

**Ordre Souverain et Militaire du Temple de Jérusalem.
Sovereign and Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem.**



**SUCCESSION 1307-1804:
RE-EXAMINING THE LARMENIUS CHARTER**



PROLOGUE

The Larmenius Charter is easily the most controversial artifact of the modern Templar movement. As the only purported line of documented continuation from the historical Order of the Knights Templar, it was supposedly written or commissioned by Jean Marc Larmenius in 1324 as a transfer of his Grandmastership due to age. Interest in its origins and potential authenticity has never been lacking.

Over the last century, conclusions regarding its legitimacy seem to have settled firmly into the camp of "Forgery" and "Hoax." This is understandable, considering virtually all examinations of the Charter were by Masonic scholars of the 19th century, a time when both Masonry and non-Masonic Templarism were at their peak and in direct competition for the claim to Templar legacy. Given that the examiners may have had a conflict of interest or an underlying bias in their examination, it seems appropriate to re-examine the Charter, as well as the long held conclusions about it. Although the narrative against it has held sway for a long time and has been often repeated without a critical eye, it is the duty of any serious researcher to draw their own conclusions when presented with the full weight of the evidence.

The purpose of this paper is not to "prove" the authenticity of the Larmenius Charter, but rather to present evidence that challenges the traditional narrative that has been accepted as fact, allowing independent minds to draw their own conclusions.

Old claims will be re-examined and new research will be presented that has hitherto

never been explored. May the reader find the truth, no matter which way it falls.

ON THE FIRST EXAMINATION

The Charter was first brought into public view by the Grandmaster of the Ordre du Temple, Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat in 1804, and signed his own endorsement of succession upon the back of the Charter in 1812. Very shortly after, the Charter was gladly submitted to Masonic scholar C. A. Thory for examination, who printed the first translation of the cypher in his book *Acta Latomorum* in 1815.

After Thory presented his research, successive critiques of the Charter were printed throughout of the 1800s by Gould, Clavel, Findel, and others – all based on Thory's translation, and all deriving the same basic conclusions – the Charter is a clever forgery, primarily due to the fact that the Latin appears to be a smooth modern ecclesiastical Latin, not the more rustic and haphazard variety that is characteristic of medieval times.

Findel's analysis was particularly blistering and provided the basis for many of the arguments that are repeated today.

While these men differed as to its origin, some say by Fabre-Palaprat himself, others by the Philippe II, Duke of Orleans in 1705 with the help of the Jesuit Bonani, the general consensus of these Masonic giants cemented the narrative that the Charter was illegitimate.

The Order of the Temple in France began to wane in the later decades of the 1800s and eventually the Archive of the Temple was deposited in the National Archives and the Charter, already deemed to be of no consequence, was lost for a time until the early 20th century, until it was purchased by Fred J. W. Crowe, who found it mislabeled as a "Masonic Diploma from 1812."

ON THE SECOND EXAMINATION

Crowe was not a random purchaser, but a well-respected Mason and a member of the Masonic Historical Society.¹ After some weeks studying and decoding the cypher, he knew he possessed something special, and now generations after Thory, decided to put in the due diligence that this unique document deserved. He published his findings and a literal translation of the cypher in the *Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1911*. After his examination, he donated it to the Masonic Great Priory of England and Wales for preservation, where it now resides at Mark Mason's Hall in London.

The first thing that Crowe noticed was the substantial differences that existed between his translation of the cypher and that of Thory. Not only is the Latin in the

¹ Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1911, pg. 185

cypher produced by Thory more modern and clean, it contains outright omissions of words, rephrasings, standardization of sentences, and other brazen edits that simply do not occur in the text. The overall result is an overt mischaracterization of the text, and thereby, of the Charter itself.²

It is difficult to prove a motive in the case of Thory, but objectively, the words of the Latin in the cypher were tampered with. A probable scenario for motive lies in the competition and disdain between the Masons and the Order of the Temple in 1815.³

Since all future evaluations and conclusions of the Charter were based on Thory's translation, it is no wonder the consensus was built so strongly. Crowe aptly summarizes the critiques that occurred after Thory:⁴

This is, as far as I can find, the first time an absolutely faithful version of the original document has been given, but Thory, and the Comte le Couteulx de Cantelou seem only to have seen a revised and modernised Latin translation. Burnes saw the original but did not transcribe it and accepted the translation. This appears to be what is criticised adversely by Findel (*History of Freemasonry* 1866, p. 717), and in Gould's *History*, vol. i., p. 498. No one of the above-named mention that the original charter is in cypher. They either never saw it, or took for granted the Latin they quote without taking the trouble to translate it for themselves, so as to be sure of its accuracy. Both in Findel and Gould it is said that the Latin is not that of the fourteenth century and has no abbreviations. Clavel however does say that it is a document in cypher though even he does not give the true Latin. I shall print the version in Thory as well as my own transcription, in parallel columns, to show the much more ancient character of the latter, whether the original is fabricated or authentic.

As we see from Crowe's summary, the subsequent examiners uncritically trusted Thory's translation, most having never even seen the document themselves. Crowe, for the first time since the revealing of the Charter, published an exact Latin translation of the cypher, which although lengthy, is worthwhile to reproduce below:

The Charter runs thus :—

MY OWN TRANSCRIPT.

Ego frater Joha[ñ]es Marcus Larmenius Hierosolymitanus Dei Gratia et Secretissimo Q[ue]r[er]andi sanctissimi[que] Martyris Supremi Templi Militie Mac[is]tri cui honos et e[gl]oria Decreto co[m]uni Fratrum Consilio ca[on]firmato e[st] superuniuersum Temb[er]li ordina[re]m sumo et supremo Magio[ster]io insignitus singulis has decretales literas uisuris salu[m] salu[m] salu[m].

Notum sit omnibus tam presentibus quam futuris u[el] quod deficientib[us] propter extremam etatem uiribus rerum angustia et gubernaculi grauitate perpensis [pre]pensis ad maiorem Dei gloriam Ordinis F[ra]trum et statutorum tutelam et salu[m] ego p[re]dictus humilis Magister Militie Templi inter ualidiores manus supremum statu[er]im deponere Magisterium.

THORY'S VERSION.

Ego Frater Johannes-Marcus Larmenius, Hierosolymitanus, Dei gratia et Secretissimo Venerandi sanctissimique Martyris, Supremi Templi militie Magistri (cui honos et gloria) decreto, communi Fratrum consilio confirmato, super uniuersum Templi Ordinem, Summo et Supremo Magisterio insignitus, singulis has decretales litteras visuris, salutem, salutem, salutem.

Notum sit omnibus tam presentibus quam futuris, quod, deficientibus, propter extremam etatem, uiribus, rerum angustia et gubernaculi gravitate perpensis, ad maiorem Dei gloriam, Ordinis, Fratrum et statutorum tutelam et salutem, ego, supra dictus, humilis Magister militie Templi, inter validiores manus Supremum statu[er]im deponere Magisterium.

2 Ibid. pg. 186

3 Fabre-Palapat's Ordre du Temple was revealed in 1804, while the Grand Encampement system of Masonic Knights Templar was launched in 1805. Each vied for rights to the Templar name. In 1911, Crowe was able to study more objectively since competition was diffused and the Ordre du Temple only barely existed in French esoteric circles at the time.

