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KNIGHT TEMPLAR

December 2023

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OF THE ORDER OF THE TEMPLE

**GRAND COMMANDERIES OF NEW
YORK** SIGN MUTUAL RECOGNITION



94th ANNUAL GRAND ENCAMPMENT EASTER OBSERVANCE – 2024

The 94th Annual Easter Sunrise Service, sponsored by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, will again be held on the steps of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia, on Sunday, March 31, 2024.

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

The Crystal Gateway Marriott, 1700 Richmond Highway, Arlington, Virginia, is our headquarters hotel. The special Knights Templar rate will be \$129.00 per room, based on double occupancy. Parking rate is \$28.00, per night. Please make your reservations directly with the hotel by calling 703-920-3230 (mention Grand Encampment of Knights Templar). A hotel reservation link is available on our website at: www.knightstemplar.org.

MEALS

A meal package is available for \$75.00 per person and includes Saturday evening dinner and Sunday morning breakfast buffet. Order your meal tickets from the Grand Encampment office. Registration forms are available online at www.knightstemplar.org for credit card processing, or mail your check, payable to the Grand Encampment, to 3 Sugar Creek Center Blvd, Suite 410, Sugar Land, TX 77478. Additional tickets may be ordered separately; Saturday dinner, \$60.00; Sunday breakfast buffet, \$20.00. Reserved seating at the Saturday night dinner will be assigned on a first come first served basis. If you would like to be seated together, please send in your payment as a group.

Note: The hotel and meal ticket cutoff date is March 1, 2024. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Grand Commanders and their ladies are invited to attend the Saturday evening dinner, courtesy of the Grand Encampment. Prior reservations are required with the Grand Encampment office.

EASTER MORNING SCHEDULE

Breakfast buffet – 5:15 a.m. to 6:15 a.m.

Buses begin to leave hotel – 6:30 a.m.

Parade will step off at 7:40 a.m.

Easter Memorial Service – 8:00 a.m.

Buses return to the hotel after the service at approximately 9:30 a.m.

OTHER DETAILS

Grand Commanders are requested to appoint a delegation chairman and notify Sir Knight Lawrence E. Tucker, R:E: Grand Recorder, 3 Sugar Creek Center Blvd, Suite 410, Sugar Land, TX 77478, Phone: 713-349-8700, Fax: 713-349-8710, E-mail: john@gektusa.org.



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Grand Master's Message

Sir Knight David J. Kussman, GCT

Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

To the Sir Knights of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!



It Came Upon the Midnight Clear is an 1849 poem and Christmas carol written by Edmund Sears, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Wayland, Massachusetts. In 1850, Sears' lyrics were set to

"Carol," a tune written for the poem the same year at his request, by Richard Storrs Willis.

Edmund Sears composed the five-stanza poem in common meter double during 1849. It first appeared on December 29, 1849, in *The Christian Register* in Boston, Massachusetts.

Sears served the Unitarian congregation in Wayland, Massachusetts, before moving on to a larger congregation at First Church of Christ, Unitarian, in Lancaster, also known as The Bulfinch Church, due to its design by Charles Bulfinch. After seven years, Sears suffered a breakdown and returned to Wayland. He wrote *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* while serving as a part-time preacher in Wayland. Writing during a period of personal melancholy, with news of revolution in Europe and the United States' war with Mexico fresh in his mind, Sears portrayed the world as dark, full of "sin

and strife," and impervious to the Christmas message.

Sears is said to have written these words at the request of his friend, William Parsons Lunt, pastor of United First Parish Church, Quincy, MA, for Lunt's Sunday school. One account says the carol was first performed by parishioners gathered in Sears' home on Christmas Eve, but to what tune is unknown: Willis' familiar melody was not written until the following year.

According to Ken Sawyer, Sears' song is remarkable for its focus – not on Bethlehem – but on his own time, on war and peace. Written in 1849, it has long been assumed to be Sears' response to the just-ended Mexican–American War. The song has been included in many Christmas albums recorded in the modern era.

As I reflect on the chaos and confusion which seems to engulf our world today, I am called to embrace the meaning of the lyrics of this beautiful poem.

May the Lord's Grace and Blessings be upon you and your families this Holy Season and may God's Peace be shed upon all people around the globe.

Merry Christmas my beloved Knights.

David J. Kussman, GCT
Grand Master

Veritas • Perspicuitas • Templarii

**It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's all-gracious King" –
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel-sounds
The blessed angels sing.**

**But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring; –
Oh hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!**

**And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing; –
Oh, rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When Peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.**

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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue is chock full of content. We have news spreads to keep you informed of what we hope are topics of interest, ranging from goings on in the jurisdiction to updates on issues of interest to Knights Templar and Masons generally, like the Vatican's restatement of the incompatibility of Masonry and the Christian religion. Their main point, it seems, is based on earlier bulls that characterize the Masons as a hotbed of a dark nefarious heresy – you guessed it, “natural philosophy” or “science.” But infallibility makes capitulation difficult (if not impossible). If only the Pope realized the danger of this rhetoric: Julio Diaz, the man who shot and killed Bro. Robert Wise earlier this year, is probably a Catholic who is convinced that the Masons are satanists with a diet of raw baby. His competency is in issue at pre-trial, see news item on page 13.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The Grand Commandery of New York and the Grand Commandery PHA of New York signed a concordat of mutual recognition with rights of mutual visitation. Essentially, Knights of either affiliation have the same rights of visitation in all Commanderies in New York under either jurisdiction. See news article on page 8. Texas instituted its first research commandery, under the new Grand Encampment provision allowing for research commanderies. See news article on page 11. And enjoy a report on the Masonic Retirement Community's Family Day in Arlington, TX, which concluded this year under a solar eclipse. It's amazing what Masons can accomplish when working together – coming from a smaller jurisdiction, it's easy to lose sight of the power of numbers, of Masonic labor magnified by the Lodge. Perhaps this is the principal impetus for the Lodge? Jurisdictions like Texas give one hope. See the news piece on page 10.

Taylor Nauta returns to these pages with a feature on the Masonic virtue of charity. Check it out on page 16. We have another essay from the Templar Ritualist course, this time Gabriel Jagush relays his interpretations regarding the symbolism of the skull. Seems like most participants of that course elect that essay, we may need to offer more topics for consideration.

Finally, yours truly tackles some history, plunging down the rabbit hole on the origins of the Order of the Temple. Whence this ritual was derived has been of particular interest to me for several years. There's a lot more research to be done, but I am fairly confident the ritualistic knighting comprising the “four steps” devolves from a Jacobite Masonry that really seeded and inspired all the “high degrees.” Other chivalric degrees drew from the same antecedent body of work – no single rite can lay claim to the origin – however it is clear that there was a divergence between the ceremonial knighting on the one hand and the didactic renditions of the Templars on the other. I'm more interested in the former, personally. See my article on page 26. Then, last but not least, since this is the December issue, I present an expanded account of an article I wrote which was published in this magazine back in 2009 (if I'm not mistaken). The subject: the Star of Bethlehem. Evidence is persuasive that the great conjunction of 7 B.C. is this fabled omen. Find out why on page 37.

There's plenty of other material in this issue. Keep up to date with the KTEF (pages 48-51) and the SOOB (46-47). And, most important of all, don't forget to read the Grand Master's Christmas Toast (with response, pages 40 and 41). And if you're a Grand Commander, your vanity may be tickled starting on page 42. (If you don't see your picture included, talk to your Grand Recorder – either we didn't receive your picture in time or what was sent was not usable.) We've done our best to include everyone but understand that a mere fraction of Grand Commanders responded to the call to submit information for this spread.

I hope wherever you find yourself this Christmas you are in the company of fine spirits, in the arms of your loved ones. Never forget, you are part of the largest family in the world, the Masonic family.

Merry Christmas!

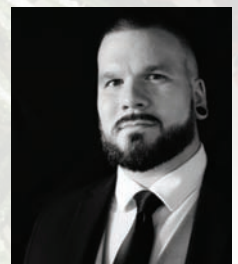
Ben Williams

Merry Christmas!

CONTRIBUTORS



Taylor Nauta is a Past Commander, Past Illustrious Master, and Past High Priest of Washington Chapter No. 5, in Baton Rouge. He's a Past Master of New River Lodge No. 402, Past Monarch of Al Azar Grotto, and Past Master of Kadosh at the Baton Rouge Consistory. He currently Venerable Master of the Baton Rouge Lodge of Perfection and es as Celebrant of the Louisiana College of the Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis. Formerly a teacher of Anatomy, Physiology, and Kinesiology at Medical Training College, he signed a recording contract with Red Stick Records in February of 2022 and is now a full-time, professional, touring singer-songwriter. When he's not writing or performing, he's fly fishing somewhere or spending time with his wife, stepson, and twin daughters.



Gabriel Jagush ("Gabe") is a Past Commander and the Prelate of Worth Commandery No. 19, Knights Templar, in Fort Worth, Texas. He currently serves as Grand Sentinel in the elected progressive line of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas. His foremost passions in Freemasonry and the Western Esoteric Tradition are ritual, education, and Christian Mysticism. Sir Knight Gabriel is a founding member of Texas MasoniCon, an international Masonic educational conference hosted by Fort Worth Lodge No. 148, AF & AM, of which he is a Past Master. When he is not occupied with Freemasonry, he enjoys hunting, traveling with his wife, Sarah, and causing chaos around the house with his son, Raphael.



John Bridegroom John A. Bridegroom is a Past Commander of Valparaiso Commandery No. 28 and a recipient of the Knight Commander of the Temple. He is a Past Master of Porter Lodge No.137, a Past Potentate, Past Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons, and is currently serving as the Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Indiana. Nationally, he is a Past Provincial Grand Secretary of the Masonic Order of Athelstan, and is currently serving as the Grand Marshal of the Order of St. Thomas of Acon and the Grand Director of Ceremonies of the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of the USA.

Editor

Ben Williams is a Registered Patent Attorney based out of Denver, Colorado. He's a Past Department Commander for the Northwest Department and chairs the Grand Encampment's Education Committee. He's married to his patient and caring wife, Tiffany, a history teacher. They have a daughter, Adelyn, and a beagle, Warwick.



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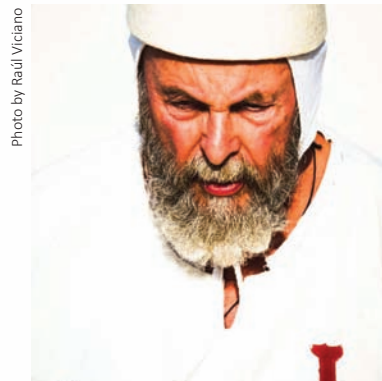


Photo by Raúl Viciano

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Grand Commandery of New York & G Sign Mutual Recogni



Sir Knight Marques A. Jones (left), Most Eminent Grand Commander of Most Eminent Prince Hall Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the State of New York, and Sir Knight David R. Barkstedt (right), Right Eminent Grand Commander of Grand Commandery of Knights Templar State of New York, sign the resolution of mutual recognition at Frank Guido's Little Italy, in Kingston, NY.

KINGSTON, NY – At a celebratory luncheon, July 29, the Grand Commandery of the State of New York and the Grand Commandery PHA of New York signed a joint resolution in mutual recognition of each jurisdiction, with rights of visitation.

Sir Knights and their Ladies traveled from across the Empire State to share in the occasion.

The Resolution includes provisions for perpetuity, cementing the bonds of friendship and brotherly love, including the provision to share directories of membership now and for the future.

Two types of visitations are contemplated by the Resolution. One is a formal visitation, akin to an official visit. In such an instance, the Grand Commanders of the respective bodies will coordinate the visitation. But for informal visitations, where an individual Sir Knight

wishes to attend a meeting between the bodies, he need only coordinate with the Commander of the body to which he solicits attendance. The Resolution specifies that this coordination may be effectuated simply by arriving early to the meeting for which the visit is intended.

In other words, the rights of visitation are essentially the same as visiting any Commandery irrespective of the jurisdiction. **KT**



Points of the Recognition were:

Whereas the goal of both Grand Commanderies is to promote amity, brotherhood, and fraternalism between the members of the Constituent Commanderies chartered to them, and to promote activities of mutual benefit; and

Whereas at all times, the rules of each Grand Lodge and Grand Encampments will be respected by all.

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That mutual visitations be granted to Sir Knights of both Grand Commanderies; and

Be it Further Resolved, That there shall be two types of visitations between Sir Knights from the Grand Commanderies-formal and informal. Formal visitations are formally arranged by the Commander or Grand Commander to visit a Constituent Commandery chartered by the other Grand Commandery. Formal visitation between two Commanderies may be arranged by the respective Eminent Commanders. Whenever there are to be formal visitations involving the Grand

Grand Commandery PHA of New York Visitation with Rights of Visitation

by Ben Williams



“Knights Templar doing what they say they’re going to do. Working together, brotherly love, taking care of each other,” said David Barkstedt, PGC. “It’s not something we *do*. It’s something we *are*. It was a great event and should have been done a long, long time ago.”

Commanders, normal Templar protocol should be followed, arranging the visit through their respective Grand Commandery’s Offices; and

Be it Further Resolved, That informal visitations are those involving individual Sir Knights. Invitations to visit a Commandery or the other Grand Commandery shall not be required. The Sir Knight(s) wishing to visit a Commandery of the other Grand Commandery should notify the Eminent Commander of the Commandery, either directly or through a member of that Commandery. The notification is informal and not required to be in writing and may be through prior contacts with a member of the Commandery or by arriving early for the meeting. The Eminent Commander of the Commandery being visited should ensure friendly welcome for all visitors; and

Be it Further Resolved, That Commandery visitations between Sir Knights of these two Grand Commanderies are definitely and strongly encouraged. It is further encouraged that the commanderies participate together and support each other in activities outside the Asylum, such as community events, parades, and other appropriate activities; and

Be it Further Resolved, That this Agreement is intended to ensure that the visitations are comported in the most friendly, courteous, and appropriate manner; and

Be it Further Resolved, That the Grand Commandery shall exchange and continue to exchange copies of their Grand Commandery directories and other publications and information.

