

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



**VERIFYING THE CONTINUATION OF
L'ORDRE DU TEMPLE AND THE O.S.M.T.J.**



PROLOGUE

One of the most significant gaps in the chronologies regarding the continuation of the Ordre du Temple and the modern Templar movement lies in the period that exists from the waning days of the late 1800s until 1932. From there we see the emergence of the *Sovereign and Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem* under Theodore Covias.

In most retellings, the time of the Grandmastership of Josephin Peladan in 1892 until the registration of the name of OSMTJ are left with little comment, and yet, this period of time is crucial to establish a legitimate continuance. Even the historicity of the Grandmastership of Peladan is a matter of question. Peladan, famous for his voluminous writings, paintings, and his fervent Catholic mysticism, has scholars devoted to his study, and yet even they cannot verify a connection beyond doubt.

Nevertheless, in this treatise the subject of the continuation from Peladan to the 1932 registration will be attempted with every source available to the author, and will be dealt with honestly.

WAS PELADAN REALLY INVOLVED?

According to the general lore of the Order, Peladan was received as Regent, but since he was so involved in establishing his own order, *L'Ordre De La Rose Croix Catholique, Du Temple Et Du Graal*, he was unable to provide it with adequate attention. Seeing the

Ordre du Temple languishing, remaining members of the Grand Priory of Belgium sought to take control and administer it instead, and Peladan agreed.

There is circumstantial and some documentary evidence to suggest that Josephin Peladan was holding high office in the Order the Temple, although some modern scholars deny it.

Internally, within the OSMTJ, he appears very early in the history after the 1932 re-emergence. The first list of Grandmasters available that was produced by the OSMTJ is in a *Brief History of the Order according to Antonio de Sousa Fontes* in 1945. This list of Grandmasters places Peladan as Regent of the Order from 1892-1894. This claim has been maintained in every list of of Succession since then.

Josephin Peladan's association with the Ordre du Temple supposedly comes by way of his father, Chevalier Adrien Peladan Sr, not to be confused with his brother, also named Adrien, Elder Peladan was also a Knight of the Golden Spur and St. Sylvester, having been knighted by the Pope himself.

Josephin Peladan said in 1892 in the Foreward of his book *How to Become a Mage: "Par mon père, le chevalier Adrien Péladan, affilié dès 1840 à la néo-templerie des Genoude, des Lourdoueix – qui cinquante années tint la plume au clair pour l'Église, contre les parpaillots, pour le Roy contre la canaille – j'appartiens à la suite de Hugues des Paiens."* Being translated as, *"But my father, the knight Adrien Péladan, affiliated from 1840 with the Neo-Templarism of Genoude and Lourdoueix, who for fifty years kept the pen clear for the Church, against the heretics, for the King, against the rabble - I belong to the suite of Hugues des Payens."*

Genoude and Lourdoueix were both prominent literary and political figures of the time. It should be noted that within the Archives and membership registers available to this author, none of the four, Genoude, Lourdoueix, Adrien or Josephin are mentioned as members. However, it is well known that the membership registers are far from complete, especially after the death of Fabre-Palaprat (1838). There are multiple documented reports of lost archives and membership rolls at various stages of the Order.

The first mention of the 1840 initiation of Elder Peladan and his two companions, aside from the quote above by Peladan himself, is by the OSMTJ in a 1965 special bulletin entitled, *"La Croix du Temple"*, which may no longer be extant.

Here, I must address the main critiques of this argument given by various scholars. It is contended that Peladan's father Adrien would never have joined the Fabre-Palaprat brand of Templary because he was a strict Royalist, while Fabre-Palaprat was a Bonapartist. Such sweeping claims seem out of place in reality though, since the Ordre du Temple itself was an apolitical entity, keeping apart from politics as a matter of Statute. Political figures abounded as members, including kings, such as Pedro I of Brazil

and Portugal. Fabre-Palaprat was dead, so his personal political leanings are irrelevant several years later when Adrien would have been initiated. Additionally, even if the argument is granted on its face, in the various relationships of life, we often find ourselves friends with, and affiliated with, people with whom we do not always agree. The dismissing the connection of Adrien to the Ordre du Temple based on "I do not think he would do that" are far from scholarly conclusions, even if maintained by a scholar.

