during ritual workings
- Widening a consistent array of books, dictionaries and reference material; with special care for approximately 30 magazines, periodical bulletins, and yearly transactions



MEMBERS

- 21 active members
- around 390 corresponding members on all continents
- 22 Craft Lodges in Switzerland
- 41 friendly research Lodges and independent searchers abroad

WORK IN PROGRESS

The ARG abides by its own statutes under Swiss law and organizes statutory meetings four times a year, usually in Lausanne, in addition to more frequent committee meetings and work groups.

A standing committee of 8 to 9 members attends to current matters and prepares the stated meetings. All outgoing information is supervised by this Committee, which works on a voluntary, non-paid basis in order to keep costs as low as possible.

Correspondence members must be Master Masons in good standing with their Lodge; they can also be female. They are regularly informed about Masonic highlights, publications, new literature, etc., but on the other hand, freely invited to contribute to the work in progress.

Active members are elected according to the following prerequisites:

- Master Mason status and in good standing with his Lodge
- Must indulge in research work, present a sound Masonic Curriculum Vitae, and produce a more than 10-page scholarly article on a specific subject in one of the three national languages
- Must be elected unanimously.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

The ARG keeps permanent contact with research Lodges in Europe: England, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Czechoslovakia; on other continents: USA, South America, Australia and New Zealand through the ANZMRC. Emphasis is presently put on the intensification of exchanges with our friends from New Zealand and Australia. For instance, several ARG papers have already been published in English by *Harashim* and by the *Southern California Research Lodge*.

ANZMRC has just published a 330 pages book *Continental Freemasonry: Philosophy, Development and Worldwide Impact*, reflecting Michel Jaccard's tour in the Southern Hemisphere, and containing the 16 subjects presented to more than 20 research Lodges.

Regular exchange of information with these Lodges, in both directions, enables the ARG to keep abreast of significant breakthroughs on fundamental subjects and make them available to its growing circle of active and corresponding members. Seminars, symposiums, exhibitions, and other gatherings fulfil and extend this goal.

LECTURES

The results of research by ARG members reaches a wide array of Masons eager to pierce the mysteries of symbolism, ritual, history, philosophy, tradition, and other modern topics of interest, not only in Lausanne, but throughout Switzerland and abroad.

Such activities considerably broaden the scope of traditional ritualistic workings within the individual Lodge, arousing an active interest in much wider psychological, historical, sociological, literary, and other important mechanisms that are active “behind the scenes”. This has proved to be of vital interest to Masonic leaders worldwide, who seek to stop the loss of members after initiation.

ARG PARTICULARITIES

Our well-appreciated magazine “*Masonica*” draws increasing attention to matters not usually treated by other magazines, according to the following basic principles:

- Choice of topics having immediate relevance for Masonry, its perspectives, philosophy, worldwide spread, political and historical issues, various special matters, all of which are treated from an original, well developed and transparent point of view.
- Authentic new treatment of Masonic content, excluding sensational, emotional, and personal dimensions.
- Particular care about precision and honesty of quotes regarding source material.
- Objectivity and coherence of the subject matter, including a high quality of language.

RESEARCH

Research means a marked interest in going further along the many paths of interpretation and comprehension of all the various steps of personal development, coupled with a thorough study of ritualistic work and its implications in the initiative process. Compared to current articles in the press, a rigorous Masonic treatment of the subject matter is required, regarding academic standards.

The oldest model of historical research established itself within the activities of *Quatuor Coronati*, London, the premier Lodge of research in the world (1886). It personified the “authentic” current of historical facts, based on original documents often difficult to consult. Although its principles of honesty in the interpretation of ancient handwritten documents still prevail, modern research in humanities has gone much further in exploring the manifold interpretations of language, rituals, spiritual and psychological insights, anthropological and sociological implications and even artistic interpretations. This feeling is shared by numerous research Lodges around the world, including the ARG: Masonry is obliged to reinvent itself with each new generation, in order to be credible and attract new prospects to individual Lodges. Research in this perspective is essential to a normal renewal of Lodge members and, accordingly, to the future of Masonry itself.

RESEARCH LODGES IN THE WORLD

Excluding organizations involved in the instruction of new members or rehearsals by Lodge officers and other forms of personal improvement, actual Lodges and academic bodies involved in authentic research number some 100 in the world. Most work in connection with their respective jurisdictions and, as such, are financially dependent. A few entities, such as the ARG, are totally independent, but work hand in hand with their respective jurisdictions, as far as development of instruction material is concerned. Scientifically oriented research bodies thus have the opportunity of making progress in the study of various segments of Masonic life and heritage. The results of all these studies, publications and conferences are essential to the healthy functioning of a progressive, dynamic, and responsible Masonry.

The list of these research Lodges can be found on the Google link:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Lodge

SOME SIGNIFICANT AND RECENT CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH PAPERS

Prof. J.A. Ferrer Benimeli, *The Ups and Downs of Spanish Masonry*
(11.25.2000)

Prof Aldo Mola, *Recent Italian Masonry* (11.22.2003)

Prof. Jan Snoek, *Three Steps Towards the Degree of Master Mason* (11.19.2005)

Prof. Christian Hervé, *Ethics and Freemasonry* (11.25.2006)

Jean-Pierre Augier, *The Future of Masonic Research* (5.20.2010)

Jean-Paul Holstein, *Musical Creation and Masonic Initiation* (11.27.2010)

Denis Labouré, *Egyptian Masonry* (4.27.2013)

Jean-Marc Pétillot, *The Spirit and historical evolution of the Rectified Rite* (5.3.2014)

And, recently:



Michel Warnery, *Masonic Symbolism and the Far East* (4.18.2015)



Alain Graesel, Past GM GLF, *Which Humanism in this 21st Century?* (10.3.2015)

THE SEAL OF THE ARG



The round form pictures the Earth, our Blue Planet, a perfect beginning for all geometrical developments: WISDOM

The outer spikes recall the radiation of the ARG outside its geographical limits as well as the border of the Lodge carpet

The Sacred Egyptian Triangle ($36^\circ+36^\circ+108^\circ$) mirrors the pediment of Greek temples in accordance with Pythagoras and Plato; its colour is blood-red, symbolising the flame of Strength

The three letters ARG form the supporting columns adorning the Temple façade

Three dots signify that handwriting lies at the start of all research; they hold the structure together and underline the solidity of geometrical outline in medieval structures

The gilding of the outer circle makes reference to GOLD, the search for the alchemical Philosophical Stone, but also to BEAUTY

2015 marked the 30th Birthday of the ARG!