Signers:

Sir Knight Marques A. Jones, Most Eminent Grand Commander of Most Eminent Prince Hall Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the State of New York

Sir Knight Paul Ingram, Most Eminent Past Grand Commander & Grand Recorder of Most Eminent Prince Hall Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the State of New York

And

Sir Knight David R. Barkstedt, Right Eminent Grand Commander of Grand Commandery of Knights Templar State of New York

Sir Knight Steven L. Wing, Right Eminent Past Grand Commander & Grand Recorder of Grand Commandery of Knights Templar State of New York.

Texas Masonic Retirement Community of the Grand Royal Arch of Texas Celebrates Family Day During Solar Eclipse

by Ben Williams

Photos by Ben Williams



ARLINGTON, TX – Over 4,000 Masons, family members, and guests met in the Pecan Orchard of the Texas Masonic Retirement Community on Saturday, October 14.

The sun was bright; the sky nearly cloudless as an annular solar eclipse curled moon-shaped shadows through the trees.

Visitors ambled down grass aisles lined by more than one hundred vendors, perusing the wares, meeting friends, winding up and down, and laughing in the sunlight. Music rang out from the stage.

Paper glasses, branded with the Royal Arch logo, were handed out to everyone. Children paused and marveled through the dark lenses as the sun was slowly swallowed by the moon.

A highlight of the annual event must be the BBQ Cookoff. This year, twenty-eight entrants spent the previous night slow-cooking brisket on-site. Masons come to the orchard just to spend time by the fires.

Your correspondent tasted the second-place entry: it was probably the best brisket he's ever eaten.

The event is impressive. Masonry is in

decline, perhaps, but here, in the shade of the pecan trees, you wouldn't know it. Children rode miniature horses near a petting zoo, there were bouncy-castles and trampolines, a dunking booth, a high-tech trailer full of hi-tech video gaming equipment, and a hayride, among the numerous canopies and tables selling a variety of foods and Masonic arts and crafts. Seventy-two units of blood were donated – around thirty-six liters – throughout the day for the Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. Seventy-seven Masons brought their classic cars and motorbikes and parked them around the Royal Arch and Keystone apartments, hoods raised, sparkling chrome.

Although the Grand Chapter organizes and hosts the event, the entire Masonic family is represented. Vendors from Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery, the Shrine, Eastern Star, the Beaucéant, the White Shrine of Jerusalem, Amaranth, Rainbow, and DeMolay were all present.

It's a reminder of what can be accomplished when Masons band together to do what we do best – look after each other. **KT**



Grand Commandery of Texas Charters First Research Commandery

Under New Constitutional Provision

by Ben Williams



Photos by Ben Williams

FORT WORTH, TX – On Friday, October 13, exactly seven hundred and sixteen years after the arrest of Jacques DeMolay and the Knights Templar in a coordinated coup that decimated the Order, the Grand Commandery of Texas chartered APOAS Commandery, the first research commandery in Texas.

APOAS Commandery was constituted under the Grand Encampment’s provision, adopted in 2021, specifically allowing for research commanderies.

Research commanderies were a recommendation forwarded by the Preserving Templary 2021 Committee, the committee charged with polling the membership to suggest various ideas for adoption by the Grand Encampment in Triennial Conclave.

Like research lodges, research commanderies are exempt from the requirement to perform initiations. Technically, under section 176 of the constitution, a subordinate commandery must initiate at least one new candidate each year or face probation. (The rule seems rarely enforced.) Typically, research commanderies are open to plural members and have as their central focus the study and discussion of the history and symbolism informing the Orders rather than the membership proper. And

membership can cross jurisdictions.

“We are not limited to Texas Knights,” said Sir Knight Billings, Commander of APOAS Commandery. “Anyone in and around that wants education; anyone who wants to write a paper and share knowledge can be a member.” The papers will be preserved and published in annual proceedings.

APOAS Commandery (an acronym that should be familiar to Knights Templar seeking admission to the Asylum) was the brainchild of Sir Knights Chance Chapman, Grand Commander, and Jack Harper, Past Grand Commander.

“When I saw the proposal [for vote at the Triennial], I figured if it passed, we would make it happen in Texas,” Sir Knight Chapman said. “So, we updated our laws in 2022 as well, and I granted the dispensation in April.”

The Knights met at the Masonic Temple Fort Worth in the early evening. After the meeting concluded, dinner was served, prepared by Tommy Ruston, of Ruston Cattle Co., a Mason-owned restaurant nearby.

The food was specific. The first course was bread and water, symbolic of the coarse diet suitable for pilgrims. To the water was added wine for the next course, red snapper.

Two miracles were thereby signified (as well as dismissal of the Nestorian heresy wherein Christ’s human and divine natures were taught as entirely separate (immiscible, like wine and oil) instead of consubstantial (like wine and water)).

The main course was prime rib.

The talk was given by Sir Knight Ben Williams (your editor), who was pleased to relay speculations regarding the origination of the Order of the Temple emergent in Jacobite Masonry of the Antients of Scotland and Ireland, potentially earlier than the historical record enumerates (and scholars generally accept) – perhaps as far back as the mid-seventeenth century (see article on page 26). Sir Knight Williams is a romantic at heart; some evidence of early Templary in Freemasonry is suggestive, though not conclusive.

Finally, the night concluded with toasts. A communion was shared using portions of the Liturgy of Saint James.

After the banquet concluded, Sir Knights made their ways home. Some stayed and the discussion carried on into the early hours. How good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity! **KT**

Ban on Catholics Being Masons Is **Still Active**, Vatican Says

by Ben Williams

Photo by Vatican Media via Vatican Pool/Getty Images



Leo XIII expanded on *In Eminenti* and wrote that Freemasonry was to be “judged not so much by the things which it has done, or brought to completion, as by the sum of its pronounced opinions.”

Pope Francis attends his weekly General Audience at the Paul VI Hall on August 09, 2023, in Vatican City, Vatican. Following his traditional July break, Pope Francis resumed his weekly General Audiences, and reflected on his recently-concluded Apostolic Journey to Portugal for World Youth Day in Lisbon.

VATICAN CITY – In response to a question by Bishop Julito Cortes from the Philippines, the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as the Inquisition) stated on November 15, 2023, that membership in Freemasonry still constitutes a “grave state of sin.” Catholics should not be members, the Dicastery said.

The letter was signed by Pope Francis and Cardinal Victor Fernández (who wrote it).

In the statement, the Dicastery said that “it should be remembered that active membership in Freemasonry by a member of the faithful is forbidden because of the irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry.” Bishops in the Philippines should “conduct catechesis accessible to the people and in all parishes regarding the reasons for the irreconcilability between the Catholic Faith and Freemasonry.” In other words, the Church should preach against the Fraternity to congregants nationwide. “Finally,” the statement said, “the Philippine Bishops are invited to consider whether they should make a public pronouncement on the matter.”

The last official proscription by the Church against membership in the Fraternity issued in 1983. Then-Cardinal Ratzinger (who chaired the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith before he became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005) wrote that, “the Church’s negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have

always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden.”

Although Masons were not necessarily to be excommunicated (as in days past), Holy Communion should be denied all Catholic Masons because Masons exist in a “grave state of sin.” Freemasonry is, so Cardinal Ratzinger wrote, entirely incompatible with the Christian religion.

The Church has had a longstanding dislike of the Fraternity. The first Bull outlawing membership in the Fraternity issued April 28, 1738, from Pope Clement XII. This Bull, *In Eminenti Apostolatus*, condemned Freemasons to “pain of excommunication...from which no one can obtain the benefit of absolution, other than at the hour of death, except through Ourselves or the Roman Pontiff of the time.” Masons were subjected to “condign penalties” (torture at the hands of the Inquisition) because they were “most suspect of heresy.” Indeed, Masons were tortured and hanged for no crime other than their membership which arose *suspicious* of being up to no good. All “prudent and upright men,” Clement wrote, “have passed the same judgment on [the Masons] as being depraved and perverted.”

In Eminenti was ratified by Popes Benedict XIV, Pius VII, Leo XII, Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and, finally, Leo XIII, who went further and pronounced doctrinal bases for the irreconcilability of Catholicism and Freemasonry in his

Bull, *Humanum Genus*.

Leo XIII expanded on *In Eminenti* and wrote that Freemasonry was to be “judged not so much by the things which it has done, or brought to completion, as by the sum of its pronounced opinions.” Leo’s contention seems to be the “natural philosophy” of the Enlightenment finding favor among Masonic Lodges and the idea that the “Church and the State ought to be altogether disunited.”

Leo seems to have believed that Masons were trying to secularize the world and undermine Church ontological predominance in existential understanding. Leo also took exception to Masons admitting members of all faiths into the Lodge, wherein all religions were viewed as viable – even equal. But, “the Catholic religion,” Leo wrote, “as it is the only one that is true, cannot, without great injustice, be regarded as merely equal to other religions.”

Humanum Genus remains significant. It sets forth the doctrinal grounds for the Church’s position against the Fraternity. The statement issued by the Dicastery last month provides no basis for the irreconcilability between the Catholic faith and Freemasonry, but suggests the Bishops preach the irreconcilability of Catholicism and Masonry anyway.

Thus, it is likely *Humanum Genus* will be consulted by Bishops in the Philippines (and abroad) as the preeminent authority on the subject. **KT**

Man Accused of Murdering Mason May Not Be Competent to Stand Trial

by Ben Williams

Hidalgo Prison records



Julio Diaz, 35.

MCALLEN, TX – Julio Diaz, 35, the man accused of shooting and killing Bro. Robert Wise on July 10 after a meeting at McAllen Lodge 1110, may not be competent to stand trial, defense counsel argues.

Diaz appeared in the Hidalgo County Court on November 6 clad in an orange jumpsuit and masked.

According to KRGV 5 News, Lennard Whittaker Molina, Attorney for the defense, informed the court that Diaz had been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

No official finding of incompetence has been made, however. An evaluation will surely follow.

If Diaz is found incompetent to stand trial,

he will likely be committed to psychiatric care for an indefinite period. This is different than a finding of insanity – he may still stand trial once found to be competent once he is able to assist in the preparation of his defense.

However, there is some overlap with competency and insanity. So, an insanity defense should not be altogether discounted.

Diaz is also charged with arson. Once detained, he allegedly admitted to police that he tried to burn down McAllen Lodge in September last year.

He smashed a window of the Lodge and poured gasoline inside before throwing in some burning cardboard.

While Diaz's motives remain unknown,

it is believed he attacked and murdered Bro. Wise due to anti-masonic conspiracy theories. With his phone in one hand, and gun in the other, he filmed the murder and posted it to social media and sent the clip to a friend. His attempt to burn down the Lodge conflates with this theory. Apparently, he believes the Freemasons are engaged in a satanic plot to take over the world and eat babies.

His trial is set for November next year. **KT**

UPDATE: Holy Land Pilgrimage for Christian Ministers is **RESCHEDULED**

by Duane Kemerley

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE – Due to the happenings in the Middle East, the 2024 Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimages for Christian Ministers have been rescheduled to 2025.

The tentative dates are as follows:

Group A: February 3 – February 13, 2025

Group B: February 7 – February 27, 2025

Ministers already registered for 2024 can be carried over for the 2025 program.

We will also be accepting additional registrations. Sir Knight Emmett Mills, Jr., PGC, national chairman and registrar will handle all registration and financial details.

Footsteps of Jesus Still On

The “In the Footsteps of Jesus Holy Land Pilgrimage” for Sir Knights, Ladies, friends, and guests scheduled for November 4 – 14, 2024 is still on the books. In anticipation that travel and tourism will be back in gear in Israel by

that time we will be accepting additional registrations into 2024. See the website for ongoing details and updates.

For current updates, information, details, forms, etc. always check www.kthlp.com. **KT**



Order of the Templar Conferred in Period Dress

by John Bridegroom



VALPARAISO, IN – Few ceremonies in the Masonic Family are as powerful as the Order of the Temple. Those who have been knighted into Masonic Templary know that the events that unfold within the Commandery of a Templar Asylum not only stoke the fires of faith within the new Knight but leave a permanent impression upon his mind.

The modern Templar is distinctive in his uniform within Freemasonry, the Class A uniform is unmistakable. While we can find a kinship with our fellow Sir Knights in photographs from one hundred and two hundred years ago, who wear uniforms very similar to ours today, certainly every Sir Knight has imagined in his mind what it must have been like to be knighted by the legendary Templars who took part in the ancient crusades.

Masonic Templary strives to emulate the self-sacrifice and devotion of our ancient brethren, and to embody those Knightly virtues established by those valiant and magnanimous Knights.

In an effort to bridge that gap and provide an experience that harkens to the time of ancient Templary, one Commandery has given a new Sir Knight a taste of both worlds. Valparaiso Commandery No. 28 in Valparaiso, Indiana, has outfitted their Commandery with the period dress of the ancient Templars. Complete with tunic, cape, helm, sword, and

chainmail, they don the garb of their legendary counterparts. On Monday, November 20, they conferred the Order of the Temple on Sir Knight Brian Austin in full gear of the medieval Knights Templar, keeping the ritual and tactics exactly as they are, conferring the Order in a full and impressive manner. In place of the traditional Class A uniform the Knights were clad in the vestments of medieval Templary.

