

On the Manner that Some European Historians Assess Autochthonous Freemasonry of the Spanish Antilles, during the Second Half of the XIX Century:

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Submitted to Ars Quatuor Coronatorum

Final: June 21, 2017

Accepted: June 23, 2017

Published: Vol. 131, 327—352. 2018

Abstract

We present a historical analysis of the development of *Autochthonous Freemasonry* in Spanish Greater Antilles (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic) during the second half of the XIX Century, and compare it to the perception provided by several Spanish and French academic historians. In the process we point out significant omissions and miss-interpretations made by such European authors, correcting them as necessary, and we develop a statistical model to support our main findings.

Keywords: Freemasons, Spanish Greater Antilles, XIX Century, independence and autonomy.

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1.0 Introduction

The Autochthonous² Grand Lodges of the Spanish Greater Antilles (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic) have been studied by several European academic historians, in the past twenty five years. Some have done it as part of their study of Spanish Freemasonry in these islands, including Professors Ayala³, Ferrer Benimeli⁴ and Castellano Gil⁵. Others, such as Prof. Soucy⁶, have undertaken a specific study of an Autochthonous Freemasonry. These latter have, apparently, been influenced by the concepts in the books of the former authors.

Moreover, the two books written by Professors Castellano Gil and Soucy stem from their doctoral dissertations, directed by two well-known specialists in this field: Prof. Paz⁷, for Castellano's dissertation, and Prof. Estrade⁸, for Soucy's dissertation. The responsibilities of a dissertation advisor include reading and approving the material included in the Defense. Thence, dissertation advisors also become responsible for the dissertation material they have authorized.

Because the AQC audience of this paper is mostly from outside the Spanish Caribbean, region, and may not be as aware as we are of its historical circumstances, we will begin with a short geographic introduction, combined with a brief history of the region's travels to independence, followed by a section listing the various countries involved, its Grand Lodges, including their dates of formation and closing, famous figures, etc. sufficient to provide the AQC reader with the necessary context for its full appreciation.

We will then discuss four key concepts alleged by the above-mentioned six professors, making it clear where our interpretation differs from theirs, and why. Said concepts are:

² Independent of foreign (Masonic) Obediences, and integrated mostly by the people of these islands (Creoles).

³ Jose A Ayala. La masonería puertorriqueña de obediencia española: siglo XIX. Secretariado de Publicaciones, Universidad de Murcia, Spain. 1991. Referenced in this paper as *Obediences*.

⁴ José A, Ferrer Benimeli: (1) *Apuntes históricos de la masonería cubano-española del siglo XIX*. CEHME, 1993; (2) *La logia dominicana Aurora No. 82 de San Pedro de Macorís (1889-1923)*. En REHMLAC, Vol. 3, Nº 2, Diciembre 2011-Abril 2012.

⁵ Jose M. Castellano Gil. La Masonería Española en Cuba. Centro de Cultura Popular Canaria. Santa Cruz de Tenerife. 1996. Referenced in this paper as *Masonería*.

⁶ Dominique Soucy: (1) Masonería y Nación. Editorial Escuadra y Compas. Sta. Cruz de Tenerife. 2006; (2) with Delphine Sappez, *Autonomismo y masonería en Cuba*. REMLAC Vol. 1, No. 1. 2009

⁷ Manuel de Paz. *Masonería Española y Emancipación Colonial*. Revista de las Indias. Vol. LXVI (238).

⁸ His bibliography <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/> includes *Betances mason inconforme*; Decanato Estudios Graduados.

- That Cuban Autochthonous Grand Lodge of Columbus (GLCol), and Puerto Rico's Sovereign (GLSPR), that derived from the GLCol were *Cuban-American*, suggesting that they were somehow dependent from, and subservient to, American Grand Lodges.
- That the members of said *Obediences* lacked a consistent ideology because, in different epochs, said members favored autonomy, independence, reform or annexation.
- That the GLCol & GLSPR did not respond to Creole class ideology and political interests
- That Spanish *Obediences* or *Grand Lodges* could invade these already-occupied masonic territories, including that of the Dominican Republic, an independent republic.

These concepts will be analyzed and contrasted using the work of academic and masonic historians from The Americas. Our sources include, for Cuba, Miranda⁹, Denslow¹⁰, Murphy¹¹, Fernández Callejas¹², Torres Cuevas¹³ and Romeu¹⁴; for Puerto Rico, Cordero¹⁵, Rodríguez Escudero¹⁶, González.Ginorio¹⁷ and Pereira¹⁸; and for the Dominican Republic, López Penha¹⁹,

⁹ Aurelio Miranda y Álvarez, Historia documentada de la masonería en Cuba. Ed. Molina. La Habana.. 1933.

¹⁰ Ray V. Denslow, American historian who wrote about Cuban and Puertorrican Freemasonry in his two books: *Freemasonry in the Western Hemisphere* (1953), 317—337, Cuba; y 317—348, Puerto Rico.; (2) Cuba, Queen of the Antilles (1944). Both books are accesible in the *Library of the Grand Lodge of Iowa*.

¹¹ W. Murphy. *A History of Freemasonry in Cuba*. Walter.Meir Lodge of Research. V. 4. 1974. Pp. 69—78.

¹² Roger Fernández Callejas. Cien Años de Actividad Masónica. Edited by Academia Cubana de Altos Estudios Masónicos of the Grand Lodge of Cuba. La Habana. 1961.

¹³ Torres Cuevas, Eduardo: (1) Historia de la Masonería Cubana: Seis Ensayos. Edición Imágenes Contemporáneas. La Habana. 2003. (2) *Masonería en Cuba durante el Siglo XIX*. REHMLAC, Vol. 3. No. 2. (3) *El Proyecto Independentista de 1868 y la Masonería Cubana*. Casa de Altos Estudios. Habana.

¹⁴ Jorge L. Romeu. (1) *Cuban Freemasons: Analysis of a Unique Niche*. Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, V. 127, 217—240. 2014; (2) *Estudio Demografico del Nuevo Auge de la Gran Logia de Cuba*. Actas del CEHME Gibraltar. V. 1 pp. 581—600. 2014. (3) *Apuntes para un Estudio Comparativo de las Masonerías Autóctonas de Cuba y Puerto Rico*. *Simp. Historia de la Masoneria. Española: CEHME* Gijón. 2015 (in press).

¹⁵ Modesto Cordero. *Apuntes Históricos de la Masonería en Puerto Rico*. Junto al Ara. Ed. Voz Escolar. Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Pp. 25—51.

¹⁶ Néstor Rodríguez Escudero. Apuntes Sobre la Historia de la Masonería Puertorriqueña. Edited by GLSPR. San Juan, Puerto Rico. 1964.

¹⁷ José González Ginorio. Luminarias. Edited by GLSPR. San Juan, Puerto Rico. Circa 1934.

¹⁸ Miguel A. Pereira. *Las relaciones exteriores de la Gran Logia Soberana de Libres y Aceptados Masones de Puerto Rico como elemento de afirmación de la identidad nacional puertorriqueña, 1885-1888*. Doctoral Dissertation. Dpto. History. Universidad Inter Americana de Puerto Rico. Recinto Metropolitano. 2015.

¹⁹ Haím H. Lopez Penha. La Masonería en Santo Domingo. Ciudad Trujillo, 1956.

Ghasmann²⁰ and Moya Pons²¹. The latter authors mentioned in each Caribbean country group above, are academic historians.

For historical background we have consulted among other texts, Moreno Fragnals²² and Masó²³, for Cuba, Franco Pichardo²⁴, for Haití and Santo Domingo, Morales Carrión²⁵, for Puerto Rico, and Comellas²⁶, for Spain. To document the autonomic developments we consulted, among other sources, Bizcarrondo²⁷, Bizcarrondo and Elorza²⁸, and Guiven Flores²⁹.

Some academic historians have criticized³⁰ Masonic historians on the grounds that these idealize, embellish or in other ways alter historical events to make Freemasonry look good. This is, sometimes, the case. Academic historians, however, are not exempt of similar problems. As we will show in this paper, several academics have also embellished, manipulated, changed or omitted historical facts that improve the image of colonial authorities and *Obediences*, or demean the image of the Autochthonous *Obediences*.