4 Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1911, pg. 186

Idcirco Deo iuante unoque supremi conuentus Equitum consensu apud eminentem Commendatorem et cad[r]isimum Fratrem Theobaldum Alexandrinum supremum ordinis Templi Magisterium auctoritatem et priuilegia contuli et hoc presenti decreto pro uita confero cum potestate secus [ndum] temporis et rerum leges. Fratri alteri institutionis et ingenii nobilitate morumque honestate prestantissimo summum et supremum Ta[e]mb[p]li ordinis Magisterium summamque auctoritatem conferendi Quod sic[t] ad perpetuitatem Magisterii successore[um] non intersectam seriem et statutorum integritatem tuendas Jubeo tamen ut non transmitti possit Mac[g]isterium sine Commilitonum Templi Conuentus generalis consensu quoties colligi uoluerit supremus iste conuentus et rebus ita sese habentibus successore[um] ad nutum Equitum eligatur.

Ne autem languescant supremi officii munera sint nunc et pereuniter quatuor supremi vicarij magistri supremam potestatem et eminentiam et auctoritatem super uniuersum Ordinem salo jure Magistri habentes qui Uig[c]arij Magistri apud seniores secundum professionis seriem eligantur Quod statutum e commendato michi [michi] et fratribus uoto Sacrosancti predicti Venerandi Beatissimique Magistri nostri Martyris cui honos et Gloria. Aen. Ego denique Fratrum Supremi Conuentus [decreto] suprema mihi commissa auctoritate Scotos Templarios Ordinis desertores Anathemati p[er] arcus illosque et Fratres sancti Johannis Hierosolime domin[ic]orum Militie spoliatores quibus [quibus] apud Deum misericordia extra gyrum templi nunc et in futurum dico uolo et jubeo signa ideo pseudo Fratribus ignota et ignoscenda constitui ore Commilitonibus tradenda et quo in esupremo conuentu jam tradere modo placuit. Que uero signa tantummodo pateant post debitam professionem et equestrem consecrationem seu cundum Templi Commilitonum ordinis statuta ritus et usus predicto eminenti commendatori a me transmissa sicut a Venerando et sanctissimo Martyra[e] Magistro cui Honos et gloria in meas manus habui tradita fiat sicut. Dixi. Fiat. Amen.

Ego Johannes Marcus Larmenius dedi die 13 Februrarii 1324.

Ego Theobaldus supremam magisterium Deo iuante acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1324.

Ego Arnaldus de Braque supremum magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno d[omi]ni 1340

Ego Johannes de Claromonte supremum magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno d[omi]ni 1349 ✠

Ego Bertrādus Guesclin supremum magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1357 ✠

Ego f[r]at[er] Johān arminiace[us] supremum magisterium acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1381.

Ego f[r]at[er] humilis f[r]at[er] bernardus arminiacus supremum magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1392.

Ego Johannes arminiace[us] supremum magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1418

Ego Johannes crouiasencis supremum templi magisterium deo iuante acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1451

Ego Robertus de Lenoncond deo iuante acceptum habeo supremum magisterium anno d[omi]ni 1478

Ego Galeas Salazar humil[is] militia templi f[r]at[er] supremum deo iuante acceptum habeo magisterium anno ch[risti] 1496

Ego Philip[us] de chabot deo iuante magisterium supremum acceptum habeo anno ch[risti] 1516

Idcirco, Deo iuante, unoque Supremi Conuentus Equitum consensu, apud eminentem Commendatorem et carissimum Fratrem, Franciscum-Thomam-Theobaldum-Alexandrinum, Supremum Ordinis Templi Magisterium, auctoritatem et priuilegia contuli, et hoc presenti decreto, pro uita, confero, cum potestate, secundum temporis et rerum leges, Fratri alteri, institutionis et ingenii nobilitate morumque honestate prestantissimo, Summum et Supremum Ordinis Templi Magisterium summamque auctoritatem conferendi. Quod sit, ad perpetuitatem Magisterii, successorum non intersectam seriem et statutorum integritatem tuendas. Jubeo tamen ut non transmitti possit Magisterium, sine commilitonum Templi Conuentus generalis consensu, quoties colligi uoluerit Supremus iste Conuentus; et, rebus ita sese habentibus, successor ad nutum Equitum eligatur.

Ne autem languescant supremi officii munera, sint nunc et perenniter quatuor Supremi Magistrum Vicarii, supremam potestatem, eminentiam et auctoritatem, super uniuersum Ordinem, salvo jure Supremi Magistrum, habentes; qui Vicarii Magistrum apud seniores secundum professionis seriem, eligantur. Quod statutum e commendato mihi et Fratribus uoto sacrosancti supra dicto Venerandi Beatissimique Magistrum nostri, Martyris (cui honos et gloria) amen.

Ego denique, Fratrum supremi Conuentus decreto, e suprema mihi commissa auctoritate. Scotos Templarios Ordinis desertores, anathemate percussos, illosque et Fratres Sancti Johannis Hierosolymae, dominiorum militiae spoliatores (qui-apud Deum misericordia) extra gyrum Templi, nunc et in futurum, uolo, dico et jubeo.

Signa, ideo, pseudo-fratribus ignota et ignoscenda constitui, ore commilitonibus tradenda, et quo, in Supremo Conuentu, jam tradere modo placuit.

Quae uero signa tantummodo pateant post debitam professionem et equestrem consecrationem, secundum Templi commilitonum statuta, ritus et usus, supra dicto eminenti commendatoris a me transmissa, sicut a Venerando et Sanctissimo

Martyre Magistro (qui honor et gloria) in meas manus habui tradita. Fiat sicut dixi. Fiat, Amen.

Ego Johannes-Marcus Larmenius dedi, die decima tertia februarii, 1324.

Ego Franciscus-Thomas-Theobaldus Alexandrinus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1324.

Ego Arnulphus De Braque, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1340.

Ego Joannes Claromontanus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1349.

Ego Bertrāndus Dugesclin, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1357.

Ego Johannes Arminiacus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1381.

Ego Bernardus Arminiacus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1392.

Ego Johannes Arminiacus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1419.

Ego Johannes Croyus, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1451.

Ego Robertus Lenoncurtius, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1478.

Ego Galeatius de Salazar, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1497.

Ego Philippus Chabotius, Deo iuante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1516.

Ego gaspardus cesinia salsis de chobanne
supremum magisterium deo juante acceptum habeo
año d-n-i 1544

Ego henricus mont moraen [very indistinct]
supremum magisterium acceptum habeo anno
ch-ti 1574

Ego Carolus Valesius [name indistinct]
supremum magisterium deo juante acceptum
habeo año 1615

Ego Jacobus rufelius granceio juante deo
magisterium supremum acceptum habeo anno
1651.

Ego Johañes hēricus durfortis duracius
supremū deo juante acceptum habeo anno
1681.

Ego philippus Aurelianus supremū magisterii-
deo juante acceptū habeo año dōi 1705.