Performing the work in this gear has its own set of challenges. It takes no small amount of effort to conform to the tactics and ritual properly. However, when it is done well, it elevates the work to new and exciting heights.

The Constitution of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar allows for period uniforms.

In lieu of the regulation Templar uniform, a Constituent Commandery, with approval of the Grand Commandery, may provide and use ceremonial robes conforming to and consistent with the historical traditions and practices of Templary.

Ref. 260. Ceremonial Uniform

This section allows the work to be performed in this manner, with the permission of your Grand Commandery. That last part is important – be sure to request permission from

your Grand Commander before attempting this in your jurisdiction.

This special conferral of the Order of the Temple capped off Valparaiso Commandery's year and was well received. Several visitors travelled to be present for the event, including one ninety-year-old Sir Knight with more than fifty years in Templary.

Participating as Commander for the work was Past Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander Tom Johnson and as Generalissimo, the Grand Standard Bearer and Battalion One Commander of the Grand Commandery of Indiana, Scott Sacek.

Creating enthusiasm for Templary and for the York Rite is needed in every jurisdiction. This conferral of the Order certainly accomplished that. Making a stronger connection to Ancient Templary and the legend of the original Order strengthens the underlying values of modern Templary and reinforces for the aspiring Sir Knights that we belong to that same tradition as the Crusaders of old. All the while exclaiming, *not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto you be the Glory!* **KT**

Ancient and Accepted Rite of England and Wales

Votes to Admit Non-Christians

by Ben Williams



LONDON – After a meeting of the National Conference of Inspectors General, the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales voted to no longer require the Trinitarian Christian Faith as prerequisite for membership. Going forward, the Rite will be open to all faiths.

While the Scottish Rite is not a Christian institution in the United States, or in most Orients around the world, the Rite in England and Wales has required its members to be Trinitarian Christians since its founding in 1845.

This likely goes back to the way the Rite operates here, where it is open to all Trinitarian Christian Masons up to the 18° and dubbed the “Rose Croix” colloquially among Masons. In the U.S., the moniker by which the Ancient and Accepted Rite is most commonly referred is the “Scottish Rite.” But in England and Wales, admission up to the 18° is open to all Christian Masons, then admission to the 19° and each subsequent degree is invitational (typically conferred as the 30° (including the 19-29°), the 31°, 32°, and 33°, for meritorious service to the “Rose Croix”). This is in marked contrast to the U.S. where any Master Mason can attain the 32° in a weekend. There is, then, in England and Wales, an emphasis on the 18°: this is the last degree most members attain absent some

recognition for service to the Craft. And the 18°, while not exclusively Christian in the U.S., nonetheless promulgates Christian themes such as the new law of love dawning over the Earth with guiding principles of faith, hope, and charity.

The decision to open the Rite to all faiths comes as part of a concerted effort to attract and retain new members. The Inspectors General also charged creation of a “new narrative” to encourage new members and a new office, the Head of Strategy, to implement the changes.

“[T]he Ancient and Accepted Rite is almost completely Universal in its nature and content,” writes Dr. Giles Shilson, 33°, Grand Secretary General, in a letter dated November 10. “Even within the system as practiced in England and Wales, the only one of the 33 degrees with any significant Christian content is the 18°.”

The Council said it will preserve the 18° intact and not adulterate its content. “[T]he Supreme Council remains adamant that it would be inappropriate, given the foundational identity of the Rose Croix degree as a Christian working within this jurisdiction, to ‘de-Christianise’ the ritual of the 18°, which we all know and hold in such high regard,” Shilson

said. “Our ritual is fundamentally reflective of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and it would, in the Council’s opinion, not be appropriate to remove or ‘water down’ the Christian character of the [18] degree.”

However, the above notwithstanding, the Supreme Council “is equally convinced that the Order’s current stance fails to reflect the Christian – and [M]asonic – need to be loving towards all and to treat one another with equity.” Thus, “the Council has come to the unanimous conclusion that the requirements to profess the Trinitarian Christian faith should no longer be a requisite of admission to this order, which strives to be reflective of a modern, inclusive society.” Removing the restriction of a Trinitarian faith is, in the Council’s view, “the Christian thing to do.”

“There are many good people prevented from experiencing the Higher Degrees of Freemasonry,” Shilson says, “who would enjoy membership and who would be assets to our Order; there is no reason why they should not join if they wish, provided they are willing to strive to uphold the Christian ideals of faith, hope and charity exemplified by the life and teachings of Jesus, so beautifully represented in the 18°” **KT**

Charity Will Cover th



In the last line of the closing prayer used in our Lodges here in Louisiana, we ask the Great Architect of the Universe to “grant that the world may be better and happier for our having lived in it, and may we ever practice that Charity which is the bond of peace and the perfection of every virtue. Amen.”

But what is “that Charity?” And why is it the “bond of peace and the perfection of every virtue?”

Contrary to popular belief, Masonic charity is more than mere financial philanthropy. Our Fraternity’s use of the word “charity” has a grander intention. What we’re talking about is *agape* (ἀγάπη), meaning the highest form of love. This kind of Charity is not love merely expressed in giving, but also in thought, word, and deed. To truly act charitably in this way means to think lovingly of people, speak lovingly of people, and act lovingly towards people. The giving of money to those in need is only a small part of what it means to be charitable in the Masonic sense, which also happens to be the biblical sense.

“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” - St Paul (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)

Charity is a synonym for Love. Not the romantic kind, but the kind of love you’d have for a dear friend or family member. The English word “charity” is rooted in the Latin “*caritas*,” which is the same root of the word “care.” Charity means, according to St Thomas Aquinas, “the choice to will the good of the other.” That is, choosing to have goodwill towards our fellow human beings with no strings attached, no conditions.

One of the best explanations I’ve heard on this subject, and also one of the best lectures in all the degrees of Masonry, is the “Address On Charity” which is given in the Grand Lodge of Louisiana’s standard working of the 3° Master Mason degree. It reads as follows:

“My brother, with this right hand I welcome you to fellowship in this Lodge and extend to you all of the rights and privileges of this ancient and honorable fraternity whose cornerstone is Charity. Charity is the brightest tool in the Masonic crown. It is the Corinthian pillar; The entablature that lends strength, grace, and beauty to the entire fabric. If we attempt to enumerate its beauties, the cooler powers of the mind melt into

ecstasy. Charity is the radiant spark of love emanating from God, the source of all love. The heart is its empire, and before its lenient sovereignty bows every discordant passion.

But the Charity of which I speak is not that charity circumscribed by the narrow limits of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked or binding up the wounds of the afflicted, but rather that broader, grander, nobler Charity that regards all men as brothers. The Charity that is swift of foot and ready of hand in the common cause of humanity. The Charity that writes the faults of a brother on the shifting sands and his virtues on tables of enduring marble. The Charity of which He spoke, not with the tongues of man but of angels, was the illustrious example.

Let this, the Mason’s Charity, burn upon the altar of your heart a living fire whose gentle warmth shall radiate fellowship, morality, brotherly love, and obedience to the Most High.

Liturgies and creeds, articles of faith, and rules of discipline have stained the rubric pages of history, while speculative points of doctrine have occasioned more misery in the world than all of the crimes for which nations have been punished and recalled to their duty. Here we array no man for his political opinion, nor

The Multitude of Sins

by Taylor Nauta



do we dictate his religious creed. To himself and his country, we leave the one; to his conscience and his God we commit the other. To the altar of Freemasonry all men bring their most votive offerings. Around it all men, whether they have received their teachings from Confucius, Zoroaster, Moses, Muhammad, or the founder of the Christian religion – just so long as they believe in the universality of the fatherhood of God and the University of the brotherhood of Man – meet upon a common level. The Jew returns to his synagogue, the Mohammedan (i.e., Muslim) to his mosque, and the Christian to his temple; each better prepared for the solemn duties of life by the associations in this universal brotherhood.

It is to this institution, born of heaven in the gray of the world's morning, before poets sang or historians wrote, that I am privileged this evening to extend to you a Craftsman's greeting. And I charge you by the noblest instincts of your being, by all you honor and revere, by the ties that bind you to earth, and by your hope of heaven, so to live, and so to act, that your Masonic life may be as an open book known and read by all men.

Finally my brother, I do assure you that whatever good you do is but duty done. If a sorrow you have lightened or a teardrop wiped away; if of poverty's

load you have lifted a share from some weary, burdened soul; if but a cup of cool water you have lifted to some famishing mortal's lips; then so far you have exemplified the divine teachings of Freemasonry, and so far have you done as our Father commanded. And now may He, without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls, bless your fellowship in this Lodge; and to His great name be all the praise."

– **Louisiana Masonic Monitor**
149-150

The Great Commandment, according to the Master, is to "love God with all your heart, soul, might, mind and strength; and like unto it, the second greatest is to love your neighbor as yourself." The Kingdom of which he spoke so often is an idyllic realm in which Charity is the law of the land. A Kingdom in which "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men" would be the motto of all.

For if all men had goodwill in their hearts towards one another, peace would be the result everywhere.

Thus, Charity is indeed "the bond of peace and the perfection of every virtue." So may we ever practice it so that the Kingdom wherein Love reigns shall truly come "on earth as it is in heaven."

As St Thomas Aquinas said, Charity is a choice. The choice to will the good of the other. It's the choice to do something rather than merely acknowledging that something must be done and praying that God will somehow do it. If you see something that can be done to make

this world more like Heaven and less like hell for humanity, something within your power to do cause or cause to be done, then the onus is on YOU to do it! Don't wait around for God to make the Kingdom come. Paraphrasing what St Augustine rightly said, "without God, we cannot; without us, God will not." The Kingdom won't come by itself. It's unreasonable to sit back in your armchair and idly hope for it. The harvest is great and the laborers are few, so you and I have great work to do.

Along with all the other working tools you've been given, you must put your trowel to ceaseless use if the Temple we're building as Masons, synonymous with the Kingdom of God, is ever to be completed. It is the Temple of Humanity, and it will not build itself. Craftsmen are required. The blueprint on the trestle-board has been drawn by the Great Architect, but it is up to the Craftsmen to begin the work and see it through to its completion. Like all Temples made with hands, it is not up to the Architect but rather the Builders to erect the Temple made without hands. The building of anything great requires collaboration, and the Temple we Masons are charged to build is no exception. The Mason prays for guidance and direction, but he doesn't wait for divine intervention. In the spirit of good Faith and undaunted Hope, he begins the work and devotes his time and talents to building the Temple of Humanity; the cornerstone of which is Charity. **KT**



Templar Ritualist Essay:

Symbolism of the **SKULL**

by Gabriel Jagush

The skull is a symbol used throughout human history. We use it to represent many different ideas, chief among which are death, mortality, and the transience of life. We can learn much about the symbolism of the skull by examining its use in Christianity, philosophy, and in various esoteric traditions. The skull motivates us to live more meaningfully, focusing on our life ahead.

It may seem contrary to common perception, but the skull has long been used by Christians symbolically. One of its most important associations is with a place called *Golgotha* in Aramaic, *Calvarie Locus* (or Calvary) in Latin, and *Kranion Tópos* in Greek. All three translate to “skull” or “place of a skull.” This is the place – supposedly a hill – where Jesus was crucified.

According to some Christian traditions, Golgotha was the burial place of Adam, the First Man. There is a Medieval story called the Legend of the Rood which goes so far as to say that the cross on Golgotha was constructed out of a tree that originally grew out of Adam’s grave on the same spot, thousands of years earlier. In this, we see a contrasting pair: the First Man and the Final Sacrifice. The death of the First Man tells us about our base state and the future of our earthly existence. Our bodies will be affected by corruption, and our time on Earth is limited. In the Final Sacrifice – Jesus offering himself – and the Resurrection, we see a promise of hope beyond the grave and better things to come. In the contrast of Adam against Jesus, we see the beginning of sin and suffering, and the end of sin and suffering.

Philosophies of both the East and West are unified on some interpretations of the symbolism of the skull. Almost universally, the skull reminds us of the fragility and impermanence of life.

Death is the only constant. It is a call to action: live your life to the fullest, and in a virtuous, meaningful way. Neo-Pyrrhonist author, Michel de Montaigne, famously wrote “*Que sçay-je*” (“What do I know?”) on a skull, which he placed on his desk, staring at it when he

needed inspiration during his writing sessions. Blaise Pascal, the mathematician, viewed the skull particularly as a symbol for the absurdity of the human condition. To him, all our endeavors are ultimately futile, as they are rendered irrelevant by death. Continental philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, had an even more grim outlook: He believed that life is only an illusion, and that the body is just a temporary vessel at best.

Eastern philosophy treats the skull similarly. Hinduism views the skull as a symbol for many of the concepts previously mentioned, and as a testament to the destructive power of time.

Buddhism sees it similarly. The skull reminds us that everything is subject to change, including our lives and our bodies. It is a call to action, telling us the importance of letting go of material desires and attachments. Both Hinduism and Buddhism use it as a symbol of the quest for enlightenment.

The Skull is very familiar to those of us in the Western Esoteric Tradition (which includes Templar Masonry). It has powerful alchemical and kabbalistic meanings. Of course, it also holds much meaning to Freemasons and Knights Templar.

Practical alchemy is the study of turning base metals into noble metals, in order to try and find the Elixir of Life or Philosopher’s Stone. Spiritual alchemy is an esoteric practice which mirrors practical alchemy, using the symbolism and concepts of practical alchemy as mental tools, allowing for spiritual and emotional growth. In this practice, the skull symbolizes the death of the old self, giving way to the birth of the new self. The old self is ego, ignorance, and bondage by material limitations. The new self is a spiritual awakening into enlightenment and a higher consciousness! It is a symbol of transmutation.

