

The Landmarks of Martinism

The purpose of this article is to examine the Landmarks of Martinism, the particular elements of Martinism on which all Martinists individually, and all Martinist Orders collectively, can agree. Masonically, Landmarks are those things which define Masonry, and without which something is not masonic. A landmark, then, is a characteristic which defines who we are, and which helps to define the ways in which, although we speak a different language, or wear different garments, yet we are members of the same family, as anyone can plainly see by our close family resemblances. A great deal of ink has been spilt hitherto on those things which separate us. Yet are we not children of one Father? Are we not all Brothers and Sisters of one initiatic family?

1) Belief in God, and invocation of Yeheshua. Martinism is an essentially Christian Order, and Yeheshua is invoked at every Martinist meeting, and is named on every Martinist Document. A belief in Deity is an essential feature of all initiatic bodies. Without it we have no *raison d'être*, and our oaths are meaningless. We are Christian, not in any narrow and dogmatic way, but as being truly reverent of the mystery of the incarnation of the Logos into the physical world. In this sense, the events of the Christian drama are ongoing, and it is this participation of the Divine in existence which gives rise to all the miracles which occur in answer to our prayers and acts of Theurgy. All Martinists are, or ought to be, comfortable with this Landmark.

2) The Initiation, passed from Louis-Claude de St Martin, which is called S.I. Alternately, we can consider that this Initiation comes from both Martinez de Pasqually and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. It is this bequest which makes us Martinists. We regard it as the transmission of a spiritual essence which unites us as an initiatic family.

There may be different routes by which it reached us in the present, as the difference between the Russian filiation, the filiation that came to Papus, and the filiation which came to Chaboseau, but it is a filiation that, in each and every case, ascends to Saint-Martin. According to the theory of our esteemed Brother, Robert AMADOU, it's then a matter of a filiation of desire, of a spiritual filiation which was, bit by bit, formalized ritually, under the influence of diverse personalities.

3) The organization by Papus, of a structure consisting of two preparatory grades and one degree, that of S.I. All Martinist Orders work with the same structure, although there is some variation in the names of the degrees. They most usually are: first, "Associate"; second, "Initiate"; and third, "Superior Inconnu", or "Serviteur Inconnu".

4) Transmission of the Initiation from person to person, IN PERSON, by an authorized Initiator, by whatever title. The Initiation is a gift given by the Initiator to his or her initiate, and is a mark of the deepest trust and confidence between the two. It can never be transmitted through the mail, or by telephone, or in any other way than in person, and in the presence of the fundamental Martinist symbols.

The Initiator may be known by several different titles, Initiator, Initiateur Libre, Free Initiator, Unknown Philosopher. In all cases these mean the same thing, once given the authority by another Initiator to confer the Initiation.

To some degree, each Initiator is free and autonomous. It is ultimately left to the discretion of the Initiator to confer initiation, and the desire and requirement to give intellectual and

spiritual charity to the Man of Desire must be balanced by an awareness of the responsibility involved. An Initiator must never act to confer the initiation on the merely curious, upon those who seek the Initiation to satisfy their own outer egos, or upon those who seek it for mercenary ends. And, this being true of the Initiation, how much more true is it of the status of an Initiator? In the hands of these rests our Tradition. While each Initiator must make every effort to preserve that heritage which is his, and to pass it on intact to posterity, yet must he also assure that that tradition is never cheapened by bestowing it on those who have not been thoroughly prepared and educated, and who are certain to maintain that tradition in purity, neither diluting it, nor cheapening it by making of it a mere commodity.

5) The Masters of the Past. These are those who have created, contributed to, and shaped our tradition, and who have passed the filiation to us. Some we all know.

Papus, Sédir, Phaneg, Maître Philippe. Others are only known to the members of one or the other lines of filiation. And some have labored so completely behind the mask that they are only known to the other Saints and great souls, and not at all to those who were around them. We invoke their presence at every meeting, and seek their guidance and protection.

6) The essential freedom of the initiate to pursue his own path of re-integration. The Martinist Order has had, since its earliest days, a syllabus of instruction and certain fundamental symbols. Aside from these, each Initiator or Group President has been free to instruct according to his understanding, and the understanding and interest of his group. Thus, Martinism is a venue, rather than a rigid curriculum, and this is as it should be, for the path of re-integration is personal. Thus, some will work within one Order, some within another, and some will work alone as free Martinists. This is as it has always been.

7) Belief in the process of re-integration as necessary to emerge from the Forest of Errors. The Martinist Order from its earliest antecedents in the Doctrine of Pasqually has always held that Man is Fallen, lost in privation, and unaware of the privileges of his first estate. The function of the schools of Don Martinez and of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin has always been to remind Man of the glories of his supernal origins and indicate a path of return. Some will prefer to follow an operative path, and some the Path of the Heart, but, whichever path may be elected, the journey must be undertaken and completed.

8) The Use of the Symbolic Cloak, Mask, and Cordelier. It doesn't really matter if the cloak is black, white or red; or the Cordelier for the S.I. is white, red, or gold; or has three knots, five, or none at all. All Martinists make use of these three profound symbols, and the underlying meaning of them is in all cases the same.

9) The use of three cloths, black, red, and white. As with the cloak, mask, and cordelier, these are in universal use, and their symbolism is everywhere explained in much the same way.

10) The use of the Trigone of Luminaries. Atop a Martinist altar are three white tapers, disposed in triangular form. In some lodges these are only used in two degrees, in others in all three, but unlit in one. The symbolism, however, is ever the same, and can be agreed upon by all Martinists.

11) The use of the Martinist Pantacle. In some Orders this is on the floor in the East, in others above the Initiator's chair, in others in both places. It is on all Martinist documents, and constitutes a universal Martinist symbol.

12) The station of the Masters of the Past. In every Martinist Temple, however named, is a place, a chair or table or altar, with a candle, representing the Masters of the Past of our Order, of our Initiatic family. It may be more decorated, but the candle is always present, and lit at all ceremonies to represent our invocation of the Masters of the Past, to represent their presence in our assemblies, and to represent our aspiration to join their number.

By Ridgely Hunt

Published on www.martinism.com with the permission of the author