Ego ludovicus augustus ba[on]rbonius ceno-
manensis supremum magisterium acceptum
habeo anno 1724.

Ego borbonius condatus [Condaus] supre-
mum magisterium deo juante acceptum habeo
año domini 1737.

Ego ludovicus franciscus borbonius contenis
supremum magisterium deo juante acceptum
habeo anno domini 1741

Ego de cosse de brissac (ludovicus hancules
timoleo) supremum magisterium deo juante
acceptum habeo anno domini 1776.

Ego cladius mateus radix de cheuillon templi
senior vicariis magister morbo grarii attectus
adstantibus fratribus prospero micale charpen-
tier de Saintot t[er]nardo raymondo fabre
ta[em]pli vicariis magistris et Johanne baptiste
augusto de coirchant supremo preceptori litteras
decretales a ludonico timoleone de cosse de
brissac templi supremo magistro in temporibus
infaustis mihi depositas fratri Jacobo Philippo
ledru templi seniori vicario magistro mei amicissi
et tradidi at istae litterae in tempore opportunis
ad perpetuam ordinis nostri memoriam juxta
ritum orientalem uigeant die 10 Junii 1804

Ego bernardus raymundus fabre cardoal
albiensis collegarum vicariorum magistrorum
fratrum commilitonum que uoto annuens suprem
magisterium acceptum habeo die quarta nov anno
1804.

Ego Gaspardas De Salciaco, Tavannensis,
Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, 1544.

Ego Henricus De Monte Morenciaco, Deo
juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, 1574.

Ego Carolus Valesuis, Deo juante,
Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui, 1615.

Ego Jacobus Ruxellius de Granceio, Deo
juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, 1651.

Ego Jacobus-Henricus De Duro forti, dux
de Duras, Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium
acceptum habui, 1681.

Ego Philippus, dux Aurelianensis, Deo
juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum habui,
1705.

Ego Ludovicus-Augustus Borbonius dux du
Maine, Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium
acceptum habui, 1724.

Ego Ludovicus-Henricus Borbonius Condaus,
Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, 1737.

Ego Ludovicus-Franciscus Borbonius-Conty,
Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, 1741.

Ego Ludovicus-Henricus-Timoleo de Cossé-
Brissac, Deo juante, Supremum Magisterium
acceptum habui, 1776.

Ego Claudius-Mathaeus Radix de Chevillon,
Templi senior Vicarius Magister, . . . adstantibus
Fratribus Prospero-Maria-Petro-Michaele Char-
pentier de Saintot, Bernardo-Raymundo Fabrè,
Templi Vicariis Magistris, et Johanne-
Baptista-Augusto de Courchant, Supremo Præ-
ceptore, hasce litteras decretales a Ludovico-
Hercule-Timoleone de Cossé-Brissac, Supremo
Magistro, in temporibus infaustis mihi depositas,
Fratri Jacobo-Philippo Ledru, Templi seniori
Vicario Magistro . . . tradidi, ut istae litterae, in
tempore opportuno, ad perpetuam Ordinis nostri
memoriam, juxta Ritum Orientalem, vigeant :
die decima junii, 1804.

Ego Bernardus-Raymundus Fabre, Deo
juante, Supremum Magisterium acceptum
habui, die quarta novembris, 1804.

Crowe's own assessment was that the literal transcription appears to be Latin of the fourteenth century. He notes how the Masonic scholars specifically mention that there are no abbreviations in the text, while his version is full of abbreviations.⁵ However, recognizing he is not an expert himself, for the first time in the history of the Charter, he submitted it for proper examination by a true expert. Sir George Warner, Keeper of the Manuscripts at the British Museum, truly one of the premier authorities on the subject in the world at the time, concluded:

"The Latin is of the fourteenth century (1300s), but the illumination cannot be, but may be from any time after the latter part of the fifteenth century (1400s)."^{6 7}

This researcher has also requested the evaluations of two experts of Latin in the present day. Both, as independent evaluators, completely unaware of the history and

5 Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1911, pg. 186

6 Ibid, pg. 196

7 Hightlights of Templar History, William Mosely Brown, pg. 54

context of the Charter, have concluded medieval origin for the Latin. Here are a few excerpts of their evaluations:

“The transcription of the the deciphered text (Crowe's), shows a very telling feature, one that I believe to be indicative of 1300s Latin. The feature occurs in the word "militiae", the genitive feminine singular of "militia". In Thory's transcript, he renders the word as "militiae"; however, in the author's transcript, he shows that the word is spelled in the cypher as "militie" and renders it as such. The long e in place of the diphthong ae is well-known feature of Medieval Latin as the diphthong 'ae' in Classical Latin is reduced to the single long vowel in Ecclesiastical.”

“Naturally, if Thory's transcript was the only one existing of the Charter, it would be understandable why one might think the Latin of the charter to be one different to Medieval Ecclesiastical, but the direct transcript of the author (Crowe) clearly shows the Medieval style of the script.”⁶

And another:

“(Crowe's) side have the shortening of doubled consonants ("acceptum"->"acceptum", "anno"-> "ano"), and what I believe is the use of the verb "habeo, habere" in the present tense as a past tense auxiliary to mean "I have", both of which are Medieval/Late Latin grammatical quirks. The smoothed version indeed seems to have converted those into more Classical constructions, by putting the doubled consonants back and turning "habeo" into the perfect tense "habui." The use of 'anno Christi' and 'anno Domini' for the years also point to Medieval Latin.”⁹

When evaluating the true, literal transcription of the Charter, the primary challenge against its authenticity – the late character of the Latin - fails.

The second critique against the Charter offered by Findel is, *“The ancient Templar statutes are ignorantly and superficially treated, as no Grandmaster was permitted to elect his successor.”¹⁰*

At first glance, such an argument may appear to have weight. Even if we disallow any “emergency powers” that may have been afforded Jean Marc Larmenius during the suppression of the Order, the Charter itself disproves this point, as it specifically states:

*“Therefore, with the help of God, and **with the sole consent of the Supreme Assembly of Knights**, I have conferred...”*

This demonstrates the act of the transmission of powers was not done by individual authority, but was done with the support of the remaining Order.

8 Private Evaluation by A. Cortez

9 M. Wand, A.W. Godfrey Scholarship For Excellence In Studies Of Classical & Medieval Latin, Stony Brook University 2017

10 Highlights of Templar History by William Moseley Brown, pg. 53

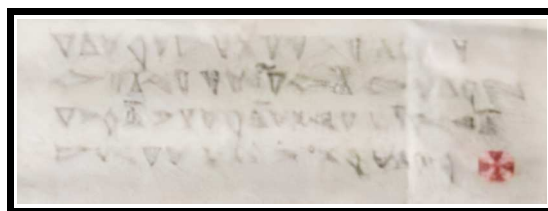
Last of the significant internal contentions is the apparent use of Ignatius Loyola's motto, "For the greater glory of God," which he first used in the 1500s. While it would be a significant detriment for the authenticity of the Charter if Loyola were the only one to use the phrase, the same phrase was used by none other than Pope Gregory the Great as early as 590 AD.¹¹ This demonstrates the phrase existed in the Christian consciousness for centuries prior to Loyola. Furthermore, one must recognize the fact that the phrase is simply a quotation of scripture with a magnifying adjective added to it. It is hardly a phrase of uniquely crafted prose, but rather one that could even be used incidentally, at any time. With its usage cited centuries beforehand, Loyola may be credited for its fame, but not its invention.