Kabbalah shares many goals with alchemy regarding death of the ego and rebirth into enlightenment. The skull has another, more specific meaning within Kabbalah. It represents “*tzimtzum*,” which was the first step

in God’s creation of the world. God withdrew or contracted his essence and divine light to create a space within which to emanate the material universe. The skull, hollow and empty, represents both this empty space, and the material creation.

Freemasonry in general makes frequent use of the skull as a symbol. It is used in many different rites and bodies, to convey all the meanings previously discussed. However, within Templary, we use the skull in combination with a candle, to great effect. Candles remind us, in general, of the religious ceremonies and rituals we have seen so often in church. From a literal perspective, candles represent and provide warmth, light, and protection from dangers in the dark.

Figuratively, they represent the Divine Light, warmth of the spirit, the eternal flame of the soul, and peace through spiritual enlightenment.

When we combine the skull and candle as symbols within Templary, we give the candidate the skull to hold in his left hand and the candle to hold in his right hand, and we tell him they represent his humility and faith, respectively. The left hand, in many ages, was considered the “unclean” hand. It is, therefore, unsurprising, that we associate it with a symbol of physical demise and the grave. However, we place the candle in the candidate’s right hand because it has long been considered the seat of fidelity. This symbolizes the two-way promise that exists between us and Jesus Christ. He promised us eternal life through His triumph over the grave, and we promise Him our faith and to follow His new law of love.

The symbolism of the skull is varied and multi-faceted. To each candidate, it may have subtle undertones and alternate meanings. To us, however, it is very clearly a call to action, asking us to live our lives meaningfully, in Christ, and to remember that though all our trails lead to the grave, there is yet hope in a new life! **KT**

Remembering



Official dignitaries present (L to R): Eminent Sir Knight Ken Jordan, Grand Junior Warden of the Grand Commandery of NY; Right Eminent Sir Knight Richard Kerimoglu, Past Grand Commander, Grand Commandery of NY, and Grand Captain of the Guard of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the state of New York; Eminent Sir Knight John J. Mullin, Grand Captain General of the Grand Commandery of NY; Ms. Debbie Louis, Representative for Governor Kathy Hochul for Brooklyn; Right Eminent Past Grand Commander Sir Knight Stenrick Adams, Grand Commandery of NY; and Most Excellent Cyril A. Francis, Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the state of NY.

DeWitt Clinton

by Alfonso Serrano



It was raining as the Knights gathered near the second oldest public cemetery in the United States. But the clouds dissipated a few hours before the annual wreath laying. The sun beamed down. It seemed like the Blessings of the Grand Architect of the Universe were with us.

At the main gate of Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery employees and visitors were curious about the men in black lining up by the Governor DeWitt Clinton

Monument nearby.

The wreath laying ceremony that was about to begin was started in 1997, by Empire-DeWitt Clinton Commandery No. 14. The ceremony has always been attended by the Knights of Bay Ridge Commandery No. 79.

Present at the wreath laying ceremony this year were Past Grand Commander Right Eminent Sir Knight Stenrick Adams and other officers of the Grand Commandery

Clinton's foresight helped establish New York City as the center of finance that it is today. Clinton spearheaded free public education and used the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of New York to lay down the foundation of public education throughout the Empire State



of Knights Templar of the State of New York along with Sir Knight Richard Kerimoglu, Past Grand Commander, who currently serves as Grand Captain of the Guard for the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the state of New York, and Ms. Debbie Louis, the representative for Governor Kathy Hochul for Brooklyn.

Also in attendance were Sir Knight Avery Thompson, Commander of Bay Ridge Commandery No. 79 and Empire-DeWitt Clinton Commandery No. 14, together with other Knights from the metropolitan area, who had come together to honor one of the most important New York statesmen ever to grace the institutions of New York's City Hall and the State Capital in Albany: Governor and Most Worshipful Brother, and Past Grand Master of the Grand Encampment, Sir Knight DeWitt Clinton.

Clinton's foresight helped establish New York City as the center of finance that it is today. Clinton spearheaded free public education and used the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of New York to lay down the foundation of public education throughout the Empire State. Along with the public school system, Clinton set aside funding for museums and libraries to help educate the masses.

I've known about Governor Clinton for most of my adult life: I'm a graduate of DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, New York City. (DeWitt Clinton High School once held the Guinness world record for the school with the largest student population in the world.) Back in 1994, my mother Lodge, Aurora Grata-Day Star Lodge No. 647, of the Third Kings District in Brooklyn, New York, treated us to a tour of this famous cemetery

which holds the remains of many famous people. While on the tour, I came to find out that my high school namesake, Governor DeWitt Clinton, was also buried here. I remarked to those who were with us then that I had gone to a school named after Governor Clinton and I didn't know who he was or what he had done in his life.

I didn't come across DeWitt Clinton again until I presented myself at Stapleton Masonic Temple on Staten Island, New York, to receive the Order of the Red Cross, the Mediterranean Pass, and Order of Malta. These Orders were conferred upon me by the Sir Knights of Empire-DeWitt Clinton Commandery No. 14. Again, I asked who was Governor Clinton? That evening I began to research the history of this man. I soon discovered that Governor Clinton was born March 2, 1769, at Little Britain, New York. His father, James Clinton (1736-1812), served as a captain of the provincial troops in the French-Indian War and as a brigadier general in the American Army during the Revolutionary War.

DeWitt Clinton graduated from Columbia College in 1768. In 1790 was admitted to the bar. From 1790 to 1795, he served as private secretary to his uncle, George Clinton, then Governor and leader of the Democratic-Republican Party in New York. DeWitt Clinton entered the state senate in 1798, serving until 1802. He at once became a dominant factor in New York politics and, for the next quarter of a century, he played a leading role in the history of the commonwealth.

In 1802 Clinton became a member of the U.S. Senate, but he resigned the following year to become Mayor of New York City, an office which he held for ten



Honored guest, Ms. Debbie Louis, read the Mayor of the City of New York's Proclamation designating April 23, 2023, "Governor DeWitt Clinton Day." Pictured with Ms. Louis (L to R): Eminent Sir Knight Averill Thompson, Commander of Bay Ridge Commandery; Eminent Sir Knight Ken Jordan, Grand Junior Warden of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the state of New York; and Eminent Sir Knight Gil Schweiger, Commander of Empire-DeWitt Clinton Commandery No. 14.

years during the period 1803-1815. During his mayoralty he also held other offices, being a member of the state senate in 1806 and Lieutenant Governor in 1811. In that same year, after a congressional caucus at Washington, DC, had nominated James Madison for a second term, the Republicans of New York, desiring to break up the so-called Virginia Dynasty (as well as the system of congressional nominations), nominated Clinton for the presidency by a legislative caucus. Clinton received 89 electoral votes to Madison's 128.

As a state legislator, Clinton was active in securing the abolition of slavery and of repealing imprisonment for debt. He was also instrumental in perfecting a system of free public schools in New York (an idea started by his uncle George Clinton). In 1810, he was a member of a commission to explore a route for a canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson River, and in 1811 he and then-Governor Morris went to Washington to secure federal aid for the undertaking of the canal but were unsuccessful. The

second war with Great Britain prevented any immediate action by the state, but in 1816 Clinton was active in reviving the project. A new commission was appointed, of which he became the commissioner. His connection with this work so enhanced his popularity that he was chosen governor by an overwhelming majority and served two triennial terms, from 1817 through 1823.

As governor he devoted his energies to the construction of the canal, but the opposition to his administration, led by Martin Van Buren and Tammany Hall, became so formidable by 1822 that he declined to seek a third term. His successful opponents, however, overreached themselves when, in 1824, they removed him from the office of canal commissioner. This partisan action aroused such indignation that at the next election Clinton was again chosen governor by a large majority and served from 1825 until his death.

As governor he took part in the formal ceremony of admitting the waters of Lake Erie into the canal in



Sir Knight Bon Wan of Morton Commandery No. 4 Knights Templars of NY with his daughter, Chloris Wan, representing the Rainbow Girls.

October of 1825. Thus he witnessed the completion of a work which owed more to him than to any other man. Aside from these great accomplishments, he was also one of the most prominent Freemasons of his day. Most Worshipful Brother Clinton was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Holland Lodge No. 16 (now No. 8) on September 3, 1790, serving as its Master in 1793 and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York from 1806 through 1819. He was elected the first Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the state of New York in 1798 and General Grand High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the United States of America from 1816 through 1826.

He was knighted in Holland Lodge No. 16 on May 17, 1792, and served as the first Thrice Illustrious Grand Master (Grand Commander) of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of New York from 1814 through 1828. He was also the first Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America from 1816 through 1828.

The origin of our present system of Orders is not exactly known. The Order of the Temple was conferred under the control of the Symbolic Lodges in Scotland, England, and Ireland in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was considered that a charter or warrant of a Blue Lodge was sufficient authority to confer the

Orders of Knighthood.

The earliest known Lodge to confer the Order of the Temple was St. Andrew's Lodge in Boston, Massachusetts, which took place in 1769, the year that Clinton was born. In New York, it is uncertain when the first encampment (Commandery) was formed, but there's reference that there was a Commandery established in New York City as early as 1785, when a detail of Knights formed an escort for the Grand Lodge of New York on the anniversary of the feast of St. John the Evangelist, December 28, 1785. Prior to the formation of the Grand Encampment of New York, there were several encampments or Commanderies in existence. In the proceedings of the Grand Encampment of New York of 1882, the following information on these encampments was compiled: Old Encampment (Morton Ein New York City ncampment), Columbian Encampment, Jerusalem Encampment, Rising Sun Encampment, St. Peter's Encampment, Stillwater-Montgomery Encampment, and Albany-Temple Encampment.

There is also in the minutes of the organization of the Grand Encampment of the United States of America mention of an Ancient Encampment of New York. Since there were approximately eight encampments in New York, some control was needed to keep them functioning as a cohesive group. On January 22, 1814, it was decreed by unanimous vote that a Grand Encampment would be established in

New York with DeWitt Clinton, then Grand Master of Masons of New York and Mayor of New York City, as its Thrice Illustrious Grand Master or Grand Commander.

Governor Clinton held that office until his death in 1828.

The Grand Encampment of the United States of America was instituted on June 22, 1816, in New York City. At this session, DeWitt Clinton was appointed the first Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States. When the anti-Masonic fervor gripped New York State in 1826 because of the Morgan Affair (Masons were accused of putting William Morgan to death as a result of his attempt to publish an exposé on the Masonic Fraternity), Governor Clinton took all the necessary steps for the arrest of the supposed criminals. Although he offered a liberal reward for their detection, he was charged by the anti-Masons with official neglect and indifference, charges which were undoubtedly false and malicious. The accusations leveled at the executive office of New York State are attributed to the political excitement of the time, anti-Masonry being adopted soon after its origin by politicians as a vehicle for their advancement to office.

DeWitt Clinton was an honorable man and a true patriot. He was also an ardent and devoted Mason. **KT**

Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.



How to join the Grand Commander's or the Grand Master's Club

Grand Commander's Club: Any individual may send a check in the amount of \$100 or more specified for the purpose of beginning a Grand Commander's Club. (Make payable to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation). This initial contribution will begin your Grand Commander's Club membership. In addition, members of the Grand Commander's Club pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more.

Grand Master's Club: Once contributions total \$1,000, the individual is enrolled in the Grand Master's Club. Membership is open to individuals only, and commandery credit is given for participation.

Qualified Charitable Distributions

Congress has now made the qualified charitable distribution (QCD) option permanent for those who wish to make direct contributions from their IRA to charity. The tax law allows individuals required to make minimum distributions due to age to transfer up to \$100,000 a year from their IRA to a qualified charity. This distribution counts toward their required minimum distribution but isn't added to their adjusted gross income the way a normal IRA distribution is. This can provide a tax savings of up to 40% depending upon an individual's tax situation. Please discuss with your tax professional whether this option could benefit you in your charitable and retirement planning.

Planned Giving Create a Charitable Legacy

Your Foundation now has a full web site dedicated to Planned Giving which you can access from our web site, shown at the bottom of this page. So if you're thinking of ways to make a lasting legacy for yourself please check out the tab on the home page that says "Planned Giving". Leaving your mark on the future is so simple with a gift in your will. To leave a gift in your Will or Trust it is as easy as asking your attorney to include a sentence that says:

I bequeath (lump sum) or (%) of my estate to:

Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

3201 Cross Timbers Road
Bldg. 4 Ste. 300
Flower Mound, TX 75028

ktef.org

Thank
You!



Down the Rabbit Hole:

On the Origins of the



Chivalry runs through Freemasonry like an auriferous vein. Even Ashmole, one of the earliest “gentlemen” Masons, mined it. In *The History of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, published 1715, two years before the founding of the Premiere Grand Lodge of England, Ashmole propagated his belief that the Knights Templar were “apprehended, rendered convicts, and all their possessions seized into the king’s hands”: “Howbeit,” he wrote, “the Bishop of York commiserating their deplorable condition within his diocese charitably disposed of them in monasteries under his jurisdiction.”¹

We see it scintillate in Anderson’s Constitutions (“from this ancient Fraternity, the Societies, or Orders of the Warlike Knights, and of the Religious too, in process of time, did borrow many solemn usages”) – even as far back as the thirteenth century, where Étienne Boileau, in collating the *Code of the Usages and Customs of the Masons, the Stonemasons, the Plasterers, and Mortarers* at Paris, around 1260 by order of King Louis IX, wrote that the Wardens are free from watch duty “since the time of Charles Martel.”

