

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



**THE MISSING ANTIQUE ARCHIVE OF
FABRE-PALAPRAT'S ORDRE DU TEMPLE**



PROLOGUE

Those who believe in the legitimacy of Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat's Ordre du Temple and those who do not have something in common. There is a looming question of why the Ordre du Temple of the 1800s possessed an archive consisting of documents largely of its own time, with very little to show prior to the Grandmastership of Dr. Fabre-Palaprat.

As evidence to demonstrate the legitimate continuation from the Templars, Fabre-Palaprat provided the Charter of Transmission (Larmenius Charter), as well as the 1705 Statutes drafted under Philippe II, Duke of Orleans. He also produced several items of "treasure" which were meant to be items of veneration passed down from the time of the Old Order. These included ash and bones claimed to be from the pyre of Jacques de Molay, the sword of the same, a gilt spur, a helmet of Templar martyr Guy Dauphin, ancient seals of the Order, among other things.

However, today, most of these objects are missing, and no document archive exists besides the Charter, the 1705 Statutes, and the documents produced by Fabre-Palaprat and his successors. If the Ordre du Temple was legitimate, certainly one would expect there to be a larger documentary footprint beyond what was produced. This will be an investigation into that archive, if it existed, as well as what might have happened to it, leaving us without it today.

DID AN ANTIQUE ARCHIVE EXIST?

The fact that an antique archive did exist in the time of Fabre-Palaprat is plainly apparent to those that are familiar with the sources. To begin, we know that both the archive of the Apostolic Court as well as the Templar Archive were legitimately transferred by the former Grandmaster Louis-Hercule Timoléon de Cossé-Brissac to Pierre-Auguste Adet, French Diplomat to the USA and Dr. Jacques-Phillipe Ledru prior to his death in 1792. This was testified in the trial of Jean Duchesne.¹ From this, we know the chain of custody of the documents, and documents dating prior to Fabre-Palaprat were received.

After the documents and items were received, an inventory was taken and listed as, *"The Rules of Bernard, the Charter of Transmission, the **Secret-Archives**, the Statutes, Rules, Laws, Ancient Seal, Grand Standard, Banner of War, Sacred Treasure of the Order..."*²

Elsewhere, this inventory is more itemized: *"The Cenotaph, the winding sheet, the bones of the martyrs, the sword of the Martyr Jacques, the helmet of the Martyr Guy, the spurs of peace, the seal of the Grandmaster Jean, the seal of the Knight of the Crusade, the seal of St. John, the patine, the primates cross and mitres, the standard, the banner of war, the original of the inventory, and of **the antique manuscripts**, the archetypes of the Statutes and the Charter of Transmission..."*³

Notice that both of these lists mark out the older archive as separate and distinct from the 1705 Statutes and the Charter of Transmission which are still with us today. Therefore, it is conclusive that these terms are not just euphemisms for the same older documents that we possess.

1 Succession 1792-1804 - Addressing the Dresser: Louis-Hercule Timoleon, Duke Of Cossé-Brissac To Bernard Raymond Fabré-Palaprat, 2021, Daniel J. Clausen, pg. 5.

https://www.academia.edu/49511889/Succession_1792_1804_Addressing_the_Dresser_Louis_Hercule_Timoleon_Duke_Of_Coss%C3%A9_Brissac_To_Bernard_Raymond_Fabr%C3%A9_Palaprat

2 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg 75

3 Ibid, pg 33-34

We also know that, regardless of the historical accuracy of the claims about these items, each item that they claimed to possess did correspond to actual items in their possession. We know this for a few reasons:

1. The 1705 Statutes and Charter of Transmission which were claimed are still present today, as well as the rubbings of the three ancient seals that are mentioned.⁴ The Rule of St. Bernard is still present in the Ordre du Temple deposit in the French National Archives.⁵
2. The archives, as well as the other objects of veneration were displayed openly in 1810, *"Besides many precious monuments, and various documents of great importance as regards to history, irresistible witnesses of its legitimate existence, the Temple possesses in its archives some other articles mentioned in the verbal-process of inventory, dated the 18th of May, 1810, signed by nearly two hundred knights who have all seen and held these same articles."*⁶
3. A portion of the archives were submitted to Masonic Historian C.A. Thory, along with the Charter of Transmission and the 1705 Statutes to verify the legitimacy of the Order: *"From the moment when he had obtained knowledge of the authentic titles which establish with the importance and dignity of the Order, the legitimate and uninterrupted succession of its Grand masters, he hastened to give proof of the most honorable impartiality by inserting in his Acta Latomorum a notice so much the more flattering for the Temple, as it is the result of **the most attentive examination of the documents extracted from its archives** and of the perfect conviction of the legitimacy of its existence."*⁷

According to the Order, Thory's examination provided a very positive analysis of the documents, and therefore, the Order's legitimacy.