Lastly, in the special bulletin *"La Croix du Temple"* it is claimed the initiation with Adrien, Genoude and Lourdouenix were initiated in the city of Toulouse. Peladan scholar Milko Bogard dismisses the event out of hand by noting, *"there was no commandery (lodge) of the Ordre du Temple in Toulouse in that year."* This he asserts without a source, as if he had knowledge the successors did not, and furthermore, as if it mattered. The location of an investiture is not inherently linked to whether there is a lodge in that city. To this day, we have Convents and Conclaves in diverse places to accommodate Knight Aspirants who may not live near populous local bodies, and other Knight Aspirants travel to them to attend from afar. We even have a practice of *Field Investiture*, where as long as it is conducted by one with Investing Authority, knightings may occur practically anywhere.

In spite of all this, it is recorded in the book *Deodat Roche et L'Eglise Gnostique*, from the French, *"We know that when the Grand Master Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat wanted impose Johannism on the whole Order, the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics who were chaplains of the Temple gathered around Monsignor de Solomon Bishop of Saint Flour and made with a large number of knights Secular secession. It was during this period, in Toulouse and within a commandery of those Catholic "refractories" that Adrien Péladan was admitted into the Order of the Temple in the company of the abbots of Genoude and Lourdoueix. Its reception took place in 1840 about a year before the end of the schism caused by Johannism (February 11, 1841) and under the Lieutenancy general (dissident) of Count Jules de Moreton Chabrillan."* Chabrillan was the leader of the non-Johannite Catholic branch.

The conclusions of these dissenting scholars are that Adrien must have been involved in some type of Hyper-Royalist knighthood instead, suggesting by name, one *Chevaliers de la Foi*, or Knights of the Faith, a group that is completely devoid of any Templar tradition, claim, or even terminology. Fixated on the political aims of Adrien, they are willing to dismiss the Ordre du Temple, the group synonymous with "Neo-Templarism" in 1840 France, but also dismiss the group whose successors overtly claim Josephin Peladan's involvement as early as 1945.

Peladan mentions the Templars beyond his father Adrien, however. In 1895, Peladan published a pseudo-biographical novel called, *Le Dernier Bourbon*, where his biographical character says, *"The Rose-Croix were gnostics, alchemists; their search for*

truth caused concern to the strict and literal Catholicism of the Templars. The two currents could never merge, except in the hands of a Grand Master capable of equally balancing Rosicrucian liberties, the individualism that inspires them, with Templar obligations. The Temple presents the qualities and defects of the Company of Jesus, taking its power from collectivism; the Rose-Croix places its power in the individual. [...] They are as different from each other as the Priest is from the Mage."

At the time of its publication, Peladan would have already passed the torch to Belgium, but the implication was that he, himself, was that "*capable Grand Master*" who is able to hold these two opposing things together.

However, it would seem that Regent is the most likely appellation for Peladan, because in the Ordre du Temple, Grandmasters are typically elected for life. So the fact that the Grandmaster list includes him for only two years while he yet lived for more than two decades after is a fact that must be explained.

If one feels that the above is evidence enough to establish his involvement, we will next examine where things went from 1894.

PASSING THE TORCH

At this juncture, one must recognize a certain modus operandi of the Ordre du Temple. Whenever it was dying or in great trouble, it would seek to be bolstered by famous names. For example, in the days after the death of Regent Sidney Smith, far from hating monarchies, the Grand Priory of England broke off and offered their Grandmastership to the King of Sweden, who declined due to his age. Then they offered to George IV of England in 1857, and this was accepted. A poetic book was published in celebration of it, and is available to this day. During the Regency of Jean-Marie Raoul, the Prince de Chimay was sent to Rome to gain papal recognition for the Templars and talks continued until ended by the Revolutions of 1848. Then Regent, Narcisse Valleray, requested official recognition from Emperor Napoleon III. In 1853, the Order was again recognized, and its members granted the right to wear their insignia within France.

Granting the head of the Order to Josephin Peladan, a prominent French Catholic mystic seems in line with previous actions of the Order when faced with difficult times.