Martel – whose name means *the hammer*

– had in the eighth century professionalized the military and created orders of knighthood to repulse the Umayyad invasion of France. Martell was successful, ultimately uniting mediaeval France and much of modern Belgium and parts of modern Germany in Christendom. Indeed, he caused many churches to be built and, according to Anderson, “sent over several expert Craftsmen and learned architects into England, at the desire of the Saxon Kings: So that during the Heptarchy, the Gothic Architecture was much encourag’d here, as in other Christian Lands.”²

1 Mollier, “Freemasonry and Templarism,” *Brill*

Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, Vol. 8, (Brill: 2014), 86.

2 *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons Containing the History, Charges, Regulations, & of that most Ancient*

Order of the Temple

by Ben Williams



Thus, whether veracious or not, Freemasonry has claimed connection with the Knights Templar in some capacity or other almost as early as its formation, certainly before Ramsay's oration in 1737.

It is widely known that the first record of the Order of the Temple appears in the minutes of Saint Andrews Royal Arch Lodge in Boston, MA, dated August 28, 1769. That evening, British Army officers from the 29th Regiment of Foot conferred upon "Brother William Davis" the "four steps, that of Excell't: Sup Excell't: Roy. Arch & Kt. Templar."³

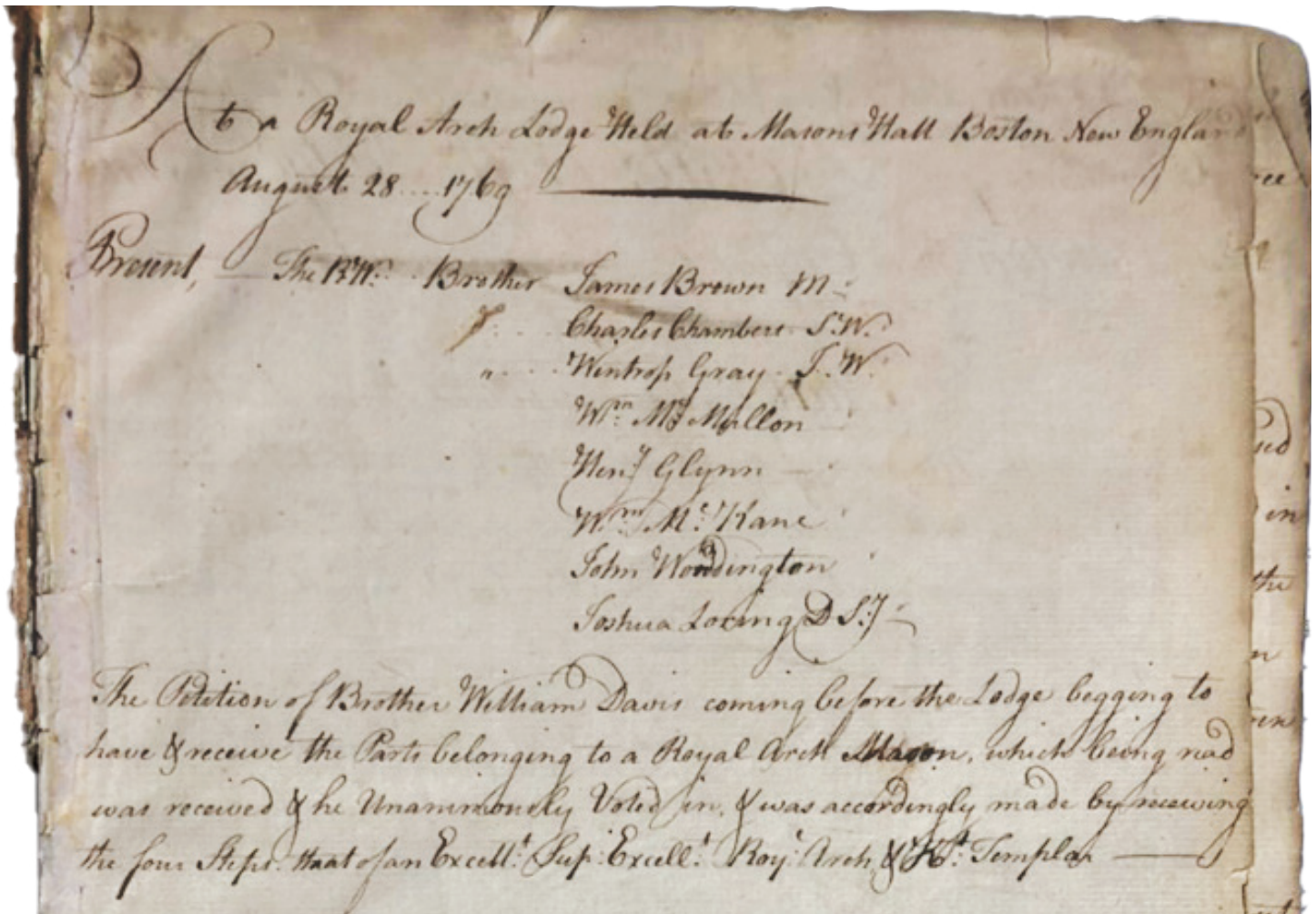
³ *and Right Worshipful Fraternity*. (London, 1723), 29. Note that this is probably not William Davis who

The entry is sparse: it concludes the minute. Yet the gaps between the words loom large: just a few months later, on December 11, Saint Andrews Royal Arch Lodge conferred the Order on Paul Revere. The same regiment that, three months later, shot Crispus Attucks in the town square and precipitated the American Revolution, was the same regiment that furnished the ritual and officers by which Paul Revere was made a Knight Templar. The trowel

died at Bunker Hill, as is frequently claimed, but more likely a Past Master of British Army Lodge No. 58 in the 15th Regiment of Foot. See Harris, "The Story of Lodge 'Glittering Star' No. 322 (Irish) and The Beginning of Knight Templary in Canada."

must be keener than the sword.

Three regiments were active in Boston in 1768, along with the grenadiers and a company of artillery. Each had traveling lodges attached. The 14th Regiment of Foot operated two lodges: British Army Lodge No. 58, chartered by the Antients in 1759, and Lodge No. 211, under an Irish constitution, chartered in 1750. The 64th Regiment operated British Army Lodge No. 106, under a Scottish constitution, chartered 1763. And the 29th Regiment operated what would become known as Glittering Star Lodge No. 322, under an Irish constitution, chartered 1759. For our purposes, the 29th Regiment is of most interest because its Lodge formed Saint



The minute from St. Andrews Royal Arch Lodge at Boston, August 28, 1769, memorializing Brother William Davis being made a “Kt. Templar,” the first historiographical record of the Order of the Templar being conferred.

Andrew Royal Arch Lodge shortly after the regiment arrived in Boston on October 5, 1768. The 14th supplied some of its officers, too. Both the 29th and 14th used Irish work.

Shortly after their arrival, James Brown and Charles Chambers, soldiers in the 29th, were entered on the visitor’s roll at Saint Andrews Lodge. This should be of interest: Saint Andrews (chartered 1760, Scottish constitution) met at the Freemasons’ Arms (a.k.a. the Green Dragon Tavern) and included a good portion of Sons of Liberty among their membership.⁴ Less than a year later, on August 18, 1769, a Royal Arch Lodge opened at the Green Dragon with British soldiers from the 29th and 14th filling out the stations and places. Perhaps three members of Saint Andrews Lodge took positions, as well.

Clearly, the “four steps” conferred upon William Davis were extant prior to the entry in the Saint Andrew Royal Arch Lodge minutes. It’s believed Glittering Star conferred the Order

in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as early as 1765.⁵

Glittering Star was chartered on May 3, 1759, while the 29th Regiment was stationed in Kilkenny, Ireland. The Regiment had been in Ireland for the better part of a decade. Since the 29th was dispatched to Nova Scotia in 1765, and then to Boston in 1768, it seems clear that Templary, in the Masonic milieu, must have been operative in Ireland at least as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. But contextual evidence suggests it goes farther back than that.

For example, as early as 1724, predating the emergence of the Hiram legend and the third degree, we find reference to Knights Templar (or Knights of Saint John) as Masons in print. In a satirical *Letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Free-Masons to Mr. Harding the Printer*, printed in Dublin, and largely attributed to Jonathan Swift, we find the following wry comments meant to poke fun at the fraternity:

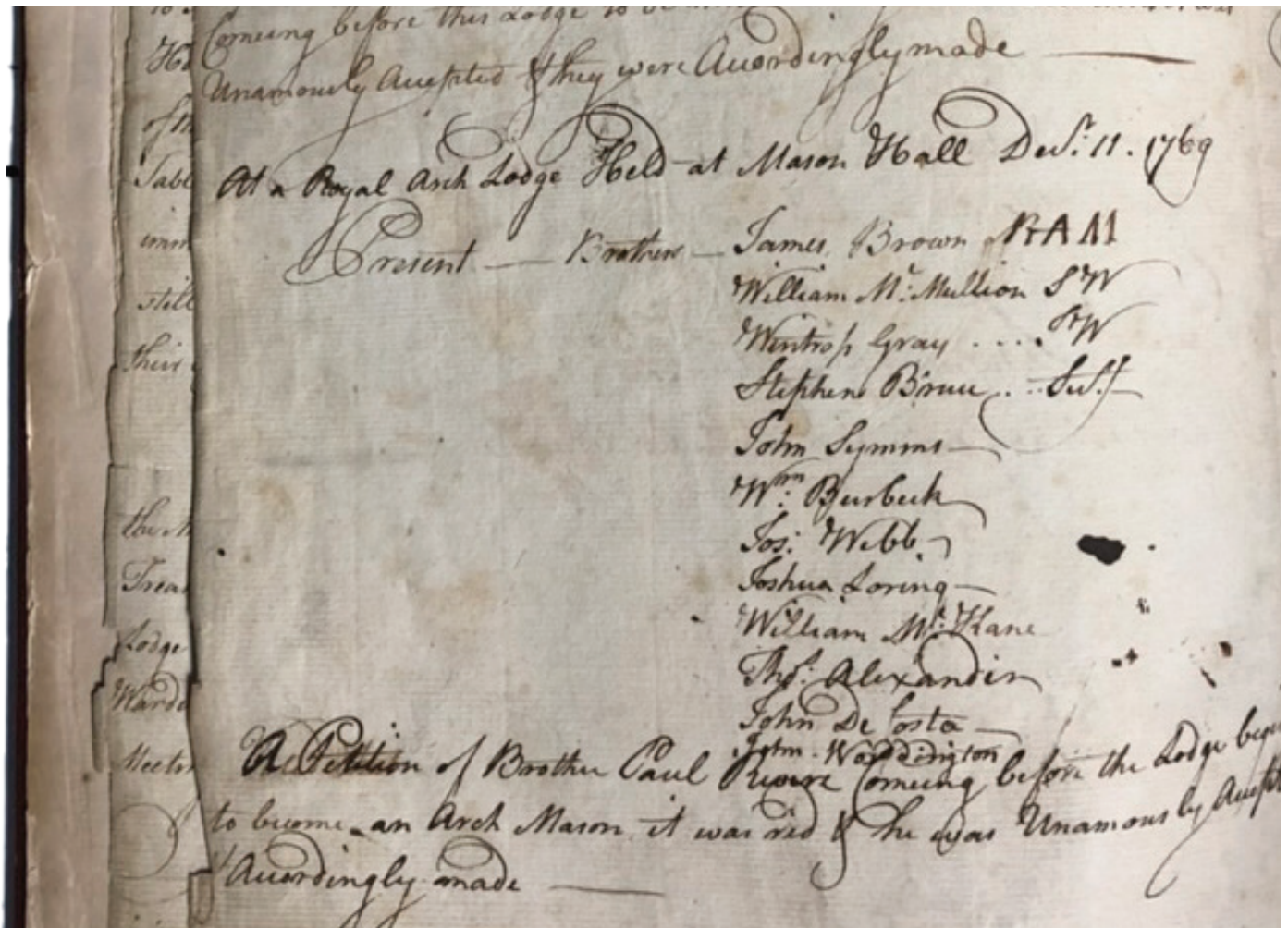
The Branch of the Lodge of Solomon’s Temple, afterwards call’d the Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem on which our Guardian fortunately hit, is as I can easily prove, the Antientest and Purest now on Earth: The famous old Scottish Lodge of Kilwinin of which all the Kings of Scotland have been from Time to Time Grand Masters without interruption, down from the days of Fergus, who Reign’d there more than 2000 years ago, long before the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem of the Knights of Maltha, to which two Lodges I must nevertheless allow the Honour of having adorn’d the Antient Jewish and Pagan Masonry with many Religious and Christian Rules.⁶

The claims of the chivalric lineage must have been open enough for the satire to attach. Earlier still, in 1688, in a satirical performance

4 See Schwartz, “Freemasonry in Revolutionary Boston,” *Freemasonry on the Frontier*, Lewis Masonic (London: 2020).

5 Harris, “The Story of Lodge ‘Glittering Star,’ No. 322 (Irish) (1759-1966): And the Beginning of Knight Templary in Canada,” *The Lodge* (1966).

6 Mollier, “Freemasonry and Templarism,” *Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 8, (Brill: 2014), 84.



The minute from St. Andrews Royal Arch Lodge at Boston, December 11, 1769, memorializing the vote to and making of Paul Revere an “Arch Mason.”

given at Trinity College Dublin, one John Jones (allegedly a friend of Swift while a student there) wrote the following (which is also largely attributed to Swift): “It was lately ordered, that, for the honour and dignity of the University, there should be introduced a society of Freemasons, consisting of gentlemen, mechanics, porters, parsons, ragmen, hucksters, bailiffs, divines, tinkers, knights, thatchers...” – there follows a long list of contradictory types – “... who shall bind themselves by an oath never to discover their mighty no-secret....” (Clearly, Swift was onto us.)