SIGNATURE ANALYSIS

Analysis of the signature portion of the Charter yields useful information, especially considering some of the secondary arguments against the Charter focus here. Critiques have rightly pointed out that one of the signers, Bertrand du Guesclin (1357-1381) was famously illiterate, and therefore could not write or sign his name. How could the Charter include a signature from such a man?

The answer is this: the same way illiterate people have signed since the foundation of bureaucracy – with a *signer's mark*. Classically, a person who could not write would affirm their name which was written by another with a cross.¹² Over time, this gradually evolved into an 'x' which is still in use today for such situations.

As for the Charter, Bertrand du Geusclin and his predecessor are the only two signatures appended in such a way. Such synchronicity is evidence for authenticity rather than an argument against it.



Findel goes on to make a grasping argument regarding the signature of Bernard Imbault, (1472-1478): *"The name of Bernard Imbault, from 1472-78. was unfortunately forgotten to be introduced among the signatures, and it not thought advisable to scratch out anything, it was admitted entirely. But were the deed genuine, Imbault would have signed his name in the proper place."*

So, Bernard Imbault signed his name in the wrong place, on a document written

11 https://knighttemplarvault.com/charter-of-larmenius/?fbclid=IwAR3vr0zXhKSzuilNOWJPZw_ebAAIzxC0Kw-VkpDvgl1uegPjnAiAqH0019s

12 "During the Middle-Ages, people could append marks or symbols on contracts and letters. Most of the time, these symbols were simple crosses, mere pictographs." <https://blog.thegrizzlylabs.com/2020/11/history-of-signatures.html>

entirely in cypher and Findel believes such an understandable human error is evidence of forgery? Rather, one might think that a careful forger who had poured countless hours into his own creation would have avoided such a mistake, while a man signing a coded document for the first and only time might have had such an accident!

This is not the only error in the Charter, though. Crowe notes numerous:

“The various acceptances of the Grandmasters show so much difference of writing, in spite of all being in cypher, that if they really are forged it is a marvelous piece of work. The small variations of wording in the acceptances, which I now print for the first time, seem too natural to be the work of Bonani. It would have been so much simpler to repeat the same thing each time, as in Thory's version. The numerous small slips and mis-spellings can hardly be intentional, and so clever a man as Bonani is said to have been, would not be likely to make them accidentally.”¹³

Human error as described above occurs precisely when men are not striving to *appear* authentic, but are merely being so. It truly would be genius to include deliberate misspellings and even a misplaced signature.

The “differences of writing” that Crowe mentions are best seen to appreciate their impact.

The body of the document is uniform, and plainly written by a single hand:



While the signature portions differ considerably from each other:

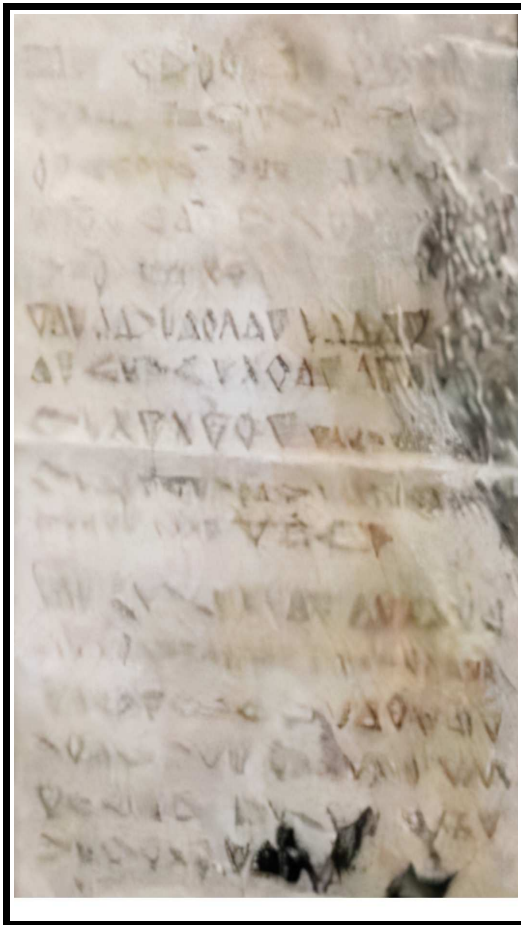
Handwritten text in a medieval script, likely Gothic or similar, on aged parchment. The text is arranged in several lines, with some characters appearing to be stylized or possibly representing a specific dialect or code. The ink is dark brown, and the parchment shows signs of wear and discoloration.

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A few things to note about the these sections of signatures:



1. The stylistic differences in writing implicate numerous writers.
2. Ink compositions are varied between them as indicated in depth and color.
3. Differing thicknesses indicate different writing tools were used between them.
4. Decay rates of the inks are different, indicating a wide and progressive range of time for the signatures.

All of this can be gleaned merely through close, careful observation, something none of the original examiners did, with the exception of Thory whose translation raises suspicion about his motives, and Burnes, who believed it was authentic.¹⁴ While some of these might be achievable by an obsessively detailed forger, it is unknown how differing rates of decay would be achieved, or even how it would be foreseen as necessary.

Anglican Archbishop, Cambridge history scholar, and Freemason, J. S. M. Ward finds himself in accord with Crowe:

“Findel produces no evidence at all. His argument that all previous signatures are the same is untrue. In a cypher like this, it is not easy to have a very distinctive handwriting, yet the signatures are by no means precisely the same, and when we come to compare the actual wording of the “acceptances” in the original we find they vary so naturally and completely that it is hard to believe that any forger would be clever enough to do it.”¹⁵

IMPLICATIONS FOR ORIGINS

Other experts have weighed in on the signature analysis, having studied some of the signatures and writing styles of the individual men. For example, the signatures of Philippe II, Duke of Orleans (1705) and Jacques Henri, Duke of Duras (1681), as well as their successors in the 1700s have been pronounced genuine.^{16 17}

¹⁴ A Sketch of the History of the Knights Templar, James Burnes, pg. 39

¹⁵ Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods, pg. 294

¹⁶ The Freemasons Magazine And Masonic Mirror, Jan-Jun. 1870, pg. 68

¹⁷ Essai Sur l'Histoire de l'Ordre des Templiers, Bruxelles 1840 (French), pg. 124

Such a fact pushes the age of the Charter back to 1681 at a minimum, and furthermore, disqualifies both Masonic theories of origin, that of Fabre-Palaprat in 1804 or by the Duke of Orleans in 1705. By establishing a minimum date of 1681, it disallows the Charter from being fabricated by Bonani for the purpose of legitimizing the Ordre du Temple under the Duke of Orleans. Both theories were offered without any evidence, so no other arguments must be contended with.