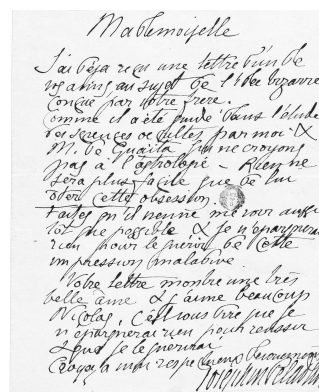
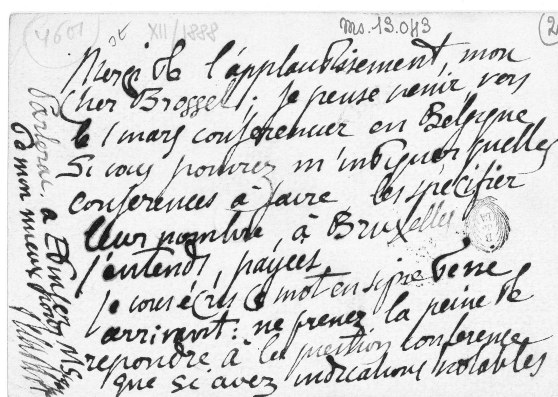
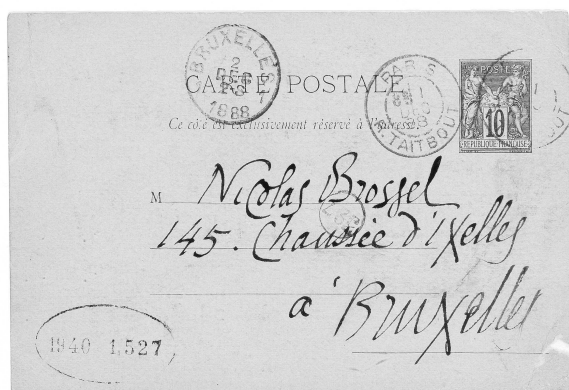
And difficult times they were. One must have an accurate assessment of the health of the Order in the days after the death of Fabre-Palaprat in 1838. For a few decades, business carried on well, schisms were healed, powers were passed peacefully, and the Order remained relevant. But gradually interest slowed, meetings became less and less frequent and numerous Grand Priories either died out or reverted to some type of masonic templarism.

In France, the Order was essentially dead, carried up to the time of Peladan only by the most long time members, like Narcisse Valleray and AMG Vernois, who were very aged. To illustrate this, Louis Theodore Zig, a former Templar, responded to a letter in 1863 requesting information about the French Templars. He wrote: *"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. Today, how many of us are alive, who could to belong to it? A few! ... At least as far as the French are concerned; but I believe yes, more of them remained in Belgium and England. ... Our feasts, which are said are still from Palestine, they have stopped!"*

First, note the "missing records." The Order was not only dead in France, but since Peladan was so concerned with his own Order that it was apparent there was no hope for future renewal. It was those knights remaining in Belgium that rose to the task.

Peladan was a pillar in the occult salons of the time, and with famed occultist Papus, founded the *Independent Group of Esoteric Studies*. The Belgian branch of this group was a lodge called KVMRIS. The leaders of this Belgian study group were one Nicolas Brossel and Francis Vergey, both reputed to have been members of the Belgian Grand Priory of the Ordre du Temple. Vergey was also a member of Peladan's *Ordre De La Rose Croix Catholique*.