Therefore, it can be concluded that an actual archive of antique manuscripts, not including the Charter and the Statutes, pre-existed the manifestation of the Ordre du Temple of Dr. Fabre-Palaprat and was present at some time in the 1800s.

4 Revue Belge de Numismatique et Sigillographie, 1909, pg 66

5 French National Archives Ordre du Temple Deposit 3A/S

6 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg 13-14

7 Ibid, pg. 300

WHAT WAS CONTAINED IN THE ANTIQUE ARCHIVE?

Several clues exist as to the contents of this archive that are preserved in quotations about it.

1. The archive contained information that, according to the Ordre du Temple, were of *"great importance to history"* and were *"irresistible witnesses of its legitimate existence."*⁸ They were *"numerous,"*⁹ *"precious"* and *"bear the imprint of age."*¹⁰
2. The antique archive contained registers and membership rolls from times past. For example, *"The registers of the Temple contain the respected names of Massillon and Fenelon."*¹¹ Elsewhere it is specified that Fenelon was initiated into the Order of the Temple on Oct. 18, 1695, and Massillon, Feb. 12, 1703. These membership rolls would therefore not only pre-date Fabre-Palaprat, but also Philippe II, Duke of Orleans, When seeking to discredit the Order, those who cannot fix the falsity on Fabre-Palaprat, move secondarily to charge the Duke of Orleans with it. These membership rolls would pre-date both hoax claims.
3. These hoax claims were present and active in the time of Fabre-Palaprat. The documents in the archive would also, according to the Order, hold strong proofs that:
 - The Order was innocent of its initial accusations by King Philip the Fair in 1307.
 - It was not born from a forgery by the Jesuit Bonani at the behest of the Duke of Orleans,
 - And it was not somehow derived from Freemasonry.

*"The authenticity of the numerous and precious documents, preserved religiously in the archives of the Temple, the liberty of becoming acquainted with every thing of which these archives are composed are granted to Knights whose virtues render them worthy of such a favor, [and demonstrate] the persecutions to which it has been exposed, of its relation to the Jesuits, the Freemasons, etc, is, in general, as erroneous as possible."*¹²

8 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg. 13-14

9 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg. 285

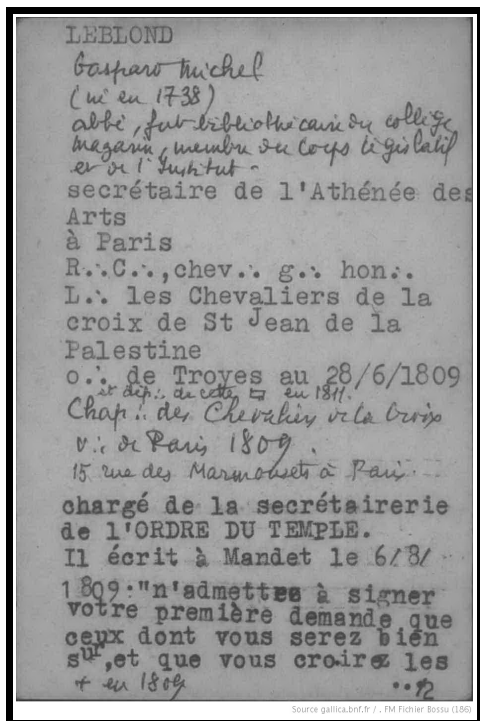
10 Biographie of Fabre Palaprat, pg . 10 (220).

11 A Sketch of the History of the Knights Templar, James Burnes, 1840, pg 52

12 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg. 285

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ANTIQUE ARCHIVE?

The short answer to this question is that many events lead to losing the Archive. The first event occurred very early on after Dr. Fabre-Palaprat's public unveiling of the Order.