These points are further sharpened by Historian Karl Gottlob von Anton, *“The signatures of the accepting Grand Masters are known and have been verified; we would call on the testimonies of the scholars Münter and Grégoire if necessary. These testimonies have been printed more than once; to test them, to challenge the authenticity of the signatures, is to insult the most respectable names. It is to accuse of falsehood Philippe d'Orléans, and after him three other members of the house of Bourbon. Philippe d'Orléans who, soon after the Regent of the Kingdom of France... and disdained to become king before his turn, would have committed a forgery to become the Grand Master of an apocryphal chivalrous Order and forced to hide! Who would believe such an accusation?”*¹⁸

It should be noted that the signatures prior to 1681 have not been disproven, they have simply not been verified, likely due to a lack of writing samples. It is sufficient to learn that all previously proposed theories are not possible according to the evidence, which leaves its origin open to further investigation.

THE YEAR 1681

Given that the earliest verified date for the Charter is 1681, it seems appropriate to delineate the state of the Order at that time.

A secretive group existed in the court of King Louis XIV in 1681 called *Les Petite Resurrection des Templiers*, or The Little Resurrection of the Templars.¹⁹ This cadre consisted of the greatest of French nobility and well-known godly men.

In the comprehensive French work, *Freemasonry in France from its Origins to 1815*, it specifically says *Les Petite Resurrection* was under the mastership of Jacques Henri, Duke of Duras, Marshal of the Armies of France, until his death in 1704.²⁰ The astute observer would notice that this man is listed as the predecessor of Philippe II, Duc D'Orleans on the Larmenius Charter, even with the years matching (1681-1704).

Yet, the only seeds of information that exist about this group are hostile Masonic sources that say this group was “licentious”, and existed only for the exercising of

18 Essai Sur l'Histoire de l'Ordre des Templiers, Bruxelles 1840 (French)

19 Masonic Dictionary: Templars

20 Ibid.

certain vices.²¹

It seems likely that this charge is Masonic slander, as it is asserted entirely without evidence. The group included nearly everyone surrounding King Louis XIV, including his eldest son and primary heir, Grand Dauphin Louis, as well as a member of his extended family - a blooded Prince, with other nobles, such as Manicamp, Chevelier of Tilladet, the Duke of Grammont, the Count of Tallard, the Marquis of Biro, the Duke of Vermandois, and even Francois Fenelon, the famed preacher and theologian.^{22 23}

Apparently, with so many of the court within the group, eventually when King Louis heard of it, he banished what courtiers he could, and castigated his relatives, and he essentially dispersed it, leaving no clear record of it behind.²⁴

Even though King Louis sought to snuff it out, it is unanimously reported in all the sources that:

1. The Templars continued to persist after it was dispersed.²⁵
2. The Order proclaimed by Philippe II, Duc D'Orleans was built upon the prior foundation of the *Petite Resurrection* dispersal.²⁶

The Masonic Dictionary explicitly states that when Philippe II publicly announced the Restoration of the Temple, “*he caused new statutes to be constructed.*” This simple phrase demonstrates that *Les Petite Resurrection* had their own pre-existing Statutes and organization that were then reformed under the mastership of the Duc D'Orleans. The successive authentic signatures on the Charter between the Duc de Duras and Philippe II demonstrate a seamless continuance between the two manifestations.²⁷ It is unknown why a group supposedly devoted to “licentious vices” would require a marvellously forged Charter back to the original Templars, as well as formal Statutes of the Order.

HISTORICAL CORRELATIONS PRE-1681

One fact is sure: if the Charter is a hoax, then it would have no relation to actual history. While the “Hidden Age” of the Templars from 1307-1681 remains dark, new research has illuminated a previously unknown narrative that corresponds well to the line of succession in the Charter.

The reader ought to remember as we proceed, a suppressed and forbidden group such as the Templars would need to periodically adapt to their circumstances to remain safe.

21 Ibid.

22 Freemasonry in France from its Origins to 1815

23 A Sketch of the History of the Knights Templar, James Burnes, pg. 52

24 The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry, A.E. Waite

25 Masonic Dictionary: Templars, Freemasonry and its Origins to 1815, Masonic Quarterly Review 1844

26 Ibid.

27 Masonic Dictionary: Templars

It is the Charter that maintains the continuity of the Order through its necessary changes.

To begin, in the aftermath of the fourteenth century suppression of the Order, many of the properties and personnel of the Order of the Temple were transferred to the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitaller/Knights of Malta) by decree of the Pope. In fact, a merging of the two was formally discussed with Grandmasters of both Orders just months before the suppression.

“In 1305, the new Pope Clement V, based in France, sent letters to both the Templar Grand Master Jacques de Molay and the Hospitaller Grand Master Fulk de Villaret to discuss the possibility of merging the two Orders. Neither was amenable to the idea, but Pope Clement persisted, and in 1306 he invited both Grand Masters to France to discuss the matter.”²⁸

However, the Templar properties and assets were not *merged* with the Knights of St. John, but rather were administered by them.²⁹ With the number of Templar admissions in the hundreds to thousands, the Templars may even have still been administering their own properties.³⁰ Either way, Templar assets were listed and administered separately from the rest of Hospitaller properties. From the beginning of the 1300s to the middle of the 1500s, the Hospitallers are even mentioned numerous times as the “Knights of St. John *and* the Temple.”³¹

With this in mind, we look to the Temple House, the grand center of Templar authority in Paris, now under Hospitaller control. In 1336-1340, we find that the Temple House was administered by “**Jehan Marc, Mayor of the land, Justice and Lord of the Hospital of Paris, who was once of the Temple.**”³²

It has been proposed by others that “Larmenius” may more properly be understood as, “l’Armenius”, meaning “the Armenian.” This designation would make sense if Jean Marc were not originally from France, but now resided there, having returned from the joint Templar/Hospitaller campaigns in Armenia that included both Grandmaster DeMolay of the Templars and Guillaume de Villaret, Grandmaster of the Hospitallers in 1300.³³ Involvement by the two Grandmasters in such a campaign in Armenia with Jean Marc provides a probable foundation to accommodate the aftermath of the suppression.

However, one will notice that the Charter, and therefore Jean Marc Larmenius'

28 Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias: Knights Templar <https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/10176>

29 Memories of the Templars in Britain: Templar Charters in Hospitaller Records After the Dissolution of the Templars, Helen Nicholson, pg. 6

30 The Temple And The Lodge By Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, pg. 140

31 Ibid, pg. 140

32 La Maison du Temple de Paris: Histoire et Description Avec Deux Planches pg. 51 and 52.

33 Demurger, Alain. Jacques de Molay. Payot, 2007. pg. 142-143

transfer of power occurred in 1324, about 12 years before the Temple House reference. The Charter describes the circumstances of the transfer:

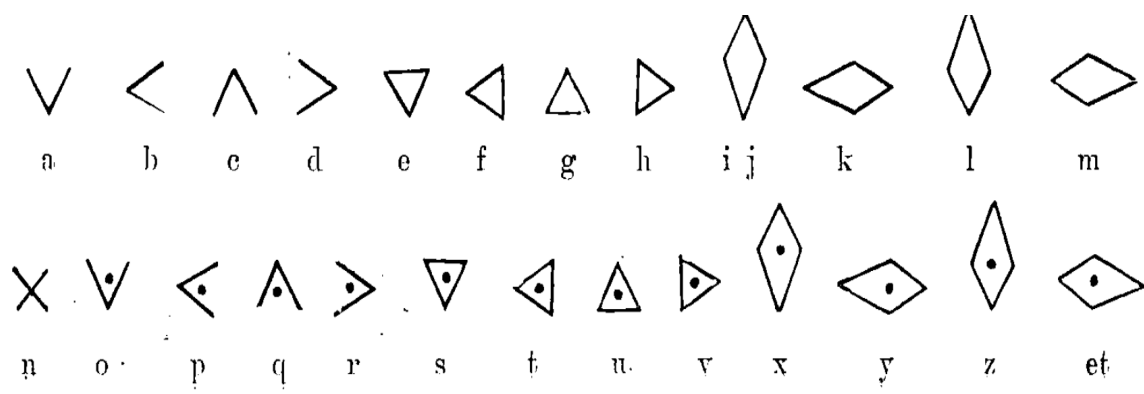
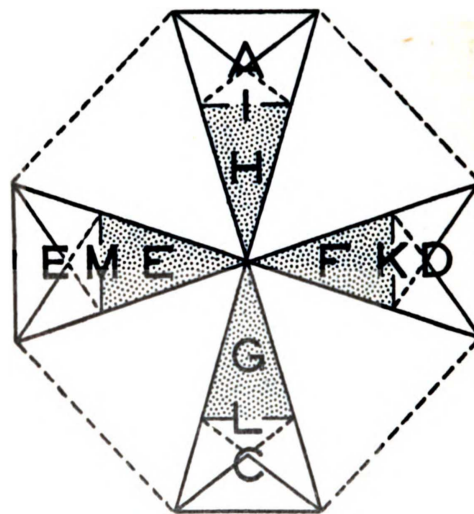
“Be it known to all, both present and to come, that the failure of my strength on account of my extreme age, my poverty, and the weight of government being well considered,.. I have determined to resign the Grandmastership into stronger hands.”

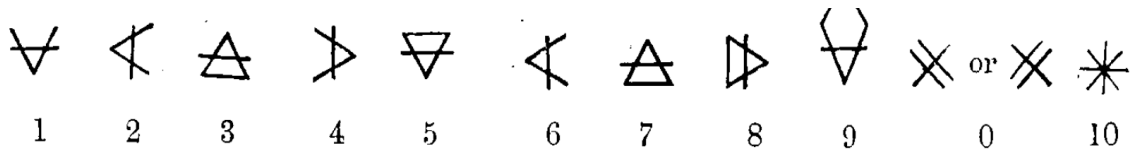
The summation of his reasoning is “I am old, tired, and another could do it better” not “I am sickly unto death.” Such a resignation would not preclude him continuing to serve in a less pressing role within the Temple House.

The Hospitallers and the Charter

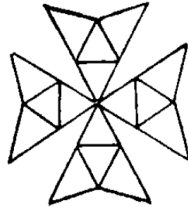
We have already established that at the supposed writing of the Charter in 1324, the Templars were essentially embedded within the bosom of the Hospitallers with both knights and property, within and yet distinct. Now we must understand how this impacted the writing of the Charter.

The Charter is written in a code that derives its letters not only from a Templar cross, but a Templar cross **embedded within a Maltese cross** (Hospitaller). Consider these diagrams to visualize how the code was determined:

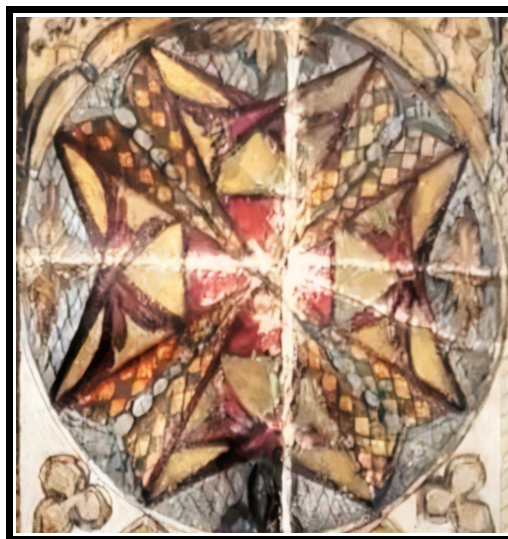




It is formed as will be noted from a combination of the Templar and Maltese crosses, thus



The Templar cross embedded within the Maltese cross is also the central, most prominent image on the Charter:



This symbolism seems to represent the actual state of affairs at the time, and even serves as the key to the cypher with which the Charter is encoded.

There is a caveat to this though. The Charter says within its own encoded text that *“I declare ... the brethren of Saint John of Jerusalem, upon whom may God have mercy, as spoilers of the domains of our soldiery and are now and hereafter to be considered beyond the pale of the Temple. I have therefore established signs, unknown to our false brethren, and not to be known by them, to be orally communicated to our fellow-soldiers...”*

There are at least two ways to explain this:

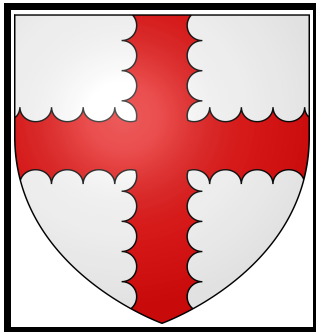
1. The secret signs could be a method to keep the Templars distinct from the Knights of St. John while yet operating within their Order. There would have been concerted efforts for assimilation which, if a distinct Templar identity were to be preserved, must be resisted.
2. This paragraph of the Charter could actually be a ruse or a distraction to prevent the Templars from being discovered should the Charter be found and decoded by

those who wished to hunt them down. It is essentially saying, “We are definitely not in the Knights of St. John. Definitely not. We could be anywhere, except there.” Yet they were.

Whichever it is, it is a historical truth that the Templars and their property went to the Knights of St. John. Evidence suggests, however, that they maintained their identity while embedded.

Knights of the Cross

According to the Charter, in 1478 the Grandmastership of the Templars was received by Robert I of Lenoncourt, Archbishop of Reims.³⁴ Afterward, he attempted the first petition for public recognition from the Vatican, which was denied. Interestingly, the archives state that he “received a new Rule.”^{35 36}



(Left: Arms of Robert de Lenoncourt)

This short series of events tells us a few key pieces of information.

1. In asking for recognition from the Vatican, it would reveal the presence of the Order to them.
2. Receiving a new Rule likely indicates a significant restructuring of the Order. Though we have few details about the request for recognition, it can be assumed that the Vatican would be unwilling to backpeddle and potentially admit wrongdoing in its suppression of the Templars. Receiving a New Rule allows for a potential workaround to this reality.

By a certain "re-branding" the Order may finally be able to come out into the light. A specific timeline must be understood for this next important phase:

1. In 1515, King Francois I is crowned King of France by none other than an aged Robert de Lenoncourt, former Grandmaster according to the Charter.³⁷
2. 1516, the Turks capture Jerusalem.
3. In 1516, shortly after his coronation, Francois I petitions Pope Leo X for a blessing in the establishment of an order, *La Chevaliers de la Croix*, or Knights of the Cross.
4. In 1516, according to the Charter, a new Templar Grandmaster is designated, Philippe Chabot, Admiral of France, and the childhood friend and life-long companion of King Francois I. *"He was a companion of Francis I as a child, and*

³⁴ Not to be confused with his nephew, Cardinal Robert de Lenoncourt.