Consider, too, that in 1627, William Stennors, operative Mason at Bangor, was buried at Bangor Abbey, in County Down, with a Masonic headstone. It is alleged Stennors had come from Scotland with James Hamilton of Ayrshire, later Earl of Clandeboye.⁷ Hamilton was likely already an agent of James I. Of note, Hamilton was also appointed a founding fellow of Trinity College where an early Lodge was

clearly operative.⁸

Certainly, Freemasonry appears to have been active in Ireland – as elsewhere – prior to the celebrated 1717 date. This is not surprising. Scotland records gentlemen Masons as early as 1634, when Lord Alexander Nesbit, son of the First Earl of Stirling, was admitted a Fellow Craft in Edinburgh. And the Baal Bridge Square, found under a shoring during the renovation of a bridge in Limerick, and dated to 1507, remains intriguing.⁹ But the role of Freemasonry in Ireland, fomented under a Jacobite milieu, should not be understated, especially in consideration of the so-called “high degrees.” It’s largely accepted that Freemasonry

was imported to France, and thence the Continent, where additional rites were developed (or, perhaps, innovated). The role of Irish Masonry in this dissemination – as well as its Antient obedience – is noteworthy.

Consider that the Royal Irish Regiment, the “Regiment of Walsh,” preserves tradition of a Masonic Lodge among its ranks as early as 1688. This regiment founded the French Lodge, *Parfaite Égalité* in 1772, which succeeded in amending the date of its constitution to March 25, 1688, by virtue of this tradition.¹⁰ This is significant, because the Royal Irish Regiment went into exile in 1691 following the Jacobite defeat. It was renamed the “Regiment of Walsh” in 1770 in honor of its commander, Antoine Joseph Philippe Walsh, whose ancestor, James Walsh of Ballynacooly, County Kilkenny, commanded the ship by which James II escaped to France after the Battle of Boyne.¹¹ Of further interest, perhaps, Antoine’s son, Antoine Vincent (“Anthony”) Walsh was one of the two shipowners who gave Bonnie Prince

7 Murphy, “Irish Jacobitism and Freemasonry,” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, Vol. 9 (1994), 75-82.

8 Becket, “William Stennors, Builder of Bangor Abbey,” *Transactions of the Lodge of Research, Ireland*, 18 (1982-4), 81-92.

9 The square is clearly alike squares employed in Masonic ritual. Inscribed on its surface is the adage, “I will strive to live with love & care” and on the reverse, “Upon the level. By the square.” Its discovery in Limerick under an earlier shoring of the bridge during a renovation in 1830 suggests its date of 1507 may be accurate. It is not known for certain when the bridge was first built, but the bridge is mentioned in records dating from 1588.

10 Murphy.

11 Murphy.



John Erskine, Sixth Earl of Mar (1675-1732), by Hyacinthe Rigaud. The Earl is shown in a red coat with the Badge of the Order of the Garter and Sash and the Badge of the Order of the Thistle.



Prince James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1766) by Alexis Simon Belle. The “Old Pretender” claimed the throne of Scotland from 1701 until his death.

Charlie the vessel that carried him to Ireland in August 1745 and then rescued him a year later, in September 1746. The other shipowner, Pierre André O’Heguerty, founded a French Masonic Lodge in 1725.

There is thus a compelling argument to be made for a form of *Catholic* Masonry – specifically, a Jacobite Freemasonry – interconnecting Lodges after the deposition of James II in Britain in the Glorious Revolution. In this argument, the “widow’s son” may be alleged to be a veiled reference to Charles Stuart, the English Monarch exiled by Cromwell after the execution of his father, Charles I, in 1649, as well as Hiram Abiff.

Regarding the Temple, we now know that, in 1722, John Erskine, the sixth Earl of Mar, wrote to James III and VIII (the Old Pretender) seeking permission to form a new knighthood in Scotland known as the “Restoration Order.”¹² It was to be a “Royal Military Order of Knighthood to be erected and conferred by His Majesty or the Commander in Chief from him” to restore “Scotland to its

ancient military spirit.” James gave his approval. Fifteen years later, Andrew Michael Ramsay’s “oration,” noting the origins of the Craft from “Our Ancestors the Crusaders” put the Templar origination theory on the map. But the fact that Ramsay was tutoring James’ son, the Bonnie Prince Charlie, in exile in Rome in 1724, just two years after the establishment of the “Restoration Order,” should not be overlooked.

John Erskine, Earl of Mar, appears to have acted as Grand Master of this (or another?) chivalric order. On September 30, 1745, in a letter written by John Drummond, the Duke of Perth, to Lord Ogilvy, the Earl of Airlie, we read that, “There was a solemn chapter of the ancient chivalry of the Temple of Jerusalem... not more than ten knights were present, for since my Lord of Mar demitted the office of G Master, no general meeting has been called save in your own north Convent.”¹³

Erskine likely helped organize the first Lodge in Paris, in 1725-26, with members of Scots-Irish regiments pressed in French

12 Schuchard, Marsha Keith, *Political-Masonic Background to the 1738 Papal Bull In Eminenti*, 10 n. 46 citing the Stuart Papers 65/39, 16 May 1722 in the Royal Archives in Windsor.

13 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol. 33 (1920), 44. The “implacable hatred” of the “Knights of Malta” should probably be ignored as innovation – the Maltese Knights and the Templars weren’t necessarily the rivals this French degree allege.

service.¹⁴

All of this is simply background. The trail of the historic record is inexact. Against the backdrop of intrigue, of Catholicism versus Protestantism, Masonry offers only secrets. But it is important to keep this backdrop in mind. The above shows intercourse between Ireland and France where early Masonic themes were carried from the island to the Continent in the latter seventeenth century. And it shows “gentlemen” and military Masons expressing interest in chivalric themes and a tradition of the Knights Templar.

Then, about half a century later, Chivalric Masonry emerges on the Continent. The Sublime Order of Elect Knights, c. 1750, discovered at Quimper and Poitiers, France, appears to be a prototypical Kadosh or Elect of the IX, as would later arise in the Morin’s Rite of Perfection, later termed his Order of the Royal Secret (now, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite). It plied the Knight Templar origination theory, as is evident from this excerpt from Morin’s 1760 ritual:

The trials that you have gone through to learn the historical facts of, and the antient Bible, do they not serve you to understand and sound your heart to make a just application of the death of Hiram Abif, in comparing it with that of James de Molay? By the degree of 9 elected, when your heart was disposed to revenge, you have been prepared to the implacable hatred, that you have sworn to the Knights of Malta, in whom you ought to revenge the death of James de Molay. As a Grand Elected you have acquired by your proved discretion in symbolic masonry, the light, which leaves nothing more to desire than your submission to the degree of the sublime Prince of the Royal Secret....¹⁵

Around the same time, the Rite of Strict Observance emerges on the record. At the Council of Willhelsbad, in 1782, regarding the recognition of the Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte, which removed the Templar significance from the Rite of Strict Observance, and blended certain Martinist elements, Jean Baptiste Willermoz stated to the assembly:

14 Schuchard, *Political-Masonic Background*, 14. See also fn. 71, citing Pierre Chevallier, *Les Ducs sous L’Acacia* (Paris, 1964) 27-29 and Edward Corp, “The Stuart Court at St. Germain-en-Laye,” *Lord Burlington*, 10-12, 20-21.

15 Mollier, “Freemasonry and Templarism,” *Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 8, (Brill: 2014), 89.

...from 1752, that is 30 years ago, having been elected to preside over the [Lodge] into which I was initiated & having no connection, neither with the late W[orshipful] Br[other] ab Ense [von Hund], nor with any of the followers of his System, I mysteriously taught those upon whom I conferred that 4th degree of the [Lodge] that they had become heirs to Kni[ght] T[emplars] and their wisdom; I repeated this and have repeated it for ten years, just as I learned it from my predecessor, who in turn had learned it through an ancient tradition, the origins of which he knew not.¹⁶

By 1759, The Swedish Rite (also forwarding a Templar origination theory) is established. The first Masonic Lodge in Sweden was founded in 1735 by Axel Wrede Sparre, who was initiated in a French-Jacobite lodge in Paris in 1731.

These rituals in one form or another arose adjacent whatever ritual comprised the “four steps,” which appears to be an earlier rendition based on the ceremony of knighting rather than instructive dialogue. Clearly, the Continental degrees cannot be the same because each involved more than four steps. For example, the Rite of Strict Observance had Apprentice, Fellow, Master, Scots Master, Secular Novice, Knight, and Lay Brother. Some antecedent inspiration was being innovated, enlarged, and “improved.”

Rather than originating the Order of the Temple, as practiced today in the American York Rite, it seems more logical to presume these continental “high degrees” were adapted alongside – and separate from – the antecedent work which also birthed the Order of the Temple as we know it today.

The Rite of Harodim

Some sort of esoteric Masonry is discernible in Scotland at least as early as 1598. William Schaw, appointed Master of Works and General Warden of the Craft by King James I, specifically references the “Art of memory” in his Statutes (which are widely regarded as a significant codification of Masonic law). The Art of memory is a phrase often connected with Hermetic philosophy of the era; that is, renaissance philosophy inspirational to the intelligentsia of the age. These statutes necessarily included speculative Masons. As early as 1600, the minutes of Edinburgh Lodge No. 1 at Holyrood house record John Boswell, 3rd

Laird Auchinleck, “attested the minutes of the Assembly with his Mark.”¹⁷ Lord Auchinleck was not an operative Mason. On July 3, 1634, the minutes of Edinburgh Lodge No. 1 record passing the son of the First Earl of Stirling, Lord Alexander Nesbit:

The 3 day of July 1634. The which day the Right Honorable my Lord Alexander is admitted fellow of the craft by Hugh Forest, Deacon, and Alexander Nesbet, Warden; and the rest of the Masters of Masons of Edinburgh; and thereto every master has subscribed with their hands or set to their marks, Jn. Watt, Thomas Paterstone, Alexander, John Mylln.¹⁸

Lord Alexander was not an operative Mason. By 1636, Lord Alexander’s brother, Sir Anthony Alexander, is noted as “general warden and mr. of work to his ma’tie” at Aitcheson-Haven Lodge.¹⁹ Also, not an operative Mason. In 1641, Sir Robery Moray, founder of the Royal Society, was made a Mason at Newcastle, under the auspices Mary’s Chapel Lodge, Edinburgh:

At Neucastell the 20 day off May 1641. The qwilk day ane serten number off Mester and others being lafule conveyned, doeth admit Mr the Right Honerabell Mr Robert Moray, General quarter Mr to the Armie off Scotlan, and the same bing aproven be the hell Mester off the Mesone off the Log off Edenbroth, quherto they heaue set to ther handes or merkes. A. Hamilton, R. Moray, Johne Mylln, James Hamilton.²⁰

Note that Moray was knighted by Charles I in 1643. Moray’s esoteric leanings are evincible not just by his famous “pentalpha” mark, but also in his correspondence with Jesuit scholar and Christian Kabbalist Athanasius Kircher while Moray was imprisoned by the Duke of Bavaria from 1643 to 1645.²¹ Reinforcing his Stuart connection, Moray is thought to have been part of the negotiations for the return of Charles II in 1660, following Cromwell’s death

two years prior.²²

Alexander Hamilton, who signed off on Sir Robert’s initiation, was a Scot who served in both the Danish and Swedish armies. He was also General of Artillery. He was initiated the year before Moray, also by Mary’s Chapel Lodge, and adopted the delta as his mark. The minute reads:

The 20 day off May 1640. The quihilk day, James Hamiltone bing deken off the Craft and Johne Meyenes warden, and the rest off M’rs off meson off edenbr. conuened, doeth admit in amoght them the right honerabell ALEXANDER HAMILTONE, generall of the artilerie of this kindom, to be fellow and Mr off the forsd Craft: and therto wie heaue set to our handes or markes. A. Hamilton, James Hamilton, John Mylln.²³

These examples are hardly exhaustive, but they are persuasive: Speculative Masonry was certainly extant in Scotland in the century prior to the formation of the Premiere Grand Lodge of England. And its members were men of wide-ranging influence and travel, many of whom bore a military commission as well as a noble birthright. And most (if not all) were Stuart sympathizers.

Of interest, then, perhaps is Swalwell Lodge (the Lodge of Industry No. 48). This Lodge preserves evidence of the Rite of Harodim (subject to at least sixteen variant spellings),²⁴ according to William Preston in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, potentially back to 1687 or even 1681. (The date on the Warden’s columns is 1690.) The word “Harodim,” which is the precursor to the well-known *Heredom* used today, is taken from 1 Kings 9:23, and translated as “overseers”; *i.e.*, the overseers of the work at the construction of King Solomon’s Temple.

The earliest incontrovertible reference to the Rite of Harodim is probably 1756, in Phoenix Lodge 94, in Sunderland, England, where a minute records that “Bro. Jos. Atkinson” is “Entered into the Harodim.”²⁵ But a minute from July 1, 1746, from the Lodge of Industry (Swalwell Lodge) 48 at Gateshead states that, “Enacted at a Grand Lodge, that no brother Mason should be admitted in to the dignity of a Highrodian” for less than 2s. 6d, or into that of “Domoskin or Farin” for less than 5s.²⁶

17 Williams, “In the Beginning,” *Finding the Mark, the Collected Grand Stewards’ Lectures*. (2019), 21.

18 Gould, *The History of Freemasonry*. (1883), 407.

19 Gould, 446.

20 University of St. Andrews Institute of Scottish Historical Research, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/item.php?id=6599>. Accessed 12 Nov 2022.

21 Moray, Robert. University of St. Andrews Institute of Scottish Historical Research, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/item.php?id=6599>. Accessed 24 Nov 2023.