Therefore, in the rest of this paper the history of the Spanish Antilles and its Grand Lodges, during the XIX Century, is briefly overviewed to provide the historical context in which these Masonic organizations operated. Then, we contrast and discuss the four concepts stated above, providing documentation that support our position. Then, we develop a statistical model to support *our key assertion* that *Autochthonous Freemasonry was a school or leaders*. Finally, we provide some general conclusions.

²⁰ Jean Ghasmann Bissainthe. *Papel de la masonería Haití-RD en siglo XIX*. *Hoy Digital*: <http://hoy.com.do/papel-de-la-masoneria-haiti-rd-en-siglo-xix/> Accedido (IV/2015).

²¹ Frank Moya Pons. *Para estudiar la masonería*. *Diario Libre.com* (23 de Agosto, 2008), appeared in: http://www.diariolibre.com/noticias/2008/08/23/i30109_para-estudiar-masonera.html Accedido (IV/2015).

²² Manuel Moreno Fragnals, *El Ingenio*. La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1978.

²³ Masó, Calixto. *Historia de Cuba*. Ediciones Universal, Miami. 1998.

²⁴ Franklin Franco Pichardo. *Historia del Pueblo Dominicano*. Sociedad Editorial Dominicana., 3ra Ed. 2002.

²⁵ Arturo Morales Carrión. *Puerto Rico: a political and Cultural History*. Norton & Co. NY/American Association for State & Local History. Nashville. 1983.

²⁶ José Luis Comellas. *Historia de España Moderna y Contemporánea*. Ed. RIALP. Madrid

²⁷ Bizcarrondo, M. *El Autonomismo Cubano: 1878-98: las ideas y los hechos*. *Historia Contemporánea*. UAM. Vol. 19, pp. 69--94. 1999.

²⁸ Bizcarrondo, M. y A. Elorza. *Cuba/España: El dilema autonomista 1878-98*. Colibrí. Madrid. 2001

²⁹ Cesar Guiven Flores. *Vigencia en Puerto Rico de la Carta Autonómica de 1897*. *Anuario Mexicano de Historia del Derecho*, N°. 10, 1998, pp. 399—423.

³⁰ See, for example, the prologue of Prof. Ferrer Benimeli to Castellano Gil's book *Masonería Española en Cuba*, (pp. 16 -17); or the concepts written by Prof. Castellano, in the first chapter of his mentioned book.

2.0 Overview of the Spanish Antilles Historical Background

The *Antilles* are the archipelago that borders the Caribbean Sea on the North and the East. They are divided into the *Greater Antilles* (the islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico), and the *Lesser Antilles*, a string of smaller islands that run South from the Virgin Islands, West of Puerto Rico, to Trinidad and Tobago, off the coast of Venezuela. The Northern coast of Venezuela and Colombia, and the Eastern coast of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Yucatan, constitute the Southern and Western limits of the Caribbean. This sea was, to the Antilles and Central and South America, similar to the Mediterranean for Southern Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa: the vehicle of exchange and transport.

The Greater Antilles were discovered by Christopher Columbus in the 1490s, during his first and second trips to America. They were, thence, the first Spanish colonial posts in America. However, their pre-eminence was short-lived. In 1519, Hernan Cortes sailed from Cuba and conquered Mexico. Shortly after, other Spanish conquistadors discovered Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia, where gold, silver, emeralds and copper (which the Antilles did not have) was found. Its Spanish settlers quickly moved out, leaving these islands semi-abandoned.

During the XVII Century, Spain lost Jamaica to the British, and Haiti (Saint Domingue, in the West part of Hispaniola) to the French. All the Lesser Antilles were colonized by English, French and Dutch, who brought in tens of thousands of African slaves and planted sugar.

Throughout the next two Centuries, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic (the Eastern part of Hispaniola) remained three poor, sparsely populated agricultural colonies³¹. In contrast, the English and French “sugar islands” became the richest European colonies of their time, due to their large production of sugar produced by an overwhelmingly slave population.

Spain invested in its rich Mexican and South American colonies and spent very little time or capital in the Spanish Antilles. Only Havana, Cuba’s capital, had importance as the port where the Spanish Fleet met, to sail with its shipment of gold, silver and species, back to Europe. The rest, was left to their own scant resources, which encouraged illegal commerce with freebooters.

³¹ For comparison, English and French *sugar islands* had a slave population of over 90%; while Spanish Antilles, slave population, before 1800, was always less than 1/3 of the total. See data in the book by Dr. Eric Williams.

Roads were few and rough. Communication was by sea, between the few big cities: San Juan in Puerto Rico; Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata in Hispaniola; Havana and Santiago, in Cuba. Two universities, in Havana and Santo Domingo, taught scholastic topics to few students.

In 1762, during the *Seven Years War*, Britain took Havana, and held it for two years. Its strategic position induced Spain to trade it for Florida, which Spain recovered a few years later, as a war prize for helping the Americans fight their revolution for independence.

It was only after Spain lost its continental colonies in America, that it started dedicating attention to its two remaining colonies in the Caribbean: Cuba and Puerto Rico. And this is when the real social and economic development of the Spanish Antilles really began.

Such important changes started with the *1790s Slave Revolt in Haiti* (or Saint Domingue) strongly impacted the life and economy way beyond the Antilles. For hundreds of white French colonists emigrated with their families to neighboring Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the USA, taking with them their skills and their masonic lodges³². The Eastern (Spanish) part of Hispaniola (today's Dominican Republic) was then successively invaded by Haitian, Spanish, British and French troops ruining the country and creating another exodus among Dominican upper classes.

After the economic destruction of Saint Domingue (Haiti), Cuba filled its place in the world sugar market. Consequently hundreds of thousands of new slaves were introduced during the XIX Century and immigration thrived. Cuba developed fast. And Creoles started reclaiming a larger political and economic standing from colonial Spain.

Fathers Caballero, in 1808, and Varela, in 1821, presented to Spain two autonomic projects. After 1820, Jose A. Saco, Cuba's first statesman, and Jose de la Luz, spent decades teaching, writing, and submitting autonomic projects requesting for Cuba a system similar to the one Britain had in Canada: an insular elected parliament under a Governor representing Spain. But Spain constantly harassed and deported Creoles who disputed its absolute rule. Annexation to the USA was then considered. Finally, in 1868, after all hope of obtaining autonomy from Spain was lost Cuba went to war for its independence.

³² During the XVIII Century, France, and hence also its colonies, were deeply into Freemasonry.

Puerto Rico, smaller and poorer than Cuba, evolved in a similar manner. In 1809 Ramon Power Giralt, who also supported autonomy, was elected to the Spanish Cortes (Parliament). Bro. Eugenio Ma. Hostos, during the 1860s, proposed in Madrid a *Spanish Antilles Autonomous Confederation* (of the three Spanish islands) Finally, also after losing hope, an uprising took place in 1868, similar to that in Cuba. It was soon overcome by Spain, who then offered political and economic reforms to thwart this other embryonic revolutionary movement.

The Cuban war of 1868-1878 failed to bring about independence. Thence, autonomy under Spain was considered the next best solution. However, Spain created all sorts of obstacles, until finally Cubans went again to war, in 1895. With the help of American troops, Cuba obtained its independence. Puerto Rico was taken over by the USA as a war prize.

Dominican Republic's history was very different. From 1796 to 1809 they suffered the devastation from several wars and invasions³³, followed by neglect and stagnation back under Spain. In 1821, the Dominicans declared their independence, but were soon invaded by the Haitians, who feared that their territory would be again used to attack and re-instate slavery.

Dominicans were under Haitian occupation until 1844 when they rebelled and proclaimed again their own Republic. But poverty, and the constant threat of another Haitian invasion, made them pursue annexation to France, the USA and, finally Spain, who accepted them as a province. Soon, Spaniards clashed with largely mixed race, free Dominicans, accustomed to participate in government. These were very different social conditions to those existing in Cuba and Puerto Rico, where Creoles, many of which were also free and mixed race, were deprived of rights.

As a result, Dominicans rebelled and reinstated their republic. Spain lost the opportunity (1) to establish an *Autonomous Spanish Antilles Confederation of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo* under Spanish Suzerainty, and (2) to avoid a military conflict with the United States, thirty years late³⁴, that caused Spain to lose their Navy in the battles of Manila and Santiago, as well as the remains of their Colonial Empire (Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico), an event that is remembered in Spanish history as *The Disaster of 1898*.