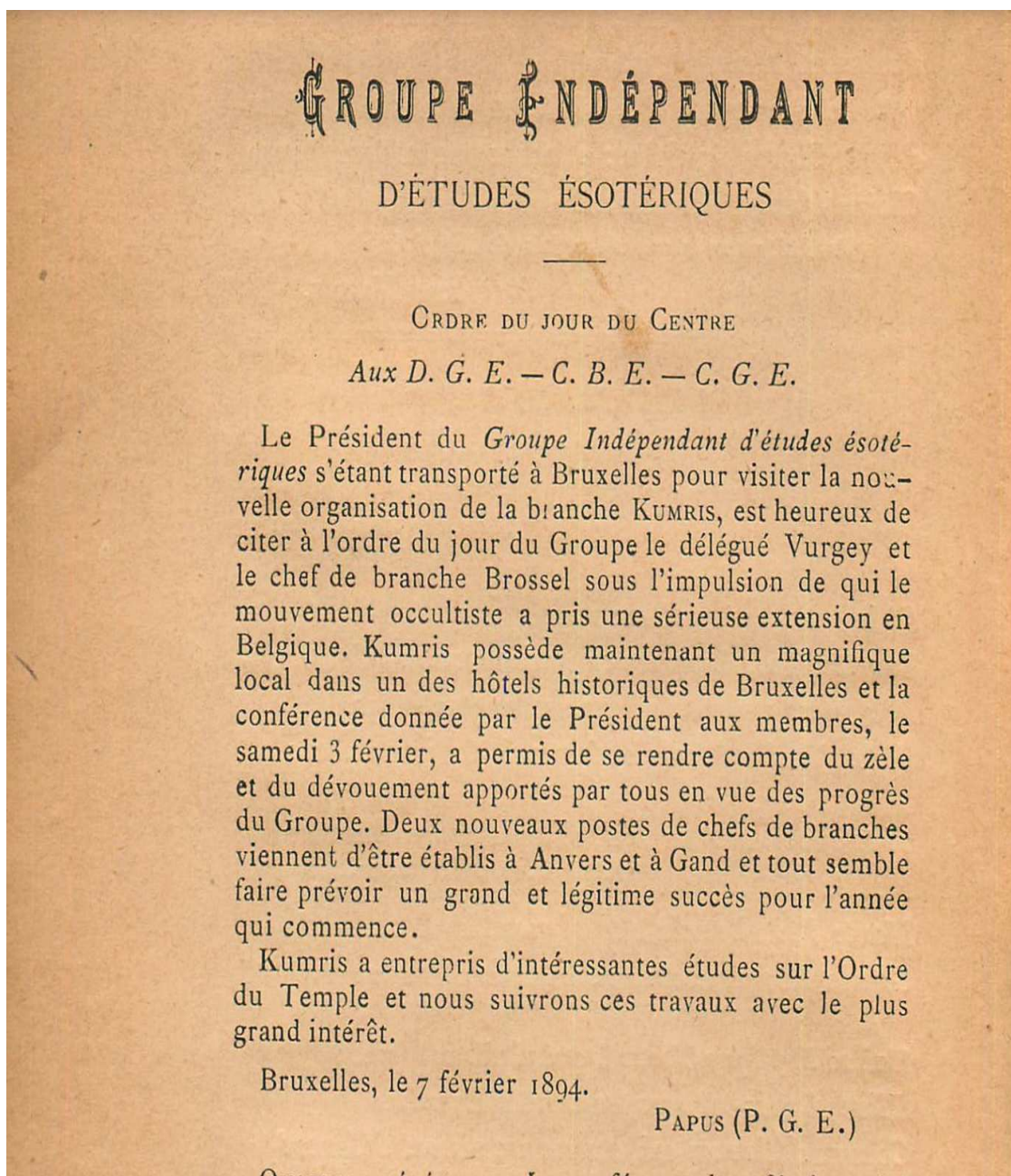
Nicolas Brossel and Josephin Peladan were well acquainted and corresponded with letters. Additionally, Peladan would write to Brossel's sister Anna Brossel, which highlights the closeness of their relationship. One may write to a friend, but would only write to the sister of a close friend. He may as well come over for Christmas dinner.



