The white standard of Scottish Rite Jurisdictions bears a double-headed eagle with outstretched wings, surmounted by a crown and their common motto: “Ordo ab chao”.
This is the motto for Scottish Rite Higher Degrees. Historically, it cannot possibly concern craft lodges.

The Great Universal Charter of Scottish Rite Higher Degrees, proclaimed in Istanbul on December 14th 2019 expressly refers to it. It does not, however, mention the motto of the Rite, as it differs according to the Jurisdictions. With some, ours included, that motto is “Suum cuique Jus”, and with others it is “Deus meumque Jus”, respectively translated by “to each one his right” and “God and my Right (Dieu et mon Droit)”. 

“Suum cuique Jus” is a Latin translation of the motto of the English monarchy, “Dieu et mon Droit”, originally formulated in French by King Richard the Lion’s Heart (1157-1199), at the battle of Gisors (1198) against King Philippe-Auguste (1165-1223), and later imposed by King Henry V of England, (1386-1422). This motto testifies to the divine origin of Rights and Justice for the Jurisdictions which have adopted it.

“Suum cuique Jus” can be traced back to the “Corpus Juris Civile”, a compendium of Roman law published in the 6th century under the Byzantine emperor Justinian. It is the founding document of civil law. More precisely, it comes from the following sentence:

“Justicia est constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi”.
Which can be translated as:

“Justice is the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right”.

In fact, its origin is even older, as it comes from Cicero (106 b.c. – 43 b.c.), suum cuique meaning literally “to each one his own”, i.e. “to each one according to his merits”. 

This observation is not part of an attempt to derive some sort of authority from an ancient origin. Its purpose is to stress the fact that such a change signals the transition from a theodicy to an anthropodicy. In the late 19th century, the Grand Collège des Rites adopted it in place of the original motto, in accordance with the decision of 1877 by the Grand Orient of France to cancel the obligation to believe in a Great Architect of the Universe and in the immortality of the soul. It testifies to the human origin of Law and Justice, to which other Jurisdictions similar to ours also refer.

This motto is not the sole property of our Jurisdiction. Indeed, suum cuique was once the motto of the Order of the Black Eagle (1701-1918) of which Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712- 1786) was one of the Grand Masters. Equally attributed to him are the Great Constitutions of 1786, at the origin of the Supreme Councils the first of which appeared in 1801.
The Supreme Council of Charleston had then to choose between the *Suum cuique* of Frederick of Prussia and the *Deus meumque Jus* of the English monarchy. As it was composed of Masters Masons of the English rites of the Ancients and of the Moderns, it chose the latter as the first motto of the Scottish Rite Higher Degrees.

In this year of the celebration of the liberation of the concentration camps, it should be recalled that *suum cuique*, when translated into German, becomes:

“*Jedem das Seine*”.

It was inscribed in red Bauhaus type over the white gate at the entrance to the camp at Buchenwald, and all the prisoners could read it from the inside. The camp was liberated on April 11th 1945 at 3.15 p.m. Today, our reading of that motto unites us with all those who read it during all those years, thus recalling them all to our memory.

Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), a German philologist wrote a book entitled *Lingua Tertii Imperii* (LTI), *The language of the 3rd Reich*, published in 1947, in which he conceptualized the transition from the common language towards a totalitarian language. Every dictatorship, every totalitarian attempt to take power, corrupts the uses of language just as it corrupts those who use it. The misappropriation of *Suum cuique* committed in the middle of the 20th century ought to be deeply pondered in this year of commemoration.

Scottish Rite Freemasonry is one of the watch posts of every form of LTI, inside as well as outside our Order. This latest example gives us the opportunity to be well aware of it.

Jacques ORÉFICE,

33°

Sovereign Grand Commander