³³ Invasion of the French, English and Spaniard armies, as well as by the Haitian ex-slaves.

³⁴ During the Cuban Independence War of 1895 to 1898

The responsibility for Spain losing its Empire was not of disloyal Cuban and Puertorrican Creoles, Freemasonry, or the American Imperialism, as some have claimed. It was the disastrous Spanish colonial policy, implemented throughout the XIX Century by its government!

For, neither the 1808 *Junta de Cadiz*, nor king Ferdinand VII, nor the Liberal government of 1820-23, nor Ferdinand VII restoration, the regency and long reign of his daughter Isabella, nor the Revolution of 1868, the reign of king Amadeus of Savoy, the First Republic, nor the restoration of King Alphonse XII, gave Cuba and Puerto Rico their long-requested Autonomy.

Autochthonous Freemasonry, as we will show in this paper, *provided the vehicle* that allowed Cuban and Puerto Rican intellectuals and politicians *to gather, interact, improve their skills and ideas and bring their efforts to improve the governments of their islands, to fruition.*

3.0 Overview of the Spanish Antilles Masonic Background

We surveyed the literature, for *an English language history of Freemasonry in Spanish Antilles*. We found two books by Bro. Denslow, available in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, a paper by Bro. Murphy, all mentioned in Section 1, and a paper by Prof. Torres Cuevas³⁵ which include Cuba and Puerto Rico. Other sources³⁶ only covered English or French Antilles.

There exist many papers and books in Spanish about Freemasonry in the Spanish Antilles which are referenced in Section 1.0. To provide even a short history in English, would require a paper in itself. We write here an overview of such a history. for Cuba, based on the seminal work by Bro. Miranda, origin of all other sources, and on our own previous work; for Puerto Rico, on the book by Prof. Ayala, and for the Dominican Republic, on the book by Bro. Lopez Penha.

Freemasonry was forbidden in Spain; thence, also in all its colonies. However, in 1751-54 the Grand Lodge of England created eight Provincial Grand Master positions, one of them for Cuba³⁷. In 1762, during the time of the British occupation of Havana, sailor Cockburn was initiated in Irish Military Lodge #218. No Cuban took part, nor belonged to any Lodge during that time. These are two anecdotal incidents, only, without further consequences in Cuba.

³⁵ Torres Cuevas, Eduardo. *The Complicated Origins of Cuban Masonry: the Temple of the Theological Virtues*. REHMLAC: Special Issue: UCLA 2013. <http://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rehmlac/issue/view/2061>

³⁶ Books and papers by Gould, Seal-Coon, Atwell, Henderson and Pope, Findel, and Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia.

³⁷ Findel, Joseph. History of Freemasonry. Mentioned in Prof. Ferrer Benimeli's REHMLAC paper.

Freemasonry entered Spain in 1808, with the French armies. It entered Cuba and Puerto Rico, with the white French colonists that fled Saint Domingue, after the Slave Revolt of the 1790s. It entered the Dominican Republic with the French armies that went there to fight such revolt, and later with the Haitian invasion of 1822. In all three cases it lasted briefly, and was an exercise of the higher classes, as these islands were not well-developed, at the time.

Developments in Cuba (following Aurelio Miranda):

In 1798, French emigres from Haiti founded Lodges La Perseverance and La Concorde, in Santiago, and in Havana, Lodges L'Amitie and La Benefique Concorde. Charters (CH) were from the Grand Orient (GO) of France; members were French, and both had a short life. In 1804, Lodge Temple des Vertues Theologiques, Ch. Grand Lodge (GL) Pennsylvania, was created in Havana. Its first Worshipful Master (WM) was Joseph Cernaux, who later moved to New York, granted Higher Degrees of Scottish Rite, and created a schism in the Northern Jurisdiction. In 1805, Reunion de Coeurs was created in Santiago. Its WM was Antoine Bideaud, also moved to New York, and communicated the Higher Degrees of Scottish Rite to American Masons. Confirmed by the Mother Council of the Scottish Rite (Southern Jurisdiction) they became the first members of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite Northern Jurisdiction. In 1808, French troops invaded Spain: French citizens became Persona Non-Grata and most left Cuba for North Carolina, Louisiana, Pennsylvania or New York. And Freemasonry decayed.

After a hiatus of twelve years, due to the French invasion of 1808, the return of King Ferdinand VIII, and the rebellion of troops in Cadiz assembled to fight independence armies in Spanish America, the Constitution of 1812 was re-instated and Freemasonry was again allowed.

In Havana, the mainly pro-Spanish *Gran Oriente Territorial Espanol Americano del Rito Escoces* was created in 1818 (under Ch from GO France). In 1820, the *Gran Logia Espanola de Antiguos y Aceptados Masones del Rito de York* (Ch. from GL Penn.), headed by the Count of O'Reilly and other important and rich Creoles, was created. After a couple of years, Creoles also became pre-eminent in the *Gran Logia Espanola* and both Orients merged, with the objective of creating a single body, independent from the control of Spaniards (a similar situation arose

during the 1860s, as Creoles were always trying to establish their autonomy). But French troops invaded Spain, restored King Ferdinand VII, and Absolutism prescribed Freemasonry again.

There was again a long hiatus, of almost forty years, before Freemasonry could reappear. In 1857 two Lodges (Fraternidad and Prudencia) were created in Santiago. They tried to obtain the support of Grand Orient Hisperico Reformado, from Spain, but it was unavailable. The GL of South Carolina, through the intercession of Bros. Pike and Mackay, provided charters for a third Lodge (San Andres), thus enabling the creation of *Grand Lodge of Colon in 1859*. Its first Grand Master was Francisco Grinan. Bro. Andres Cassard, following instructions of, and with a Charter from Bro. Albert Pike, recently elected Supreme Commander of the *Mother Council of the Scottish Rite*, then created the *Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree (Colon) for Cuba and the Spanish Antilles*. Bro. Antonio Vinent, a rich Spanish noble, was its first Supreme Commander.

From the start, there were strong differences between the Supreme Council and the Grand Lodge of Colon, as Bro. Cassard had used the Naples Charter to create them, under which Grand Lodge was under the control of the Supreme Council. Bro. Pike then sent Bro. Vicente DeCastro to sort things out. Instead, Bro. DeCastro created another Obedience in 1862, the Gran Oriente de Cuba y Las Antillas (GOCA). Now there would be three bodies fighting for the pre-eminence.

As in the 1820s, Creoles started taking over the GL Colon. GOCA was completely in their hands, and was preparing an armed insurrection against Spain. For such political activities, GOCA was considered an *irregular* body. In 1868, Grand Secretary Benjamin Odio, with the support of *Grand Master Andres Puente Badell*, presented a new Constitution for the GL Colon, *separating the GL from the Supreme Council of Colon*, to which the latter strongly objected³⁸.

In 1868, the first *Cuban War of Independence* started, and GOCA disbanded. In 1870, *Grand Master Puente Badell*, Grand Treasurer, and several other important GL of Colon officers were murdered by Spanish troops near Santiago. Remnants of GOCA lodges plus several others from GL Colon created the first Provincial Grand Lodge of Havana, dissolved in 1874. A Second Provincial GL of Havana was created in 1875. The first Spanish *Obediences* appeared in Cuba.

³⁸ Creoles were, as in the 1820s, becoming pre-eminent in Grand Lodge, electing several of them to the Grand Line and sought more independence from the pro-Spanish Supreme Council. Almeida, Historia, Ch. XXIV has details.

In 1876 Bro. Aurelio Almeida, one of the most important Freemasons of the XIX Century, created the *GL of the Island of Cuba* in Havana. Also, GL Colon and the Supreme Council officially separated into two independent bodies. In 1877, GL Colon siege moved to Havana from Santiago, and *GM Antonio Govin is elected*.

In 1878, the first War of Independence ended with *Zanjon Peace Treaty*³⁹. In 1880 Grand Lodges of Colon and Isla de Cuba *merged into one body*⁴⁰, under GM Govín and the philosophy that *CLUCIC would strive to obtain by evolution, what had not been achieved by war*. Finally, in 1891, all the *Spanish Obediences* joined GLUCIC, creating a single masonic body in the Island: Gran Logia de Cuba⁴¹. For, as Prof. Torres Cuevas says: “Cuban Freemasons have always sought Unity, trait that differentiates it from Spanish Freemasons, characterized by fragmentation”⁴².