³⁵ Statut Generaux (original) Archives Nationales, France BA^{XIX} Cart 157.

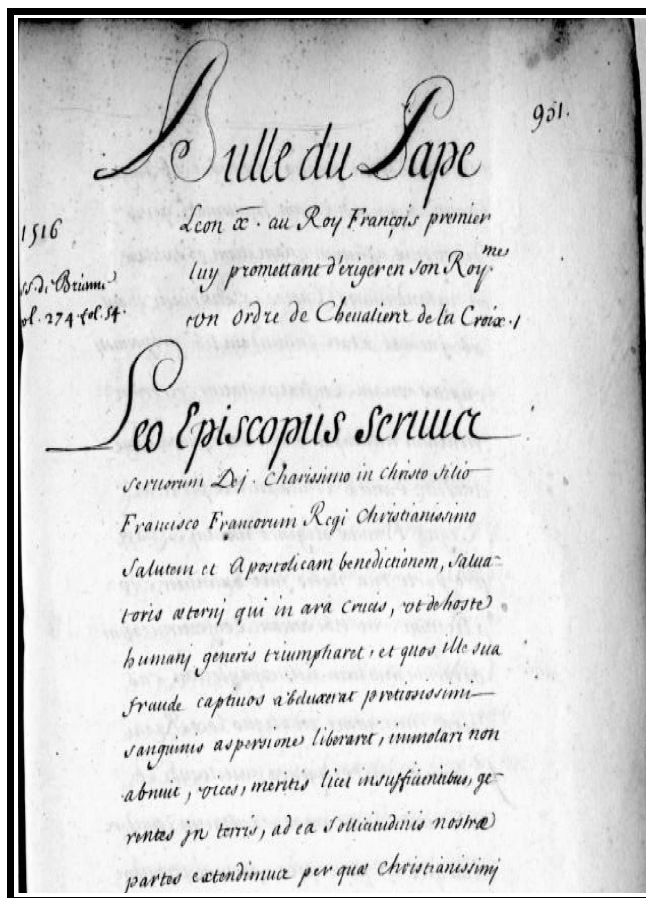
³⁶ Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie, 1909, pg. 50

³⁷ <http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=fr;p=robert;n=de+lenoncourt;oc=1>

on that king's ascension was loaded with honors and estates." ³⁸

With Jerusalem in a weakened state after the conquest by the Turks, the potential for a new crusade appeared. Additionally, the rebranding of an old crusading order with a new Rule allowed for the Vatican to grant recognition without admitting wrongdoing. The document establishing the Order of the Knights of the Cross contains some tantalizing clues as to the nature of this Order.

1. The Bull gives authority for crusading *"on account of the holy expedition against the most impious Turks, which undertaking, from your entrance into life, you proposed for yourself, that you may desire one brotherhood of men, of so-called soldiers, to be established, by you, under an invocation of the same Sacred Cross."*



2. The Bull states, *"And how(ever) many will seem to you willing to undertake that (thing) of recovering and preserving, for the salubrious righteousness of said Brotherhood, by whatsoever means, the establishments and the ordinances, distinguished and rational, and also those not straying from the sacred Canons, and of consuming the disorderliness, by the apostolic power, from the course of the present times, and we also grant the means (to do this)."*

"Recovering and preserving" a brotherhood is not a necessary act for a brand-new Order, but only for one which may have previously been suppressed.

However, it ought to be noted that the Order of the Knights of the Cross in France simply does not exist in the pages of history apart from this Papal Bull of 1516.³⁹ Nothing exists in the National Archives about them. They are not in the Vatican Library. They are not recorded in any book of Chivalry, past or present.⁴⁰ They have no historical presence on the Internet. This Order seems to exist simply as a name for the Brotherhood to be *"recovered and preserved."*

³⁸ 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 5, Chabot, Philippe de

³⁹ Bulls and Briefs of Popes and Cardinals of the Renaissance, pg. 40

⁴⁰ "Knights of the Cross" in France should not be confused with the "Knights of the Cross and Red Star", which was founded in the 1200s in Bohemia.

The name "Knights of the Cross" may refer to the combined Templar cross and Maltese cross which symbolized the embedded Order. Additionally, since the Knights of the Cross were officially founded on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, it may also refer to the fact that command to arrest the Templars occurred on the **same day** in 1307 on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 200 years prior.⁴¹

Adoration of the Cross of Christ featured prominently in the religious practice of the Templars.⁴² The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was uniquely tied to the Templars as well, because the red cross which they bore on their chest was meant as a reminder of the Passion of Jesus Christ, the shedding of His blood, and symbolically, the willingness to do so on His behalf. Dr. Jochen Schenk, in his paper *The Cult of the Cross in the Order of the Temple*⁴³, records that *"in Parma in 1327, twenty years after the first Templar arrests, during Carnival it was the members of the confraternity of the Holy Cross who dressed as master and knights of the Temple, thus demonstrating that in public memory the association of the Order with the relic of Christ's Passion and the devotional cult that had been organised around it was still alive."*⁴⁴

According to the analysis of the Charter by Sir George Warner, the illumination on the Charter could not be earlier than the late 1400s. So, if a renewal of the Order occurred under Grandmaster Philippe Chabot as Knights of the Cross, 1516 would match well as ideal time to illuminate the manuscript in both timeframe and opportunity.

Emerging from the Shadows

So it seems the Pope may have given recognition with a wink, allowing the knights to come out in a pseudo-public fashion. Following the events of 1516, we begin to see an actual presence of the Knights of the Temple operating in Paris in the public record.

Furthermore, the Grandmasters of the Templars according to the Charter after this time are featured at the highest levels of French nobility, and frequently as military experts as Constable, Marshal or Admiral of France.

Throughout the 1500s, we see notary records mentioning Knights of the Temple. In 1590, within minutes of a town meetings, we see a resolution of a court case against them:

"Mandate to Jean Jodellet, prosecutor for the City's causes in Parliament, to present a request at Court in the proceedings between the Knights of the Temple and others. Ordinance of the City Office, authorizing the purchase and resale of small grains

41 1516 Papal Bull establishing Chevaliers de la Croix.

42 *As Ordens Militares. Freires, Guerreiros, Cavaleiros. Actas do VI Encontro sobre Ordens Militares, Vol. 1, GEOS / Município de Palmela, Palmela, 2012. The Cult of the Cross in the Order of the Temple*, Dr. Jochen Schenk, German Historical Institute.

43 *Ibid.* For a full treatment on the subject of the Exaltation of the Cross in Templar religious practice, see this source.

44 'Chronicon Parmense ab anno MXXXVIII usque ad annum MCCCXXXVIII', ed Guiliano BONAZZI, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ix:9, Città di Castello, 1902, p. 186 (1327).

measurement by women of grain carriers."