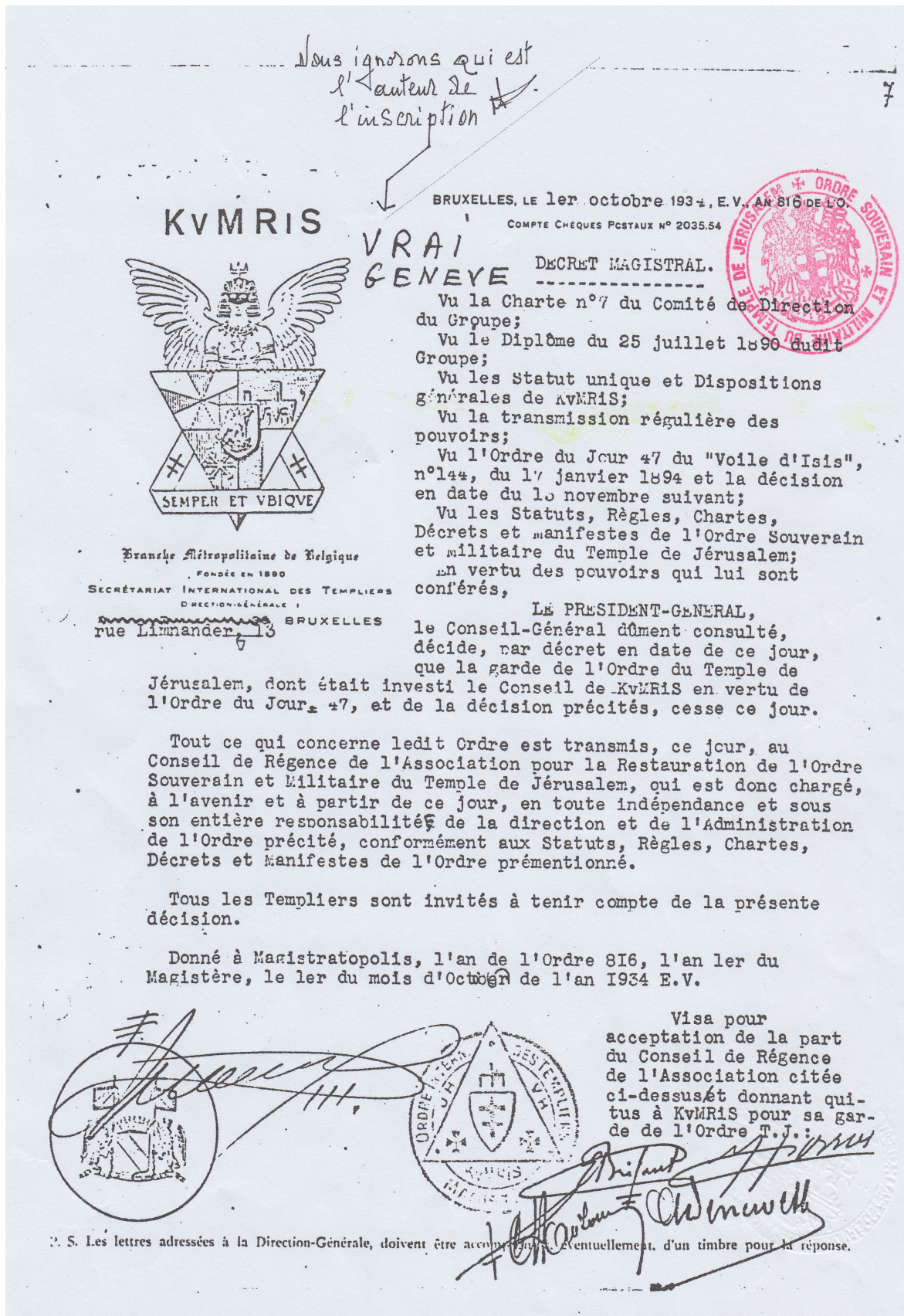
As the narrative goes, Brossol and Vurgey ask to take the management of the Ordre du Temple under the care of KVMRIS. Histories of the Order record that on the 13th of November 1894, the General Convent of the Order of the Temple met in Brussels to re-establish the Regency there.

Below is an entry from *L'Initiation*, the official publication of the *Independent Group for Esoteric Studies* written by Papus in 1894, the year of the transfer. In it, it states that he has visited the KVMRIS lodge, and says it is essentially doing well, specifically mentioning Vurgey and Brossol, and that the lodge has taken a specific interest in the Ordre du Temple.

From here, the lodge KVMRIS acted as an administrative umbrella for l'Ordre du Temple via a Council of Regency until 1932 when the Order is released out again under the name of OSMTJ.



Next, we have a document from 1932 that establishes the reorganization of the Templars and releasing them out from under the umbrella and administration of the KVMRIS lodge and is reproduced here:



A rough translation of the document follows:

Dated 1 Oct 1934

Magisterial Decree

Whereas the charter n° 7 of the direction committee of the group;

Whereas the diploma of 25 July 1890 creates the group;

Whereas the unique statutes and general depositories of Kumris;

Whereas the order of the day 47 in the "voile d'isis" n° 144, of the 17th of

January 1894 and the decision made on the date of the following November (N°)

Whereas the statutes, rules, charters, decree's and manifests of the Souverein Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

And with all rights issued by the brotherhood, the president general, the general assembly, here gathered, decides that, by the decree of this day, the safeguarding of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, invested by the council of Kvmris, and placed on the order of the day, 47, the following decision was agreed, on this day:

To all who are concerned within the Order and past that, this day, within the Council of Regency of the Association for the Restoration of the Souverein and Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, who is charged, to be present on this day, in complete independence and under the complete responsibility of the direction and the administration of the Order, according the statutes, rules, charters, decrees and manifest of the mentioned Order. All the Templars were invited to attend this decision.