Developments in Puerto Rico (following Jose Antonio Ayala):

In 1789 there were close to 40 lodges under GO of France in the Caribbean, half of them in Saint Domingue (Haiti). After the slave revolt of the 1790s most of them closed or moved out to Cuba, Puerto Rico or Dominican Republic. In 1809 a Provincial Grand Lodge was created in Haiti, under UGLE, which became independent in 1823, under Haitian President Boyer.

Hence, in 1802, Bro. Nicolas Panel, a Frenchman established in Puerto Rico, promoted the creation of Masonic lodges. Several were founded during 1808 to 1814, in San Juan, Ponce, and Mayaguez. After a similar hiatus as in Cuba, Masonic activity restarted in 1820. And at least two Rose Croix Chapters, receiving their Ch from Cuba and New York, were created, implying that Symbolic Lodges, that nurtured them, existed in San Juan, San German and Mayaguez.

After another long hiatus, due to restauration of Absolutism in Spain, Masonic activity restarted. Some relevant young men that had studied abroad⁴³ returned, bringing their Masonic experience. Lodge *Union Germana* (with Ch from GO Nacional de Venezuela) was created in

³⁹ Spain conceded to Cuba freedom of the press, of slaves who had fought for independence, and status as Province of Spain, with political party representation to its Parliament, among other important gains.

⁴⁰ Gran Logia Unida de Colon e Isla de Cuba: GLUCIC.

⁴¹ Gran Logia de Cuba: GLC, the name that continues to date.

⁴² Torres Cuevas. REHMLAC, V. 3, No. 2, page 100.

⁴³ Such as Hostos, Betances, and Ruiz Belvis, went mainly to Spain, France, Germany or the USA.

San German, in 1866⁴⁴. Lodge Estrella de Luquillo (Ch from GO Colon) was created in 1867. And in 1871, Spanish GONE created Logia Colombia, in San Juan.

The first Spanish *Obediences* entered Puerto Rico, about this time. They usually pursued a political ideology and followed a political leader. For example, Conservative GONE⁴⁵ was created in 1865; its Grand Commander (GC) was Marques de Seoani. Liberal GODE was created in 1868, led by GC Ruiz Zorrilla, Sagasta and Becerera. Some years later (in 1889), liberal GOE and republican GLS were created, led by GCs Morayta, Moreno Roure, and Sallaberry.

In 1880, Bro. Palmer founded *Adelphia*, in Mayaguez, among several other lodges, under the philosophy that *Masonic autonomy would bring political autonomy*. In 1881 Puerto Rico's Provincial GL was created by *GLUCIC*. In 1885 it became the independent Gran Logia Soberana de Puerto Rico (*GLSPR*), with Bro. Palmer as Grand Master. After that, the struggle between the *Authoctonus* GLSPR and all other *Spanish Obediences* became much stronger.

A list of the most important officers of GLUCIC and GLSPR, their positions in the Grand Lodge, in government, civic organizations, their occupations, and the main countries where they studied their professions, are given below in Tables 1 and 2.

Tabla 1. Grand Lodge, Government and Civic Leaders

Leaders GLSPR	Leaders GLUCIC	Positions
Santiago R. Palmer	Antonio Govín	Grand Masters
R. Matienzo Cintron	Aurelio Almeida	Grand Secretaries
Segundo Ruiz Belvis	José Fdez. Pellon	Grand Line Officers
Antonio Ruiz Quinones	Fco. de P. Rodriguez	Political Leaders
Luis Munoz Rivera	Aurelio Miranda	Newspaper Editors
Manuel Fdez Juncos	José Ma. Galvez	Members of the
José Celso Barbosa	Juan Hdez. Barreiro	Autonomic Government

Bros. Palmer and Govin were Grand Masters; Bros. Matienzo Cintron, Ruiz Belvis, Ruiz Quinones, Almeida and Miranda, were Grand Secretaries; Bros. Munoz Rivera, Fernandez Juncos, and Galvez were leaders of Autonomic political parties, and members of the autonomic government formed by Spain, at the end of the Spanish-Cuban-American war, in 1898.

⁴⁴ Bro. Eugenio Maria de Hostos, a prominent educator, and Bro. Santiago Palmer, the Father of Puerto Rican Authoctonus Freemasonry, were initiated there.

⁴⁵ GONE: Gran Oriente Nacional de Espana; GODE: Gran Oriente de Espana; GOE: Gran Oriente Espanol; GLS Gran Logia Simbolica Espanola. They responded towell- established political parties or organizations.

Tabla 2. Main Leaders, Main Profesionos and Main Centress of Study

Leaders in P.R.	Leaders in Cuba	Professions	Studies
Roman Baldorioty	Ricardo del Monte	Doctors, Teachers	Cuba
Federico Degateau	Rafael Montoro	Lawyers	Puerto Rico
Cayetano. Coll Toste	Enrique J. Varona	Journalists	United States
Franco. M. Quinones	José A. Cortina	Writers, Poets	Spain
Antonio Cordero	Raimundo Cabrera	Industrialists	Germany
José De Diego	Eliseo Giberga	Farmers	France
José Claudio Vera	Miguel Gener	Merchants	England

The best minds and intellectuals, both in Cuba and in Puerto Rico, during the last quarter of the XIX Century were Freemasons. Most of them were associated with GLUCIC and GLSPR. For details, see the papers of Torres Cuevas, Ayala, Romeu and Souci, already mentioned.

Developments in the Dominican Republic (following Bro. Lopez Penha):

After the French troops withdrew from the Dominican Republic, in 1809, the country was devastated by war and invasions. It declared a short-lived independence in 1821, followed by the occupation of Haitian troops, that brought Freemasonry with them, under the GO of Haiti. In 1825, Bros. Generals Borgella and Riche founded Lodge Constante Union in Santo Domingo. Bro. Juan Pablo Duarte, leader of the Independence, was a member. Bro. Tomas Bobadilla founded the Grand Lodge of Republica Dominicana, and Logia Cuna de America in 1859, and became its Grand Master, as well as Grand Commander of the Supreme Council. Lodges Nuevo Mundo in Santiago de los Caballeros, and Concordia in La Vega, were also founded at that time.

Dominican Republic annexed to Spain, in 1861, and Freemasonry was again forbidden. Such union proved unsuccessful and was short-lived. After the *War of Restoration*, in 1865, Freemasonry was again allowed to function and new Lodges were created.

For example, Lodge *La Restauracion* was founded in Puerto Plata, in 1868. Several Generals and Presidents of the reinstated Dominican Republic, including General Luperon, and Presidents Baez, and Espaillat, were Freemasons, as well as members of the Scottish Rite⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Where they held the 33rd Degree.

4.0 The Four Allegations and our Argumentation

The above-mentioned European historians and their dissertation advisors, have made four allegations regarding *Autochthonous Freemasonry in the Spanish Antilles* that we find biased, inaccurate and misleading. To support such allegations, said authors have omitted or manipulated historical events in their work. Historians on the American side of the Atlantic need to address such allegations for two very important reasons. First, it is fair and necessary to set the record straight, as there are always two sides to a story. Secondly, we want future historians to be able to read alternative views of these events, and be able to hear both sides of the arguments enabling them to form their own, impartial judgment about such historical events.

In this section we present and analyze such European historians' allegations and support material (all quotes were translated by this author from their Spanish sources), and then we provide arguments that show how such allegations are incorrect or biased.

4.1 That both Autochthonous Grand Lodges (GLCol & GLSPR) were Cuban-American, thereby subtly suggesting that they were somehow used as tools of the United States against Spain.

- *“Freemasonry of Cuban-American origin (...) self-defined as Autochthonous, comes from Cuba, existed prior to Spanish Freemasonry (...) In 1871 started the penetration of Spanish Freemasonry in Puerto Rico (...) contested up to 1898 by a Freemasonry self-defined as Autochthonous, coming from Cuba”, Ayala⁴⁷.*
- *“To confront this type of [Spanish] Freemasonry, another type was created at the end of the decade of 1870, self-defined as Autochthonous, when in reality it was of Cuban-American origin”. Ayala⁴⁸*
- *“The opportunistic support [of the GLSPR] to the new American regime will earn the patronage (...) of their Northern neighbor” Ayala⁴⁹.*
- *“The Masonic influence originated in the United States left its footprint”. Castellano⁵⁰*

Argumentation

⁴⁷ Jose A. Ayala. *La Masonería de obediencia Española ante el conflicto colonial puertorriqueño*, Cuadernos de Investigaciones Históricas. Paginas 22 y 23. Referenced in this paper as *Cuadernos*.