"Jehan Jodellet, City Attorney at the Court of Parliament, present request to the Court in the pending proceedings in this case to include the Knights of the Temple and Messieurs Boucher, Brolhe and consorts, and by this request to have communication of the documents of the trial."

"Intervention in a lawsuit between the Knights of the Temple and various individuals, Delegate of the Temple Commandery to the Town Hall assembly for the pay of 4000 Swiss requested by the King,"⁴⁵

While these minutes are not exciting material, it establishes a public presence for Knights of the Temple as well as a functioning Commandery which was known to the public. This is not Templar community lore. These are primary documents of a Templar presence.

Furthermore, numerous instances from the 1500s to the 1700s where the Grand Prior of France of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem faithfully bore a second designation of *Commander of the Temple* in Paris. One of the most extraordinary documents was a 1570 transfer that named the Grand Prior of France of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem as also being "*Commander of the **ORDER** of the Temple.*"⁴⁶ It is a recognized fact that the Knights of St. John retained the Commandery and Priory of the Temple name. But, the idea that this Commandery functioned as a center for Knights of the Temple, and the Commander of the Order of the Temple is a concept foreign to historical norms.

Minutes are recorded for the affairs of the Knights of the Temple in 1631⁴⁷ and 1695.⁴⁸

Charles de Valois, Duke of Angoulême, Grandmaster of the Templars according to the Charter (1615-1650), was also Grand Prior of France in the Knights of Malta.⁴⁹

This state of affairs seems to have continued straight through the 1700s. Throughout the 1700s, both the Grand Prior of the Knights of Malta and the Grandmaster of the Temple are frequently members of the Bourbon-Conti line.⁵⁰ The Charter of Larmenius bears the authenticated signature of Louise-Francois de Bourbon, Prince of Conti while the French National Archives bears his papers as Grand Prior of the Order of Malta (Knights of St. John) and "Grand Prior of the Temple," demonstrating his dual

45 Registres des délibérations du bureau de la ville de Paris. T. 11, 1594-1598, pg 649

46 Pierre LaFontaine, French National Archives Reference: Y//104-Y//111 fol. 373 V°

47 Minutes concernant les seigneuries de l'ordre du Temple à Bagnolet, Bondy, Le Raincy, Clichy-sous- French National Archives Reference: MC/ET/LXXXVIII/130

48 Minutes concernant l'ordre du Temple et la Commanderie de Paris (terrier). 1695, French National Archives Reference: MC/ET/LXXXVIII/133

49 Knecht, Robert J. (2016). *Hero or Tyrant? Henry III, King of France, 1574-89*. Routledge.

50 The Order of Malta and its Commanderies (French) as compared to the Larmenius Charter

involvement.⁵¹ His personal papers in the National Archives also include "*old titles of ownership of the goods of the Grand Priory of France in the commanderies of the Temple in Paris*",⁵² showing that even in the 1770s, the Grand Prior of the Knights of St. John and Grandmaster of the Order of the Temple kept the property administrations of the Templars separate.

Knights of the Cross Lodge

The Knights of the Cross Lodge was a quasi-masonic body that acted as an interface between Freemasonry and the non-Masonic Order of the Temple under Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat. It was established in 1804-05 shortly after Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat received the Grandmastership of the Order of the Temple.

Continuity to the Order of the Temple of the 1800s seems assured, as the Bailiff of Temple and Administrator General of the Grand Priory of the Knights of St. John from 1776-1788 was Alexandre Charles Emmanuel Crussol de Floresnac -- a founding member of the Knights of the Cross Lodge with Fabre-Palaprat.^{53 54} The name of the lodge as "Chevaliers de la Croix" or Knights of the Cross cannot be unnoticed. A reasonable explanation for this name is that it was brought in through the influence of the Bailiff of Temple House, whose involvement is conspicuous,

The Order of the Templars appear to come into its own after the public presentation by Fabre-Palaprat. The Chevaliers de la Croix lodge served as the launching pad for the public revealing of the Order of the Temple.

When the Order of the Temple began to wane in the latter part of the 1800s, a deposit was made in the National Archives that included various seals and decorations that the Order of the Temple had used.⁵⁵ Yet they are catalogued as "*Various ensigns from the Order of the Knights of the Cross*" in the National Archives.⁵⁶ The other relics that are catalogued under the Order of the Temple and are frequently cited as part of its "treasure" are also included in this same deposit.

These objects show a maintained honor and respect for the previous centuries of embedded cooperation between the Order of St. John and the Order of the Temple, even after the Order of the Temple was relaunched without the Knights of St. John as a public entity in 1804.

51 French National Archives reference: R/3/1-R/3/1100

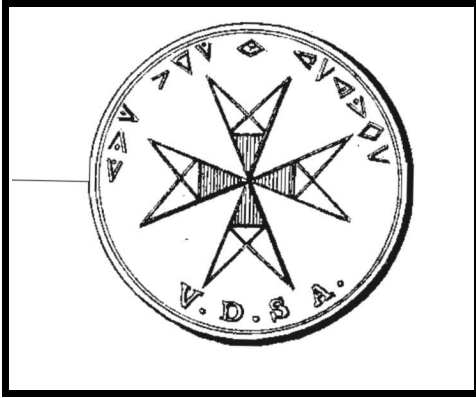
52 French National Archives reference: R/3/244

53 Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe by François de Chateaubriand A Translation into English by A. S. KLINE, PDF pg. 1755

54 Freemason's Monthly Magazine, July 1, 1857 pg. 524

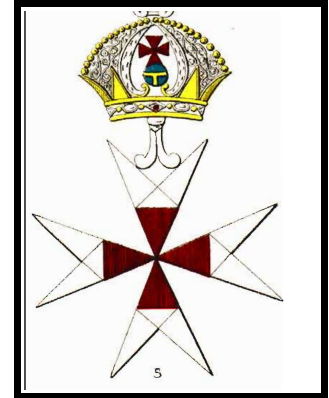
55 Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie, 1909, pg. 295 and Appendix.

56 Inventaire Général des Richesses d'Art de la France, pg. 52



Left: Reverse side of a medal from the Metropolitan Convent.

Right: Grand Croix of the Order of the Temple 1814-1824.



CONCLUSIONS

While this paper does not prove definitively the authenticity of the Larmenius Charter, it can be seen that significant congruence exists with the Larmenius Charter and verifiable history established by primary documents.

Furthermore, classical internal arguments against the Charter have been roundly defeated once examined by authorities who do not have an interest in the outcome.

The question that the reader must ask is: “How could all of this be if the Charter is a forgery?” Such evidence of continuity that corresponds to a fake Charter seems to stretch the definition of coincidence and serendipity.

Two centuries of “hoax narrative” are not likely ever to be undone, but those who seek to examine the matter closely may personally arrive at different conclusions, and they would not be completely unjustified in doing so. This was the case with other prominent Masonic scholars.

“Dr. Mackey, John Yarker, and Lecouteulx de Canteleu (who, owing to his possession of Templar documents, had exclusive sources of information)... all accept the Charter as authentic.”⁵⁷

Whether or not the Charter itself is an authentic document from 1324, it may yet represent an authentic tradition of Templar continuation, which it attempted to preserve.



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