In 1809, the Magistral Secretary of the Order was Abbé Gaspard-Michel Leblond, a famed French librarian of Mazarin College and antiquarian,¹³ he "was as versed in the science of the mysteries of paganism as in those of the Catholic religion, of which he was one of the most honorable ministers... he was part of the Lodge of the Knights of the Cross, in which he helped organize the Order of the Temple."¹⁴

Leblond, member #4 in the Order's registers, was a trusted, high level Templar, and as Magistral Secretary, he was in caretaker of the archives.

Sadly, in a fit of delirium from a fever, he "delivered to the flames a host of precious manuscripts" of the Order.¹⁵ He died shortly after.

Knowing the manuscript burning of Leblond occurred only a short five years after Fabre-Palaprat received the documents, it is unlikely these "precious manuscripts" were the day to day notations of the Order.¹⁶ Bernard-Raymond Fabre-Palaprat did not even sign his acceptance on the back of the Larmenius Charter until 1812, such was the budding nature of the public Order in 1809.

Unfortunately, that would not be the only stroke of disaster for the antique archive of the Order.

A later Magistral Secretary, Francois-Louis Foraisse, known as Louis of Sundgaw, was deposed from his position as Secretary, but did not want to go away quietly: "The Charter of Transmission, as well as the objects which were **mutilated or injured** when they tore them away from the care of the last deposed Magisterial Secretary (Louis of Sundgaw), are place in the Apostolical-Patriarchal Archives, under the safeguard of the Grandmaster and

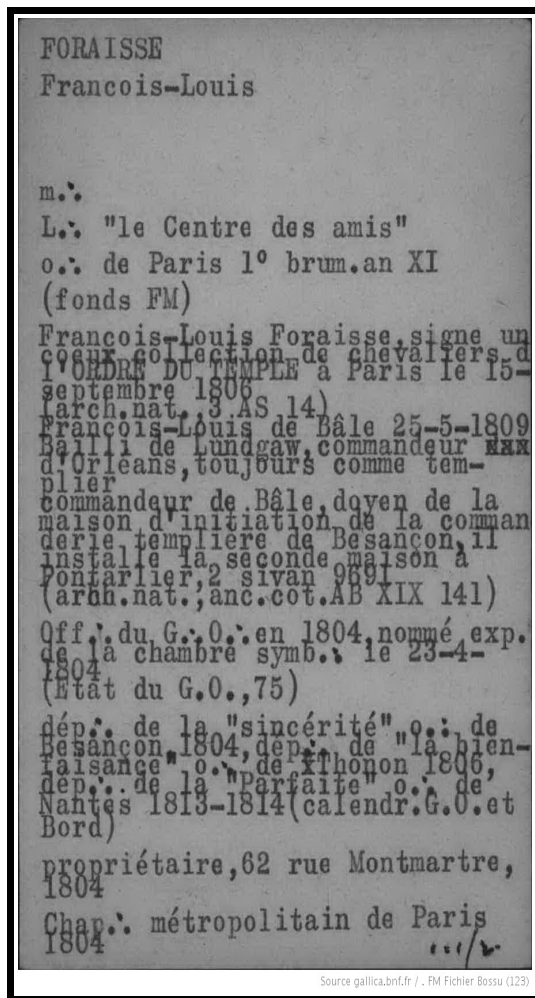
13 https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaspard_Michel

14 Historical Summary of the Order of Freemasonry, Vol. 2, Bésuchet, pg. 169

15 Ibid. pg. 169

16 The French National Archives still holds documents of the Fabre-Palaprat era back to 1806, and so, were not burned.

of eleven knights, who each have a key of the sacred Treasure."¹⁷



The next set of circumstances, which may be the same as above, wildly supposes a careful orchestration to rid the Order of its legitimacy by this Louis Foraisse.

Dr. Fabre-Palaprat died in 1838, and the Order honored him with a large Convent which included a memorial service for the former Grandmaster.

One of the speeches given at his memorial detailed the troubles and hardships he had in service and sacrifice for the Order. In doing so, it details a harrowing event regarding the archives:

"The parchments of the Temple bear the precious imprint of age by the centuries. Soon, the only man in a position to execute for their profit the most daring move - the deal is concluded - from then on everything is prepared in mystery and in silence. The brazier is lit, its sparkling flame is ready to devour our most precious manuscripts, our registers -- the Archetype [is fulfilled], for everything that

belongs to the Temple must perish by Fire!