⁴⁸ Ayala, Obediencias. Pagina 15

⁴⁹ Ayala. Cuadernos. Pág. 35

⁵⁰ Castellano. Masonería. P. 60.

These Spanish historians single out Cuba's Grand Lodge and Supreme Council because they were chartered from American and not from Spanish Masonic *Obediences*. However, these European authors fail to equally use such nomenclature to identify their own *Obediences* as Franco-Spanish or Portuguese-Spanish, as their charters also came from abroad, suggesting that the United States used Cuban Freemasons as a political tool.

Our argumentation is based upon *Masonic Law*, possibly unknown to these Spanish authors. According to such Law, to create a Grand Lodge three conditions are required: (1) that there are at least three active lodges; (2) that the territory is not already masonically occupied; and (3) that some regular Grand Lodge provides a charter for its creation. In the case of Cuba, the charter came from the United States; in the case of Spain, it came from France and Portugal.

For Cuba, there was a reason. In 1859, Freemasonry was prohibited in Spain. Thence, no Spanish Grand Lodge could provide such Charter. Many Cubans and Puertorricans were political exiles⁵¹, or had emigrated to the United States, where some had already joined the Craft. Thence, there existed a Grand Lodge and a Supreme Council⁵², willing and able to provide such Charter.

The two Masons that Albert Pike, just elected Grand Commander of the *Mother Supreme Council* in Charleston, sent successively to Cuba⁵³, were Bros. Andrés Cassard and Vicente Antonio de Castro. They were both Cubans, and had lived in the United States as political exiles due to their pro-independence views and activities, and had joined the Craft during their exile.

Regarding Prof. Castellano's alleged American Masonic influence in Cuba, it was quite limited. For example, in lieu of adopting the York Rite for the three Symbolic degrees, as done in the United States, Cuban and Puertorrican lodges used the Scottish Rite protocol. American liturgies and monitors were not translated but re-written (by Bros. De Castro and Cassard). Prof. Castellano recognizes such Cuban Character when he writes: "from 1859 onward, proliferation of *Obediencias of purely Cuban character* would generate an environment full of rivalries"⁵⁴.

⁵¹ Accused by the Spanish government of being autonomists, reformists, anexionists o separatists.

⁵² Supreme Council, Charleston, South Carolina, provided the Charter to create Cuba's GLCol. & Supreme Council.

⁵³ Ill. Pike controlled with firm hand the *Mother Supreme Council* since 1859 until his death in 1892. He sent Bros. Cassard and De Castro successively, two independent and assertive Cubans. See also, Soucy, *Masoneria*, p. 141.

⁵⁴ Castellano. *Masonería*. Pág. 270.

Moreover, Prof. Torres Cuevas, a Cuban academic historian, agrees with the Cuban Character of GLCol when he writes: “the most remarkable of the Grand Lodge of Colon lied in the fact that, in spite of having obtained their Charter from American Masonic organizations, their behavior and projections were closer to what has been called *Latin Freemasonry*”⁵⁵.

Summarizing: unless the XIX Century *Spanish Obediences* had created themselves, as did the *Grand Lodge of England in 1717*, they must have followed a similar legal procedure to obtain their charters (also from a foreign country). And they did!

Spanish Obediences obtained their *Charters* from *Grand Orient of France* and *Grand Orient of Portugal*. For example, Prof. Paz writes: “Lodge Taoro, Canarias, (...) was erected under the auspices of *Grande Oriente Lusitano Unido*, as well as many other Spanish lodges”⁵⁶.

However, neither Profs. Ayala or Castellano, or any other European Academic historian, identify Spanish Obediences as *Hispano-Lusitana* or *Hispano-French*. This *obviously* constitutes *a double standard and a subtle but factual miss-representation* of Autochthonous Grand Lodges.

Finally, *the attitude of GLSPR vis-a-vis the Americans*, after the change of landlords resulting from the 1898 War, has been *qualified by Prof. Ayala as opportunistic*. However, a sounder explanation for the positive attitude of GLSPR toward the Americans is advanced by Prof. Ayala himself, when he writes, a few pages further in his same paper: “*The inept Spanish colonial administration discriminated, without doubt, these overseas Spaniard subjects, and favored the European Spaniards, who enjoyed in the islands a wealth of privileges: trades, positions, and the confidence of Spanish authorities*”⁵⁷. We rest our case.

4.2 That the members of these two Grand Lodges lacked a consistent political ideology; thence, these Grand Lodges should not be considered as centers of revolutionaries.

⁵⁵ Eduardo Torres Cuevas. *Masonería en Cuba durante el Siglo XIX*. REHMLAC, V. 3. No. 2. pp. 86--88

⁵⁶ Paz. *Masonería*. Page 740. A similar concept can be found in Soucy. *Masoneria*. P. 136.

⁵⁷ Ayala. *Cuadernos*. p. 27

- “*There were Freemasons in the Conservative party, and there were also in the Liberal Party, and later in the Autonomist Party. However, the most numerous examples have been found in the latter one*”. Ayala⁵⁸.
- “*We disagree that the participation of some Freemasons in the ranks of the Liberation Army determines that this Obedience may have passed into history as a Center of Pro-Independence Revolutionaries*”. Castellano⁵⁹.

Argumentation

Our argumentation to the above allegation that Cuban and Puertorrican Lodges were ideologically inconsistent, with the liberal philosophy and the efforts of the Creole class to obtain political and socio-economical improvements in their two islands, includes several parts.

First, in the *fifty years between 1850 and 1899, strategies* toward Spanish colonial rule *varied, as political circumstances varied*. Thence, we can find at different times, trends favoring *reform, autonomy or independence*. But at all times, such *strategies pursued the same objective: improving the political, socio-economic, and cultural conditions*, within or without Spanish rule.

Bro. Miguel Pereira’s doctoral dissertation, already mentioned, explains how autonomists and freemasons used *the same concept of promoting Puertorrican identity*, as opposed to Spanish identity, *as a fundamental element in their quest for political autonomy*. The same concept applies in Cuba, after 1880, when armed conflict failed to bring about independence from Spain.

Prof. Ayala recognizes this: “*at the heart of such disputes [between Creole and Spanish obediences] lies not only a political problem –the problem of the Autonomy of the island and therefore the right of Puertorricans to create their own institutions- but also social (...) the Spanish obediences had a strong component of European Spaniards, that enjoyed considerable privileges in the island before 1898*”⁶⁰. The same also applies to Cuba.

Regarding Prof. Castellano’s comment that *only some masons participated* in the Cuban Independence War, *and not entire Masonic Lodges*, we advance two arguments:

⁵⁸ Ayala. Obediencias p. 15.

⁵⁹ Castellano. Masoneria. p. 72

⁶⁰ Ayala. Obediencias. p. 15.

First, Prof. Castellano, in Footnote 429 (page 261) writes: “Among the Masons revolting against Spanish rule, in 1868, we find *an important contingent of members of Lodge Buena Fe, of Manzanillo: Carlos M. de Céspedes, Manuel de Jesús Calvar, Bartolomé Maso Márquez ...*”. And we add: *from Bayamo Lodge, Tomas Estrada Palma and Francisco Vicente Aguilera, and from Lodge Tímina, Ignacio Agramonte*. For those unfamiliar with Cuban Independence history, such list includes relevant *leaders: Céspedes, first President during the War and Father of the Country, Maso and Estrada Palma*⁶¹, also *Presidents of the Republic in Arms* (and the latter, also elected *First President of Cuba* in 1902). Finally, *Bros. Francisco Vicente Aguilera and Ignacio Agramonte were two of the most important promoters and ideologues of the War of 1868-1878*.

Secondly, it would be naïve to search for Lodge documentation involving revolutionary activity. Such activity is not allowed, in open lodge, by our *Ancient Landmarks. What happens before or after the Session* is another story, but is *not committed to the minutes*. In addition, it would be even more naïve to expect any conspirator to commit into paper the names of their members and their plans, so Spanish authorities could find them and act accordingly.