Issued at Magistropolis, in the year of the Order 816, in the first year of the Magisterium, the 1st of the month of October of the year 1934.

Visa for the acceptance on behalf of the Regency Council of the Association given to Kvmris for the Safekeeping of the Order TJ (Temple Jerusalem)

Signatures including names as:

Emile Brifaut, Emile Isaac (Vandenberg), Alfred Deneweth

There are several things to note in this document. First, it states in the beginning lines that the name of OSMTJ was first used in a diploma dated July 25, 1890.

Secondly, the Statutes, Rules and Charter and "safeguarding of the Order" are dated from 1894, the year the transfer from Peladan would have occurred and the year mentioned in *L'Initiation* that KVMRIS was involved in l'Ordre du Temple.

Third, it states that this decree comes from the "Council of Regency" for the "Restoration" of the Order. This Council of Regency is mentioned on numerous timelines of the Order, also sometimes refered to as the "Secretariat."

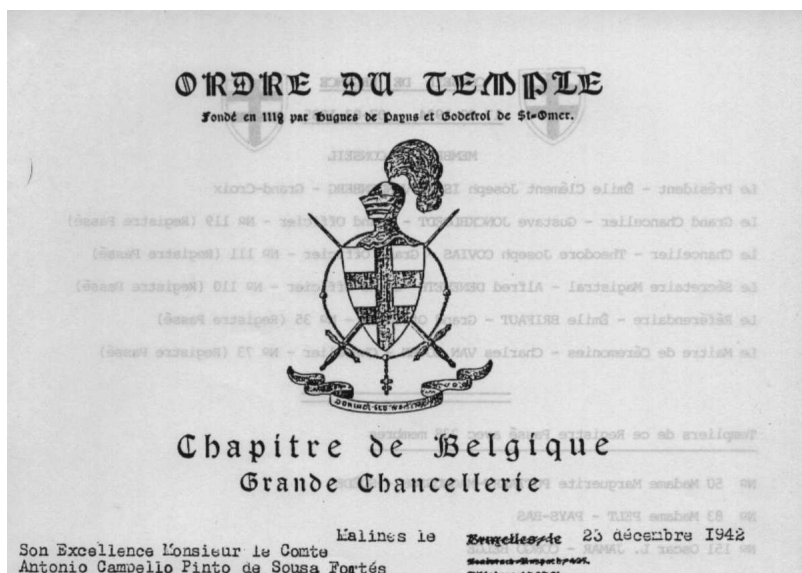
Fourth, the decree sends out the OSMTJ under their own responsibility and direction according to their statutes, rules and charters, and no longer under the umbrella of KVMRIS.

Fifth, it states that all the Templars were invited to attend the decision, which demonstrates an active and existing body of Templars during the period of this Council of Regency. Therefore, this era from 1894-1932 was not a dormant or sleeping period.

Sixth, among the signatures is Emile Isaac (Vandenberg), Regent of the OSMTJ from 1935-1942, establishing a fluid continuation from the administration of KVMRIS to

OSMTJ.

Lastly, on a document from 1942 by the above signatory Emile Issac Vandenberg, and addressed to his successor Antonio de Sousa Fontes, he writes from the Grand Priory of Belgium on *Ordre du Temple* letterhead, bringing the establishment and continuity of the Templars full circle.



When the whole narrative is put together and combined with the documentary evidence that is still extant, one must admit that there are still gaps in the whole story, nevertheless, the gaps do not force us to make any needless leaps of judgement. Taken all together, there is a cohesive, plausible, and evidenced line of history that maintains and verifies continuity between the Ordre du Temple of the 1800s and the OSMTJ of the 20th century. It is granted that not everything is known, but not knowing the entire story does not disqualify the rest. Furthermore, greater cooperation between modern Templar branches may bring new documentary evidence to light in due time. We pray for such a day.

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Knight Commander Daniel J. Clausen

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