*But a vague anxiety had seized the mind of the Grandmaster. This pressing feeling brought him spontaneously to the unworthy functionary of the Order at the moment when this traitor was preparing to censure his execrable crime. Bernard Raymond sees the danger, he rushes in to seize by force the registers that are disputed with him. A violent struggle ensues, hand to hand. Many sheets torn off by the sacrilegious hand of the unworthy Forraisse are instantly consumed by the flames. But all the rest of the titles and papers miraculously escape imminent destruction."*¹⁸

However, it seems that Forraisse was not done yet, as he did not fully complete his

17 Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg. 35

18 Biographie of Fabre Palaprat, pg. 10 (220).

mission. The speech continues:

"Other, no less daring attempts of this kind, and no doubt, starting from the same source have taken place since the one just mentioned. From then on, precautionary measures had to be taken in order to secure these treasures of the Order of the Temple."¹⁹

It is unknown whether any of these other attempts were successful in destroying any part of the archive. Nevertheless, the Order seems to claim a persistent conspiracy to destroy the antique archives, which was at least partially successful.

Three years prior to the death of Fabre-Palaprat in 1838, he moved to the south of France to deal with his declining health. The next event can be placed circa 1834, since it is spoken of in relationship to when he left Paris:

*"Less than a year before his departure from Paris, Grand Master was again exposed to the danger of seeing **several pieces of great importance taken from the archives**. Seduced by the demonstrations of an enthusiasts zeal for the Temple (a zeal which was in reality only a clever imposture), the magisterial confidence had once again been led astray."*

Mistaking this zeal as sincere, Fabre-Palaprat was lured into a situation where more very important archives were stolen. Whatever was left of the antique archive after all this, the speech at Fabre-Palaprat's memorial service leaves its fate in an alarming state:

"Let us hope, Gentlemen, that these archives, so interesting, which each of us as been able to see, and of which, very fortunately, meticulous inventory was solemnly made at the meeting of the General Convent, will have been deposited in a safe place by the wise forethought of the Grandmaster Bernard Raymond."²⁰

Alarming, because it is their *hope* that the Grandmaster will have deposited the archive in a safe place. The phrasing is such that, at time of the death of Fabre-Palaprat, the exact location of the antique archive was unknown!

Not long after the death of Fabre-Palaprat, the Order began to decline. His successor, William Sidney Smith, only held the reins for a mere two years before his death. Beginning in the mid-1840s, the Order began a steady decline and fragmentation.²¹

In a letter from 1863, Theodore Juge, publisher of the Order, responded to a letter about

19 Biographie of Fabre Palaprat, pg . 10 (220).

20 Ibid. Pg 11 (221).

21 Verifying the Continuation of the French Ordre du Temple and the OSMTJ, Daniel Clausen, 2021.

https://www.academia.edu/47009076/Verifying_the_Continuation_of_the_French_Ordre_du_Temple_and_the_OSMTJ

the state of the Templars in France reflecting on how it was far it had fallen:

*"How can you dig in still fresh graves? The Order of the Temple has been dead almost since the time yours was **missing records**.. The Order was not able to get through the time of 1848, and even then there were hardly any meetings... But I believe yes, more of them remained in Belgium and England."*

Since we know the Order was certainly alive in the immediate aftermath of Fabre-Palaprat's death, the time of "missing records" would be placed to soon after that. It is conceivable that whatever remained of the antique archive after Fabre-Palaprat hid it away was never recovered, as it seems no one else knew the location. Perhaps because of this, the legitimacy of the Order then took a terrible blow, reducing interest and prestige, causing the steep decline of the Order in the mid-1840s.

THE FRENCH NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Two deposits of the Order's archives were made, one in 1857, one in 1871. These archives are large and voluminous, yet nothing from the antique archive was included. Furthermore, it is known that it is far from complete.²² Even the most prized possession of the Ordre du Temple, the original Charter of Larmenius, did not make it into the National Archives, but instead, disappeared for decades before it was presented at auction, mislabeled as a "Masonic Diploma from 1812" in the early 20th century.

Interestingly, the three ancient seals mentioned in the original inventory were cataloged for the 1857 deposit, but they were absent from the 1871 inventory. A Numismatic Manual from 1909 describes the situation:

"The Order then possessed at least three seals. The matrices of these seals which still appear on the inventory established on July 23, 1857, unfortunately no longer exist among the documents deposited in the archives on August 16, 1871. But we had the good fortune to find the imprints on various documents which form part of the archives of the Order... These three matrices must have been lost between 1857 and 1871 because they no longer appear on the established inventory during the deposit made in the National Archives (in 1871)."²³

These seals were the Seal of Grandmaster Jean-Marc Larmenius, author of the Charter of

²² Pieces of the conventional archive are scattered across various libraries in Europe and the United States. Periodically, documents from the conventional archive appear at auction, demonstrating a certain portion still exists in private hands.