Bro. Garrigó explains the *traditional civic involvement* of Cuban Freemasons: “it is not the Masonic Institution that creates conspiracies; it is that Masonic doctrine is incompatible with the colonial regime (...) *Masons, as individuals, feel the duty to fight for the social and national human improvement*”⁶². Prof. Torres Cuevas writes: “*Gran Logia Unida de Colón e Isla de Cuba (GLUCIC) had common elements (...) with Jose Marti’s Cuban revolutionary project (...) it shares the ethical conception, that constitutes part of masonic social action (...) in favor of a democratic and non-denominational republic*”⁶³. Prof. Torres Cuevas adds: “The members of the *leadership of the Autonomist Party were distinguished members*⁶⁴ of the two [Cuban, Autochthonous] Masonic obediences: GLCol and GLUCIC (...) *Many of the best known intellectuals of that time, both Autonomist or Independentist, were Masons*”⁶⁵. Prof. Soucy writes that, *between 1879 y 1895*, “it was *the Liberal Autonomist Party, organized and led mainly by*

⁶¹ This author was initiated in *Lodge Estrada Palma*, Marianao, Cuba, in January of 1969.

⁶² Torres Cuevas, *Seis Ensayos*, p. 161.

⁶³ Torres Cuevas. *REHMLAC*. Pag. 99. GLUCIC was the continuation of GLCol, after the War of 1868-78.

⁶⁴ Many autonomists, such as Bro. Gálvez, were former *laborantes* during the War of 1868-78.

⁶⁵ Torres Cuevas. *Seis Ensayos*. p. 69.

Cuban Masons that, as opined by Prof. Torres Cuevas, *developed the thesis that it was preferable to obtain through evolution what was not achieved [in 1868-78] by revolution*”⁶⁶.

Prof. Soucy and Sappez also state: “the *Grand Lodge* [GLUCIC] as an institution, *affirms its non-political character; its members (...) their commitment as masons and citizens (...)* It will be Bro. *Antonio Govín*, as *Grand Master*, who will say (...) that it would be a *major misfortune* that there were *separation between the Freemason and the Citizen*, because then, the work of the Fraternity would be useless; dead”⁶⁷.

Our *Autochthonous obediences fostered the creation of leaders. Freemasonry* was the *Cathalist* that linked and refined them. *Spanish Obediences and colonial authorities understood these issues very well*. That is why they worked so hard to dismantle *Autochthonous Obediences*.

4.3 That GLCol & GLSPR did not respond to the Creole class ideology and political interests

- “*The Grand Lodge of Columbus (GLCol)*, not only set itself apart from any *revolutionary or independence process, but in addition, it was against it*”. Castellano.⁶⁸
- “*The Grand Lodge of Columbus (GLCol)* maintained during a long time its strong *Spanish character, and only after the mid-1870s, it started showing some Cuban Masonic identity*”. Soucy⁶⁹

Argumentation

We provide a two-part argumentation. We consider the murder, in February of 1870, of GLCol Grand Master Puente Badell, and then we present several comments written by the same authors above, in their same books, totally inconsistent with their above-mentioned allegations.

First, *Prof. Castellano alleges that GLCol not only set itself apart, but was against any revolutionary process, based on a few comments made by several GLCol Spanish Masons*. However, this same criterion was derided by Prof. *Castellano* (see 2nd comment of 3.2) when he disputed that GLCol was pro-revolutionary, an obvious inconsistency.

⁶⁶ See article of Profs. Soucy & Sappez. *Autonomismo y masonería en Cuba*. [REHMLAC](#) (Revista de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Latinoamericana y Caribeña). 2009. Vol. 1, No. 1. Page 95.

⁶⁷ Soucy y Sappez. [Masonería](#). Páge. 96.

⁶⁸ Castellano. [Masonería](#). Page. 261

⁶⁹ Soucy. [Masonería](#). Page. 115.

The *murder of Grand Master Andrés Puente Badell, of the Grand Treasurer, and several other GLCol leaders*, took place in *February 1870*, in San Juan de Wilson, a farm near Santiago de Cuba, by Spanish forces under Major Carlos González Boet. Bro. Aurelio Miranda⁷⁰ writes a chapter on these events; Prof. Torres Cuevas, includes them in his book⁷¹; Prof. Soucy⁷² does, too. However, *this historical event is not even mentioned in Prof. Castellano's book*.

The *historical importance* of GM Puente Badell's murder *is evident*. First, it was *not an isolated event* during Cuba's wars with Spain. On 27 of November 1871, the *Spanish colonial government executed seven Cuban medical students from the University of Havana*⁷³ for jesting over the tomb of Spanish journalist Gonzalo Castañón, killed in a duel with a Cuban journalist.

Then, during the 1895 Cuban Independence War, *Spanish General Valeriano Weiler* decreed the *Bando de Reconcentración*. *Several hundred thousand Cuban peasants were evicted from their farms, their homes and crops burnt, their animals killed*. They then were forced to move into towns where, *over 200 thousand perished of starvation and disease*⁷⁴.

These three events pursued the same Colonial objective: to send a clear message to their respective group membership (Cuban masons, students and peasants, respectively) which at least sympathized, if not helped the Cuban Independence Army, about the risks they were taking.

After our presentation of this topic to the *International Symposium on Latin American Freemasonry*, in San José, Costa Rica (UCR, XI/2015) *Prof. Ferrer Benimeli*⁷⁵, a distinguished Spanish academic historian, *justified the exclusion of GM Puente Badell's murder in Prof. Castellano's book*, stating that his murder was important to us, but that it was not important to Castellano. We have shown how GM Puente Badell was not just another Freemason. He was elected GM since 1867, and was instrumental in the efforts to separate the Symbolism (Grand Lodge) from the Supreme Council, headed by wealthy Spaniards, evidently pro-Spanish.

⁷⁰ Aurelio Miranda. *Asesinato de Andrés Puente*. *Historia de la Masonería*. Capitulo XLII. Pag. 313.

⁷¹ Torres Cuevas. *Seis Ensayos*. pp. 61 y 62; See also, Torres Cuevas, *REHMLAC*, p.90.

⁷² Soucy, *Masonería*. Pp. 128 y 164—165.

⁷³ Masó, *Historia*, pp. 262—265. Captain Federico Capdevila defended these University of Havana students in the War Council that condemned them to death by firing squad. Capdevila was a Freemason, according to Cuban GM Piñeiro del Cueto, in his Buenos Aires conference on Freemasonry, published in 1962, by the GLSPR.

⁷⁴ Masó, *Historia*. Page. 385.

⁷⁵ Ferrer Benimeli is a Jesuit scholar, whose doctoral dissertation on Spanish Freemasonry started a movement for academic study of the subject. He founded and chaired CEHME, a professional society for such studies, in Spain.

Such an argument seems untenable for two important reasons. First, if every historian is allowed to include or exclude events, according to his or her whim, history would soon become a discredited chaos. Secondly, we believe that the case for *the relevance of GM Puente Badell's murder* in the history of Cuban Freemasonry has been objectively proven.

Additional argumentation consists in providing *several quotes from the same European authors*, about the Autochthonous Grand Lodges and their participation in these events. If such Grand Lodges had been pro-Spanish, or if they had supported Creole struggles only from 1875 onward, as Prof. Soucy claims, the Spanish colonial forces would have not murdered GM Puente Badell in 1870, and *Autochthonous lodges would have not been harassed and closed*, while most *Spanish Obediences* were left to continue their work, both in Cuba and in Puerto Rico.

Quotes about Cuban Autochthonous Freemasonry, contradicting these were Pro-Spanish

“[the government intended] to cut off *the resources that the Grand Orient of Columbus was secretly sending to the rebels*, throughout the island [of Cuba]”⁷⁶.

“*Repression was practically constant*”⁷⁷.

“The *publication* [of the Cuban masonic paper] *ceased as a consequence of the arrests produced on March 5, 1870 after the penetration into Lodge San Andres by colonial forces, while conducting a session to honor Grand Master Puente Badell*”⁷⁸.

“After the Spanish revolution of 1868 (...) *Cuban Freemasons, under suspicion of fomenting the revolution, had seen a strengthening of the colonial government repression*.”⁷⁹

Quotes regarding Puertorrican Autochthonous Freemasonry, contradicting the same:

“The Manifest published by *the Grand Council of GOE, in Boletín Oficial* of 1892 (...) launched *the accusation of separatist to the Autochthonous Freemasonry, and not only from a Masonic point of view, but also from a political one. The cause of the Spanish Freemasonry was a nationalistic, patriotic one, they argued*”⁸⁰.