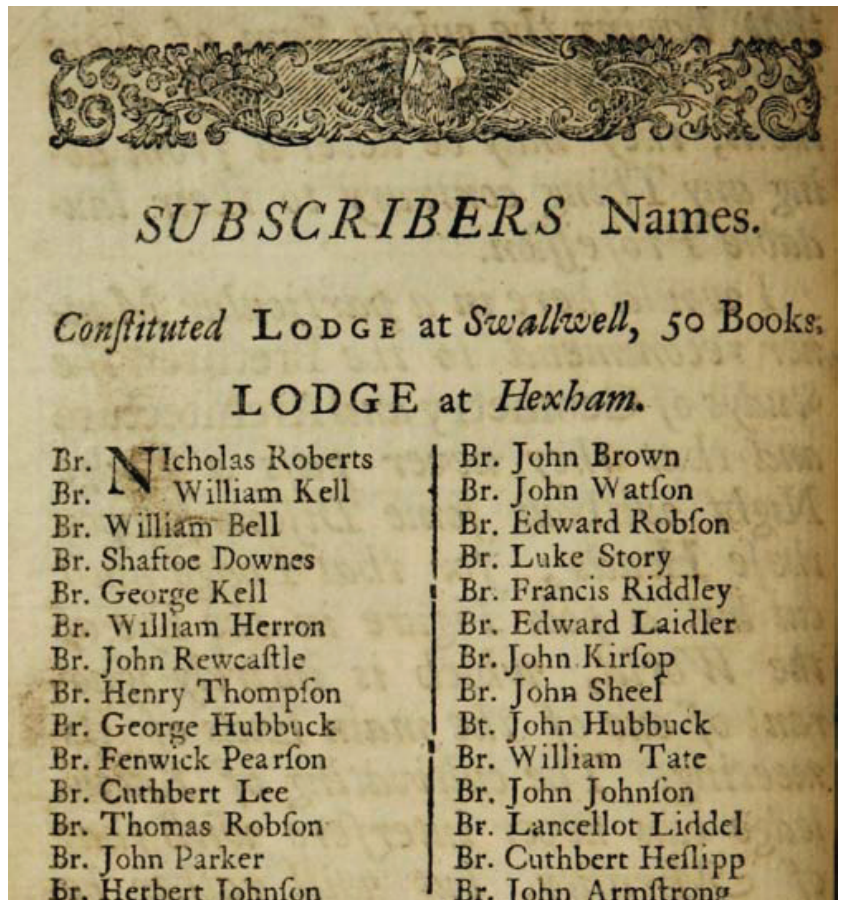
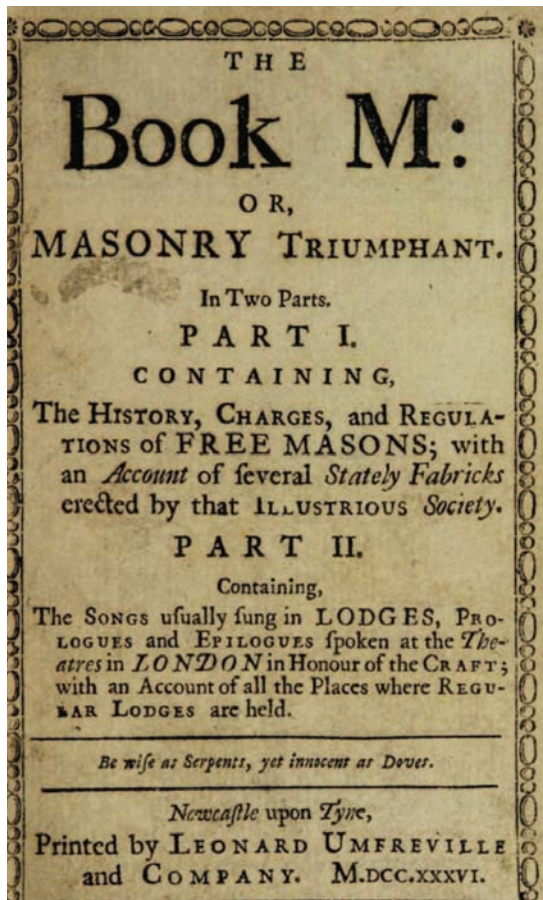
22 Ibid.

23 University of St. Andrews Institute of Scottish Historical Research, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/item.php?id=380>. Accessed 12 Nov 2022.

24 See Williams Waples, “An Introduction to the Harodim,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (1947) vol. 60, 125-26

25 *AQC* 60 (1947)

26 Gould, *History*, vol. ii, 170.



The Book M: or Masonry Triumphant, 1736, printed in Newcastle Upon Tyne in the north of England. Frontispiece (left) and the anonymous dedication to “Lodge at Swallowwell” for “50 books”

Whatever these entries refer to, it seems plausible the reference was to more than a single degree, but a system of degrees of a type. These degrees were clearly operative in the North of England by the mid-eighteenth century; they must, therefore, have been established prior to the dates of entry history records.

For example, in 1745, Phoenix Lodge 94 records a Brother “passed the bridge,” probably as part of the Harodim (or at least some higher order of degrees). Could this be a reference to what is now practiced in the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, where Zerubbabel is caused to traverse the hostile dominions to seek out Darius’ aid in defending the reconstruction of the Temple, work also exemplified in the Irish degrees, now under the Knight Masons? Certainly, this story is some of the oldest Masonry – the origin of the sword and the trowel used as the Masonic crest as well for its enduring symbolism in protecting and preserving the sacred. (Note also that the immemorial discussion is immortalized in stone in Roslyn Chapel, dated to 1446.) Or perhaps it refers to the rough and rugged road now practiced as part of the Royal Arch degree? Either way, Zerubbabel is prominent as an archetype for chivalry, no doubt, and employed in early “high degree” Masonry.

“We have amongst us three classes of confreres, the Novices or Apprentices; the Companions or Professed; the Masters or the Perfected,” wrote Ramsay in 1737 in his famous Oration. “To the first are explained the moral virtues, to the second the heroic virtues; to the last the Christian virtues; so that our Institution embraces the whole philosophy of sentiment and the complete theology of the heart.”

Two years before Ramsay’s Oration, Bro. Joseph Laycock of Winlaton, Swallowwell, gave an oration at Swallowwell Lodge on March 8, 1735, where he repeated twelve lines, which he terms “old verses,” concerning the sword and the trowel (as featured in the Book of Nehemiah):

When Sanballat Jerusalem distressed
With sharp assaults in Nehemiah’s time,
To war and work the Jews themselves addressed,
And did repair their walls with stone and lime.
One hand the sword against the foe did shake,
The other hand the trowel up did take.

Of valiant minds, lo, here a worthy part,
That quailed not with ruin of their wall;
But Captains bold did prove the MASONS art:
Which doth infer this lesson unto all,
That, to defend our country dear from harm,
To war or work we either hand should arm.

These were cited in the fourth lecture recorded in the *BOOK M: or, Masonry Triumphant* published in 1736, along with the rest of the lecture, which clearly treats of the story of King Cyrus and the rebuilding of the Temple. We find these themes today in all “high degree” Masonry, from the Royal Order of Scotland to the York and Scottish Rites, and everywhere in between.²⁷ Note also the esoteric allusions informing the history of Masonry relayed in this early Masonic text, “The MAGI, and learned MASONS of the East, who were conversant in the Caballa of the Jews, the Mythologies of the Chaldeans and Egyptians, were esteemed among Masons to be the first who couched the M. or G. Masonry under the O, and certainly no symbols, (if thoroughly considered) can be more expressive of the Things aimed at, than the Masons symbols are.”²⁸

Further, the *Book M* records, in lecture seven, reference to Hiram Abiff, and a dissertation on the difference of the genealogies cited of the craftsman in Kings viz-à-viz Chronicles. It also includes the phrase, in transliterated Hebrew, and translated as “Did Huram, his

²⁷ Interesting, too, that in 1729, Ramsay was in London publicizing his mystical novel regarding the perennial tradition titled, *The Travels of Cyrus*.
²⁸ *Book M*, 23.



Photo by Ben Williams

St. Mary's Abbey, Melrose, est. 1136. The abbey was a center of learning and, despite the poor obedience, one of wealth and prosperity. Edward II sacked the Abbey in 1322, Richard II sacked it again in 1385, and Henry VIII dealt the final blow in 1560. Melrose Lodge of St John No. 1 *bis* has been associated with the site and claim to have been extant since 1136.

Father, make to King Solomon," a statement clearly evolved within our current Royal Arch degree.

This is all the more significant, because the lecture discusses the term "Harodim" applied to "rulers or provosts assisting King Solomon, who were set over the work."²⁹ There is a clear allusion to a gradation of rulership among the equal and the elect, hinting at a hierarchy of Masonic standing beyond the simple second or third degrees. Then, towards the end of the lectures, we find echoes of Anderson's Constitution, "The Brethren in foreign parts have also discovered, that not only the Orders of Warlike Knights, but the Religious too, with several other noble and ancient Societies of Men, have derived their Charges and Regulations from the Free Masons."³⁰

It seems likely that speculative Masonry of the mid-seventeenth century included chivalric themes, not least because of the military commissions noblemen frequently held. "There are students of Masonic history who hold the view that the Scottish influence of the Rosy Cross permeated Durham County Lodges."³¹

With mind to the above, consider, then, that publication of the *Book M* was funded by a bunch of Lodges who preordered copies. These Lodges are listed at the beginning of the book. The first Lodge listed, however, has no members enumerated like the others documented, only "Constituted LODGE at *Swallowwell*, 50 Books" fills out the entry. The book's dedication is "To the Brethren and Fellows of the most ancient and honourable society of Free and Accepted Masons, assembling in Lodges in the Northern Counties of England, this Book is with all Humility dedication, by, Their ever faithful Brother, and most obedient humble Servant, W. SMITH."

The Northern counties of England – where Ashmole and Moray were made Masons – where the Harodim first surface on the record – appear to be the benefactors of this book of Masonic instruction, now the rarest Masonic book in the world.

Cistercians

Arguably, chivalric themes were weaved into Masonic symbolism in the seventeenth century to support some kind of spiritual sympathy. Of course, Templar legendry in

Scotland is thousands of years old; the centuries line the well from which legend may be deeply drawn.

Nonetheless, it is true that, in 1129, Hugues de Payens, Grand Master of the Knights Templar, visited King David I of Scotland on a fundraising mission for the new Order. Whatever they discussed, by the time de Payens left, King David had granted land in Ballantrodoch to the Temple and commissioned the construction of the first Cistercian Abbey in Scotland, St Mary's Abbey at Melrose, completed in 1136. He deeded the lands under allodial warrant to the Abbey ten years later. "I wish, therefore, that they may hold and possess the aforesaid lands and their appurtenances, that is to say, with greater freedom and stability than any other tenure could be held and possessed," the king wrote.³²

Rumors promulgated by Baigent, Leigh, and Lincoln in their book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, that de Payens took Catherine St. Clair as bride have never been confirmed.³³

³² Wade, *History of St. Mary's Abbey, Melrose, The Monastery of Old Melrose, and The Town and Parish of Melrose*, 1861, 161.

³³ The rumor is, frankly, unlikely although, as a great-grandson of a St. Clair, I rather like the

²⁹ *Book M*, 41.

³⁰ *Book M*, 44.

³¹ Waples, *AQC*, "An Introduction to the Harodim."

Vol. 60 (1947), 125.



Images of St. Mary's Abbey Melrose (R to L): fourteenth century inscription on the lintel beneath the double compasses; setting maul and skull with square; modern marker of site where human heart was found, believed to be the heart of Robert the Bruce, and the Mordo Inscription.

Of course, the Cistercians and the Knights Templar were aligned – de Payens' cousin, Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot of Clairvaux Abbey, wrote the Templar Rule and was the main influence in the Order attaining Papal sanction. If the Templars can be said to have an obedience, it must be Cistercian in origin.

Although the Cistercians were a poor obedience (like the Knights Templar), holding all title in common, the brethren of St. Mary's Abbey Melrose had fostered a thriving wool trade and developed systematic methods of farming. They therefore sustained a surplus. A thriving township grew up surrounding the Abbey. In the twelfth century, during a famine, records show that St. Mary's Abbey Melrose supported approximately 4,000 people for over three months.³⁴

It seems likely, therefore, that were Templars to have arrived in Scotland after the coup against the Order in 1307, St. Mary's Abbey Melrose might have proved a sensible destination. After all, in 1307, Robert the Bruce was still excommunicated – Papal authority did not reach north of Hadrian's wall. And Melrose could support and succor hundreds.

As a poor obedience, the Cistercians did not necessarily hire outside labor, but initiated "Lay Brethren of the Craft," clerics not invested with the Holy Orders to administer Communion but skilled laborers who plied their crafts under the aegis of the Order in exchange for

room and board and, of course, training and education. These skilled artisans could travel between Cistercian holdings to ply their trades, a freedom of movement uncommon in serfdom. (It is interesting to note the seventh and last degree of the Rite of Strict Observance was termed "Lay Brother.")³⁵ St. Mary's Abbey Melrose needed stone workers: it was almost continually under construction for over 300 years. The Abbey was first destroyed by Edward II in 1322 (just eight years after Jacques de Molay's martyrdom in Paris), then by Richard II in 1385. It was still under construction in 1560 when Henry VIII dealt the final blow in dissolving Catholic holdings.