²³ Revue Belge de Numismatique et Sigillographie, 1909, pg 66

Transmission, the Seal of the Crusading Knight, and the Seal of St. John.

The lack of these ancient seals are very unfortunate, mostly due to the fact that the Seal of Jean-Marc Larmenius could reasonably be evaluated to further validate or discredit the Charter of Larmenius that bears his name. Its very existence acts as a second primary document that corroborates the Charter itself.

The seals luckily were still used on later Order documents. Transcribed from the documents, they are depicted below:



Lastly, in our own present times, it was discovered that within the French National Archives, there was cataloged the Statutes of the Order of the Temple for the years 1596, 1693, and 1695.

FINDING AID i

Modern Order of the Temple Fund (1705-1857)

Reference codes: [3AS/32](#)

List of members of the Metropolitan Grand Convent.

▼ More actions

Description

Registration number for the Temple Militia.

Statuta commilitonum ordinis Templi a conventu generali Versaliano anni 1705 confecta (sceaux). 1705 **REVIEW date** .

Statuta commilitonum ordinis Templi in conventibus annorum 1596, 1693 et 1695 confecta (sceau). 1596-1695.

Statutes of the Knights of the Order of the Temple. 1705.

Statuta commilitonum ordinis Templi (printed in 1811). 1705.

This groundbreaking discovery eventually led to a disappointing conclusion. The first document presented to me per my request for these early Statutes was the 1705 Statutes. When I notified the National Archives that they sent me the wrong documents, they sent me the next set of documents, which was another copy of the 1705 Statutes. The liaison for the National Archives then admitted the 1596-1695 Statutes are not present as they should be. The National Archives was apologetic for not having the documents I requested.

It is possible these early Statutes were a legitimate part of the antique archives. For an entry to exist, they were certainly cataloged at one time by the National Archives. The existence of the 1596 Statutes in particular would verify a legitimate Templar continuation over 100 years before the Duke of Orleans in 1705, smashing all previously suggested hoax narratives.

The 1695 Statutes would be historically significant by showing the structure of the Order during the period of "*Le Petit Resurrection des Templiers*" under the Duke of Duras, whose signature on the Larmenius Charter has been verified back to 1681.²⁴

It is a tragedy that nearly all of the items that pre-date the Ordre du Temple under Fabre-Palaprat have somehow been lost, either through the deliberate schemes of men like Foraisse, or through the unlucky errors of men, like the burning by Leblond, or the missing entries of seals and statutes in the National Archives.

CONCLUSIONS

While the actual manuscripts and documents are no longer with us today, it can be concluded they existed at one time. Over the course of the 1800s, these antique documents were seen by many, affirmed by the signatures of 200 Knights, analyzed and found approval by Thory. They seemed threatening enough to initiate a campaign to destroy them through several attempts. If it can be said that they existed, then the legitimacy of the Ordre du Temple can be bolstered.

Interestingly, these documents and the seals were not frequently paraded about, but instead, were kept only for "*those knights whose virtues rendered them worthy of such a favor.*"²⁵ In many ways, the Order felt secure in its legitimacy, even though they were frequently questioned by hostile outsiders. But when the hostility moved against the archives themselves, they were hidden away beyond the reach of anyone who might seek to harm them. The security they desired was too secure, keeping even future generations

²⁴ Re-Examining the Larmenius Charter, Daniel Clausen, 2021, pg. 11

²⁵ Manual of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, Henry Lucas, 1830, pg. 285

from the knowledge of these precious archives.

It seems that perhaps the Order of the Temple does indeed follow a pattern, an archetype: *“For everything that belongs to the Temple must perish by Fire!”*

May it not be so. Perhaps further research will bring forth more evidence. Private collections may come to light. The safe deposit of Fabre-Palaprat may some day be found. In that day, may the Order of the Temple be redeemed, and may Truth vindicate her children.



Daniel J. Clausen, GOTJ

Grand Historian of the OSMTJ
International Templar Historical Committee
Templar Digital Research Library Administrator
Templar Relic Exhibit Curator