⁷⁶ Castellano. *Masonería*. p. 78. GODE was a Spanish Obecience that disputed Cuban Masonic territory from GLCol.

⁷⁷ Soucy, *Masonería* Pages 115 & 194

⁷⁸ Castellano. *Masonería*. p. 227

⁷⁹ Soucy, *Masonería*. p. 149.

⁸⁰ Ayala. *Cuadernos*. pág. 25

“Challenging this pro-Spanish Freemasonry, it is possible that another type of Freemasonry co-existed -the Autochthonous of the Gran Logia Soberana- less close to the national cause or to the Spanish colonial domination”⁸¹.

“The objective of [GM Santiago R.] Palmer was to create (...) a Masonically independent territory for Puerto Rico; and also political autonomy for the island”⁸².

Quotes regarding the Morro of San Juan Puerto Rico events, on October of 1887.

Prof. Ayala briefly covers this historical event: “Governor Palacio included in the same bag his persecution of Liberal Autonomists and of Masons; and many lodges were forced to suspend their work, and many masons were sent to prison accused of conspiracy”⁸³.

Puertorrican historians are less concise, dedicating full articles to these events. Dr. Miguel A. Pereira writes: “On October 24 1887, the first Grand Master of Puertorrican Masons, Santiago R. Palmer⁸⁴, was arrested in Mayaguez, jointly with other prominent masons: Alberto Nadal, José Madera, José Vicente González, Salvador Carbonell Toro & Tomás Vázquez”⁸⁵. Prof. Luis A. Otero writes: “They were tortured after their arrest. Carbonell was lifted by his arms, his elbows tied together, until his feet barely touched the floor. Brutality was such, that his arms were affected for the rest of his life”⁸⁶.

4.4 Spanish Obediences felt they had the right to invade already-occupied masonic territories

Spanish Freemasons have (1) never accepted the concept of having a single Grand Lodge per state or nation, and (2) are dearer to the concept of *Obedience*, whereby the Supreme Council is the highest ranking power, one that controls every lower echelon, including the Grand Lodge.

Cuban and Puertorrican Freemasons favor the contrary concepts, which are more frequent in The Americas. They favor a single body per country, and an independent Grand Lodge, that

⁸¹ Ayala. Cuadernos. pág. 33

⁸² Ayala. Obediencias. Pagina 54.

⁸³ Ayala. Cuadernos. pág. 28

⁸⁴ Luis_Santiago Ramos. *Santiago R. Palmer: escribano y notario*. Lumina. Vol. 2. pp, 87--94

⁸⁵ Miguel A Pereira. *Encarcelamiento de Baldorioty y Palmer en El Morro en 1887*. El Nuevo Periódico de Caguas. Miércoles 24 de octubre del 2012.

⁸⁶ Luis A. Otero. *The Prisoners of San Felipe del Morro*. Scottish Rite Journal, Nov/Dec. 2013, 22—24;

manages itself without external interference. This divergence caused much trouble between the original *Grand Lodge and Supreme Council of Colon* and is at the heart of our current objection.

Spain perceived Freemasonry in a manner, that was clearly explained by Prof. Ayala: “In the ideological battle that was ensuing [at the end of the XIX Century] in these Antilles islands, hidden in greater or smaller degree, laid the intention of domination that these metropolis had; we stress the meager Masonic presence of Spain, until 1868, that contrasted with the belligerence of the French ... and the everyday stronger pre-eminence of the United States, in the area”⁸⁷. It explains the motives of the Spanish Obediences in our Islands, and their suspicion toward ours.

The *Grand Lodges of the Dominican Republic and Cuba* (GLCol) were created in 1858-59. GOCA, also in Cuba, was created in 1862. *During the 1860s, several Lodges* were created in *Puerto Rico*, dependent from Venezuela, Dominican Republic and the Cuban GLCol. Thence, when *after 1868 the first Spanish Lodges arrived* to Puerto Rico, and after 1870 to Cuba, since this island was at war with Spain, *these territories were both Masonically occupied*.

The character of this difficult situation is clearly illustrated in an article by Prof. Jose A. Ferrer Benimeli that describes “how did Lodge Aurora N° 82 of San Pedro de Macorís, Santo Domingo, face the Dominican and international context supported by the Spanish Obedience *Gran Oriente Español*, (GOE) from 1889 to 1923”. Prof. Ferrer continues: “The Official Bulletin (of GOE) whose first issue is dated July 1° 1889, No. 12, of December 15 explains who was Montero Casal and why were three Dominican lodges founded by the GOE”⁸⁸.

Argumentation

It is obvious, from the cases presented, that confrontation between Caribbean Spanish and Autochthonous Freemasonry, at the end of the XIX Century, goes beyond just Spanish colonies.

The *Dominican Republic, after the War of Restauration*, became again an *independent* nation. Several of its presidents and generals, as well as other important leaders (Table No. 4), were members of their Autochthonous Grand Lodge. *However*, the fact of being independent, with its Grand Lodge (occupied Masonic territory) was *not a deterrent for Spanish Obediences to install their own Lodges there*, as they had previously done in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

⁸⁷ Ayala. *Obediencias*. Page 24

⁸⁸ Ferrer Benimeli. *La logia dominicana Aurora No. 82 de San Pedro de Macorís*. Abstract & Introduction.

As stated by Prof. Ayala, Autochthonous and Spanish Lodges functioned in practice as political organizations: “at the bottom of this differend [between Autochthonous and Spanish Obediences] there was not only a political problem (...) *but also social*”⁸⁹.

The *Gran Logia Nacional Dominicana* (GLND) deeply resented Spanish invasion of its territory, and actively fought against it. Prof. Ferrer writes: “There were still several difficulties to surmount, stemming from the members of the GLND who wage a continuous war against us, stating that our Lodge [Aurora No. 84], because it depends from the [*Spanish Obedience*] GOE, constitutes an invasion and thence, is an irregular Lodge”⁹⁰. Prof. Ferrer then writes: “on July 27, 1909, from the city of Santo Domingo, GLND Grand Master J. Pardo, addressed personally to Don Miguel Morayta Grand Master of the GOE, to send him an issue of *Boletín Masónico* that included the GLNSD decree that stated such difficulties, between the *Lodge Aurora* of San Pedro de Macorís, established under the GOE (...) *considered irregular for having invaded our territory*”⁹¹. Prof. Ferrer then quotes Bro. Fernando Jacobo, WM. of Aurora No. 84: “we can counter the daily attacks, suffered from the *Dominican lodges that consider us irregular*”⁹².

We could quote Prof. Ferrer’s article further; but we consider the above, sufficient.

5.0 Discussion

We have presented argumentation that challenges *certain concepts and suggestions* that some European historians advance, regarding *Autochthonous Freemasonry in Cuba and Puerto Rico*. These include that such *Obediences were pro-American, pro-Spanish* (which constitute a contradiction), and that their *political ideology was inconsistent and opportunistic*.

On the other hand, if these *Autochthonous Obediences* were none of the above, and they were not a political party, or a subversive movement either; what were they?

To provide an answer, we need to examine the *historical context* in which these events took place. During most part of the second half of the XIX Century, neither of these two islands

⁸⁹ Ayala. *Obediencia*. p. 15.

⁹⁰ Ferrer Benimeli. *Aurora No. 82*. Página 22.

⁹¹ Ferrer Benimeli. *Aurora No. 82*. Página 23.

⁹² Ferrer Benimeli. *Aurora No. 82*. Página 25.

had political parties, clubs, unions, or civic organizations. For most of these institutions were either forbidden by the colonial authorities, or had not yet been created.

Moreover, there were few schools, especially for mid-level education. In Puerto Rico and in the Oriental half of Cuba, there were no universities or seminaries -the only university being in Havana. Those few, such as Betances and Hostos, in Puerto Rico, or De Castro and Céspedes, in Cuba, with the means to travel, studied in Havana, the United States or Europe. The majority, however, grew intellectually by participating in Lodges and literary societies. Thence, *Autochthonous Freemasonry* became, for most of these masons, their school, as well as the vehicle through which they prepared themselves to undertake their patriotic endeavors.

Such masons included Bros. Muñoz Rivera and Fernández Juncos, in Puerto Rico, who edited newspapers and organized autonomous political parties. Bro. Cassard became a teacher, founded lodges, schools and newspapers, and wrote liturgies. In Cuba, Bros. Calixto Garcia, Maceo and Máximo Gómez, rural entrepreneurs, became generals of the Independence Army. Their military strategies and campaigns were studied in several European military academies.

Romeu explains *such contribution of Autochthonous Freemasonry to the process of nation-building, in Cuba and Puerto Rico*, in the following way: “There exist *three key functions* that Freemasonry, in particular the *Grand Lodge of Cuba [and Puerto Rico]* contributed to society (...) These are *the connective, the disseminating and the incubating functions*”⁹³.

6.0 A Statistical Model to Support our Assessment

To explore further the key leadership role of our Autochthonous Freemasonry we have derived *a statistical model*. We have developed a *Contingency Table* to analyze the plausibility of the statistical relationship (association) between *two factors: political leadership*, measured by the inclusion, in the autonomic government established by Spain in Puerto Rico, in January of 1898, because of the Spanish-American War, *and the membership in the Masonic Institution*.

⁹³ J. L. Romeu. *Characteristics and Challenges of Cuban Freemasons in the XX Century: A demographic approach*. REHMLAC. *Special Issue: Grand Lodge of California*. 2013. pp. 137—154.

We consider, as *population at risk*, the number of *potential candidates capable* (due to their knowledge and personal qualifications) *of becoming members of the Autonomous Government*. We use *ten thousand* as a *basis for population at risk*, a very conservative number.

We know, from Prof. Ayala’s book, that the *total of Puertorrican Freemasons was about three thousand*. Assume that all of them had the necessary qualifications to be considered potential members of said autonomic government (thence, also of the population at risk).

We can then, using a Contingency Table approach, assess whether said two-factor association is statistically feasible. *We build a four quadrant Table, in the following manner:* (1) those who did not belong to the autonomous government, nor to the Freemasons; (2) those who did not belong to the autonomous government, but were Freemasons; (3) those who belonged to said autonomous government, but did not belong to the Freemasons; and (4) those who were part of the autonomous government, and also belonged to the Freemasons.

Tabla 2: Freemasons and Political Leadership: theoretical statement

		Factor A:	Masons	
Factor B:		Not Masons	Masons	Total Factor-B
Participation in Autonomic	Outside the Government	Persons not in the government, nor masons	Masons Outside the Government	Total Outside the Government
Puertorrican Politics	In the Government	Not Masons inside the government	Masons inside the government	Total of Government Secretaries
	Total Factor-A	Total of Non Masons	Total of Masones	General Total

We also know from Prof. Ayala's book that out of eleven Secretaries established by the Autonomous Government in Puerto Rico in 1898, eight were confirmed Freemasons⁹⁴. Thence:

Tabla 3: Freemasons and Political Leadership: Observed Values

	Factor A:	Masoneria	
Factor B:	Not Masons	Masons	Total-B
Outside the Government	6997	2992	9989
In the Government	3	8	11
Total-A	7000	3000	10000

We calculate below the *Expected Values*⁹⁵, that is, the *theoretical number in each cell*, assuming that there is *no association* between the two factors analyzed.

Tabla 4: Freemasons and Political Leadership:: Expected Values

	Factor A:	Masoneria	
Factor B:	Not Masons	Masons	Total-B
Outside the Government	6992.3	2996.7	9989
In the Government	7.7	3.3	11
Total-A	7000	3000	10000

⁹⁴ Prof. Ayala writes: "The first [Puertorrican] Autonomous Government was formed on February 10, 1898. Out of its Six Secretaries, at least four were Freemasons (...) Out of the five sub-secretaries, four were also Freemasons (the fifth one is in doubt)". *Cuadernos*, p. 30

⁹⁵ Multiplying, for each cell in the table, the line total by the column total, and dividing this result by the general total. For example: $9989 \times 7000 / 10000 = 6992.3$ is the entry for the first cell of the table.

We can verify how, *if there is no relationship between the two factors mentioned, the number of members in the Autonomic Government, who are Freemasons, should have been only 3.3. However, there were over twice this 3.3 figure.* In addition, the Contingency Table *statistic Total Sum is 9.57, also over twice than the allowed table value of 3.84, obtained assuming there is no association between these two factors. Therefore, the test hypothesis of NO association between Membership in Freemasonry and also in the Autonomous Government is rejected. And we conclude that such association is very plausible.*

For Cuba, results from such analysis is even stronger, given that the members of Cuba's 1898 autonomous government were all Freemasons.

Based upon the above results *we state that a major contribution of Cuban and Puertorrican Autochthonous Freemasonry to the struggle for sovereignty, cultural and socio-economic development was the grooming of the main leaders of such movement.*

7.0 Conclusions

In the present paper, the following results have been established:

Autonomists and Freemasons (which frequently overlapped) used the promotion of their own Creole identity, as opposed to the Spanish identity, as a fundamental element to seek and obtain their autonomy, both politically and Masonically.

In different periods, Autochthonous Freemasons adopted different strategies, including reform, autonomy or independence, to attain a greater political and socio-economic development. Such variety of strategies does not imply, a lack of consistent political ideology.

Autochthonous Freemasonry functioned as a true school of political and socio-economic leaders, especially for those Brethren lacking the economic opportunity to obtain a formal higher education. Examples of such include Maceo, Gómez, Masó and Estrada Palma, in Cuba, Espaillat, Luperon and Lilis, in the Dominican Republic, and Palmer, Muñoz Rivera and

*Fernández Juncos*⁹⁶ in Puerto Rico. Developing such important national leaders was perhaps the greatest contribution of the Autochthonous Freemasonry in the Spanish Antilles.

Several European historians have unfairly judged certain characteristics of Cuban and Puertorrican Autochthonous Freemasonry, such as the origin of their Charters, by branding these as Cuban-American. However, they failed to name their own Freemasonry as Franco-Spanish or Lusitano-Spanish, an appropriate nomenclature as their Charters also came from other countries, Such naming may suggest that these Autochthonous Grand Lodges were agents of the United States. This shows how these authors are either biased or largely inconsistent.

Several European historians have alleged that Cuban and Puertorrican Autochthonous Grand Lodges were pro-Spanish and pro-American (a contradiction already discussed), while omitting critical historical events such as the murder of GM Puente Badell, in Santiago de Cuba, or minimizing other events, such as holding prisoners several GLSPR Grand Line members in El Morro, in October 1887, in San Juan: events that obviously challenge their allegations.

Some European authors have justified or minimized the invasion by Spanish Obediences, of already Masonically-occupied territories in the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and even in the independent Dominican Republic, as occurred with Lodge Aurora.

Finally, and possibly most important of all, it is imperative to present an alternative vision of these events, one that provides the perspectives from the American side of the Atlantic⁹⁷, to counterbalance the European perspectives discussed in this paper. For these are the only available ones, at this time, and have already influenced some authors, such as Prof. Soucy.

Having an alternative vision of these events will allow future Masonic and academic historians to read and evaluate both sides of the arguments, thus acquiring a better informed and more balanced viewpoint of the events about which they will be writing and studying, and they will be better prepared to provide a more objective view, than at the present.

⁹⁶ Born in Asturias, Spain, this Brother immigrated to Puerto Rico at age seven. He labored in a Spanish Obedience and was a member of the Autonomic government of 1898. One of the main avenues in San Juan bares his name.

⁹⁷ Represented by the academic and masonic historians from Cuba and Puerto Rico discussed in this paper .

8. Acknowledgements

We thank the reviewers and the Editor of AQC, for their excellent comments and suggestions that helped us enhance our paper. We thank Bros. W. Kreuger, of the GL Iowa Library, T. Savini, of the Livingston Library of the GL New York; and Ms. L. Watkins, of the Scottish Rite Library, House of the Temple, Washington, DC, and Mr. J. Croteau, AASR/NMJ Center, for facilitating us many useful books and materials, used throughout our research.

Finally, we acknowledge our Bros. L. Otero, M. A. Pereira, L. Santiago and R. Barquin, from our Jose G. Bloise Lodge of Research, GLSPR, San Juan, Puerto Rico, for their constant encouragement, useful interaction, and valuable input to our Masonic research efforts.