Thus, a Lodge of operative Masons, Melrose Lodge of St. John No. 1 has been connected with the site for centuries. They date their charter back to 1136: a wooden plaque with the Lodge's coat of arms, dated 1136, is still on display above their entryway. The minutes of the speculative Lodge go back, unbroken, to 1674. Interestingly, even though

the Grand Lodge of Scotland formed in 1736, Melrose St John No. 1 didn't join the Grand Lodge until 1891. It remained independent for almost 200 years after the formation of the Premiere Grand Lodge of England. Today, due to its heritage, it is numbered No. 1 *bis*; that is, number 1 the *second*. (In other words, the second "number one" Lodge, along with Mary's Chapel Lodge and Kilwinning Lodge and Aberdeen Lodge, viewed as potentially the oldest Masonic Lodge in the world.) The tradition of the Lodge is that the Lodge was created to build St. Mary's Abbey Melrose.

Interestingly, evidence of the philosophy of speculative Masonry can be found in fourteenth to fifteenth century stonework restoring the twelfth century ruin. Upon the lintel above a doorway leading to the turret, and under a shield bearing interlocked compasses, is the old English inscription:

Sa gays the cumpas evyn about,
sa trough and taute – do but duite.
Behalde to ye hende. Q. Johne Morwo.

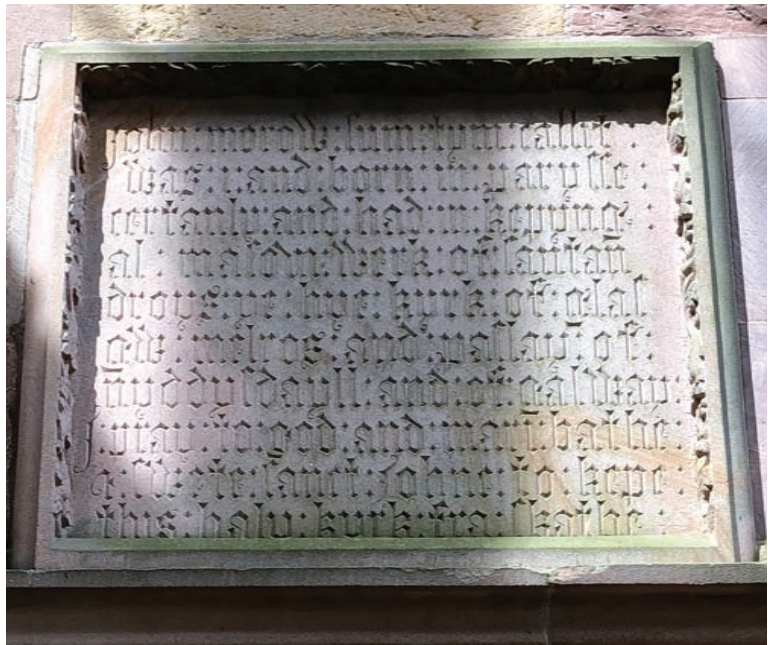
("So goes the compass even about. So truth and praise do [not] doubt. Behold to your end" or, essentially, "as the compass goes round the circumference without deviating, so doubtless, truth and loyalty never deviate. Look well to the end, quoth John Morwo.")

Some earlier lines appear to have been erased, chiseled off the rock.

John Morwo (also spelled "Morow," "Murdo," among other variations, probably an

35 In his *History of Melrose Abbey*, James Wade distinguishes Lay Brethren as "servants of the community, perform[ing] the menial offices, [who] were employed in the labours of husbandry." However, he also states that "A master Mason or builder was either kept in the monastery or adjacent to it, and many other persons who exercised useful employments, such as potters, gardeners, tool-makers, smiths, and habit-makers," and notes that, "A society of masons always settled, and instituted their lodge or club in the neighborhood of a monastery, from the very commencement of its erection." See Wade, *History of St. Mary's Abbey, Melrose, The Monastery of Old Melrose, and The Town and Parish of Melrose*, 1861, 152-53.

idea.
34 Barrett, M. "Abbey of Melrose." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 10. (New York: Robert Appleton Company) 1911.



Photos by Ben Williams

early pronunciation of Murray or Moray), is traditionally held as the first “Grand Master” of Melrose St. John Lodge No. 1. He was the architect and Master Mason at the construction of St. Andrews at Glasgow and at other churches in Scotland. Also in the Abbey are the remains of a carving of a square, a setting maul, and a skull with the curious inscription “HE[R]E LYIS THE RACE OF YE HOVS OF ZAIR.”

Whatever any of this means, it is clear that Robert the Bruce had a particular fondness for Melrose Abbey. After Edward II sacked the site in 1322, Robert granted funds to restore the Abbey. (Why would Edward sack a monastery that was sacred to the Catholic Church?) Robert also waived taxes and bequeathed the monks £100 a year for “the King’s meal” in perpetuity: Annually, each monk was granted a plate of rice and almond milk courtesy of the throne. When Robert died fighting in Spain, his heart was carried back to Scotland and buried in St Mary’s Abbey Melrose.

We must devolve to speculation. It seems plausible that fleeing Knights of the Temple would seek succor in Melrose Abbey, the principal community under their obedience in lands outside the jurisdiction of the Church, in the Scottish borderlands close to England. It seems plausible that our ritual, while romanticized and promulgated to impress upon candidates some sense of specialty, nonetheless captured at least a germ of truth. The evidence is circumstantial, but not unpersuasive. On a preponderance of the evidence standard (that is, whether it is more likely than not), the likelihood of a Templar connection with Craft Masonry inheres, albeit not the ritual or kind practiced today. Perhaps just a enough for the

historical association to be plied for political purposes, a vein of gold in the batholith foisted over history.

It is possible – even likely – that Jacobite noblemen set up Craft Lodges in Ireland, under warrant from Scotland, in the early-to-mid-1600s. It is likely that Irish Masons and shipowners seeded Masonry throughout Catholic France, certainly by the 1720s. We know that the 29th Regiment picked up its Masonic charter in Kilkenny, Ireland, operating under an Irish warrant. We know they brought the “four steps” with them to the new world, and that almost certainly they conferred the “degree” of Knight Templar in Halifax, Nova Scotia, prior to conferring it on William Davis in Boston. And we know, therefore, that they had to learn it elsewhere first, probably in Ireland.

It is important to recognize that the ceremony of “Knight Templar” in the four steps recorded in Boston – that is, in Antient Masonry – refers to a ceremonial knighting of a kind, involving certain acts, and not a didactic episode more common to French iterations of chivalric Masonry as promulgated in the 1750s and later.

Conclusion

We can show a direct link from Trinity College, Dublin, to James I, with Scots noblemen serving as agents of James I peripherally associated with a seventeenth century Masonic Lodge connected with the school. And, from the earliest satire pillorying Masonry prior to the founding of the Premiere Grand Lodge of England in 1717, we see allusions to Masonic inspiration in Hermeticism, alchemy, Rosicrucianism, and Kabbalah, plied for comic

effect:

These are to give notice, that the Modern Green-ribbon’d Caball, together with the Ancient Brotherhood of the Rosy-Cross; the Hermetick Adepti, and the Company of accepted Masons, intend all to Dine together on the 31 [sic] of November next, at the Flying-Bill in Wind-Mill-Crown-Street; having already given order for great store of Black-Swan pies, Pach’d Phoenixes Eggs, Haunches of Unicorns, &c. To be provided on that occasion; All idle people that can spare so much time from the Coffe-house, may repair thither to be spectators of the Solemnity: But are advised to provide themselves Spectacles of Malleable Glass; For otherwise ‘tis thought the said Societies (as hitherto) make their Appearance Invisible.³⁶

“Advert” in Poor Robin’s Intelligence,
10 October 1676

Such “Rosicrucian” ideas mocked here were conflated with the “secret knowledge” alleged of the Templars and popularized toward the end of the seventeenth century in the chivalric revival.³⁷

Whether St Mary’s Abbey Melrose was a seat of “Lay Brethren of the Craft” wherein fleeing Knights Templar found succor and means to travel throughout the state will probably never be known. But it would be a sensible destination to escape the avarice of a perfidious king and a wily pope.

³⁶ Bogdan, *Handbook of Freemasonry*, 286.

³⁷ Bogdan.



It is of interest, however, that one of the earliest accounts of Magna Carta, presented to King John at Runnymede in 1215 to distract the monarch, is found in the *Chronicle of Melrose Abbey* (1170-1270). “Brother Almeric, Master of the Knights Templar in England” is recorded in the Magna Carta as a witness, present at Runnymede on June 15, and we know that King John spent the eve of the signing in the Commandery in London. It seems unquestionable that the Knights Templar were part of those “knights from the North” that enforced distraint on the monarch upon that historic occasion that paved the way to greater freedom for the common man – and that St. Mary’s Abbey Melrose maintained an interest in those proceedings.

All these connections are intriguing, but definitive proof must remain elusive.

Finally, there is a nice 1743 account by the Reverend Adam Milne of the Parish of Melrose, which contemporizes a Templar connection with the site at least prior to the mid-eighteenth century:

About a mile to the West of the Tweed, stands Newstead, a Place noted for an ancient Lodge of Masons, but more remarkable for another Abbacy on the

East-side of it, called Red Abbey-stead. Whether it got this name from the color of the stones wherewith it was built; or because it was an House belonging to the Templars, they wearing a red Cross for their distinguishing badge, I cannot determine...³⁸

Intriguingly, in 1846, during the construction of the Edinburgh and Hawick Railway, extensive Roman ruins were discovered east of Newstead, revealing the long devotional history of the area. Many ceremonial artifacts were discovered among them as well as stones from the Red Abbey and other buildings erased by history. One stone discovered in this area is of interest to us. It was given to Sir David Erskine, who placed it in the north wall of the choir of Dryburgh Abbey shortly after its discovery. A nineteenth century description of the stone reads:

It has been considerably broken, is now irregular in shape. Measuring about thirteen inches in length by eleven and

38 Rev. Adam Milne, “Description of the Parish of Melrose (1743),” recorded in the *History of Melrose Abbey*, by James Wade, (1861) 25.

a-half inches in breadth. It has cut on it a portion of a large-sized double-edged sword of ancient form, the guard being bent at its extremity towards the blade. At the sides of the handle we have, in old English characters, the letters A.P., apparently the initial of the person’s name to whom the monument had been placed. On the right of the sword blade is sculptured a mason’s square, and on the left a pair of compasses. Below these emblems runs on each side the upper part of an ornamental wreath, formed apparently of ivy, or perhaps the more sacred emblem of the vine.³⁹

The stone was presented by Dr. John Alexander Smith to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, who dated it to the late fourteenth century or early fifteenth century.

Apparently, Dr. Smith observed that “the initial letters may be read Alexander or Andrew Pringle, which was a common name in the vicinity” and that “the individual, whatever his name, was a freemason, admits of no doubt, and the two-edged sword and wreath may indicate that was a knight-templar or crusader.”⁴⁰

Did the Knights Templar lay low among the Lay Brethren of the Craft and initiate a tradition among operative Masons that emerged (or reemerged) in the seventeenth century as Freemasonry, perhaps fomented in the Jacobite milieu? Or were older themes simply resurrected for fraternal (or even political) purposes based on a germ of a supposed secret history?

Some connection between Templary and the Craft might be more plausible than contemporary scholarship likes to admit. **KT**



39 Wade, *History of St. Mary’s Abbey, Melrose, The Monastery of Old Melrose, and The Town and Parish of Melrose*, 1861, 106-07.

40 Wade, *History of St. Mary’s Abbey, Melrose*, 107.

Decoding the Star of Bethlehem

by Ben Williams



“When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.” Matt 2: 9 (KJV)

The star of Bethlehem was a significant omen for the three wise men and, by extension, all of Christendom. Some have taken Matthew 2: 9 to describe a comet, some heavenly omen by which the travelers were led to the stable where the baby Jesus was swaddled in a manger. Some millennials, no doubt, think it was some sort of spaceship.

More serious scholars have alluded to a conjunction between heavenly bodies that, together, formed a bright star. But this would not go “before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was,” let alone share the same celestial latitude to appear as one great big star.

And, of course, according to the text, the three wise men go to the capital, Jerusalem first: They ask King Herod where the messiah has been born. Strange question for ones led by yonder star if it were to somehow appear over the place of the birth in physical form.

Now, there was a “great conjunction” of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B.C. But that was seven years before the birth of Christ. Was the calendar just wrong? Were these wise men not wise?

Definitely not. There is an early medieval astrological technique that offers an intriguing explanation for this sign in heaven. And, surprisingly, when applied to the great conjunction in 7 B.C., according to the tradition, it appears to forecast a birth in Judea in the year 1 A.D. (there is no year zero in the Christian calendar – as soon as Christ was born, the calendar became – at least for Christians – the first year of our Lord). There are a number of unlikely outcomes that must be satisfied and are satisfied when applied according to an ancient teaching, that suggest the great conjunction of 7 B.C. might well have been the “star of Bethlehem.” Here’s how.

The wise men came from the east. The word in Greek is *magoi* (μάγοι), and it has

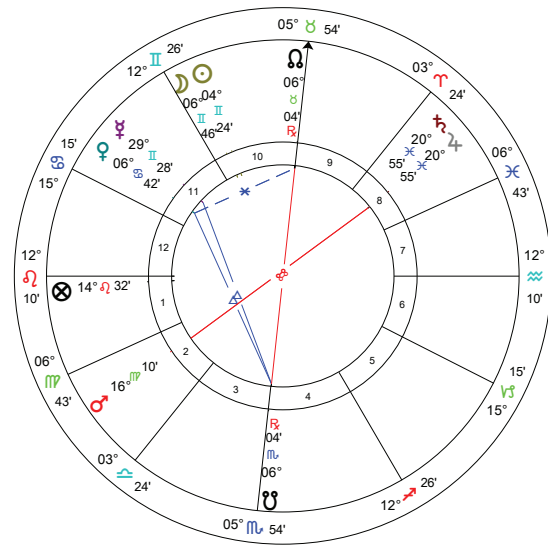
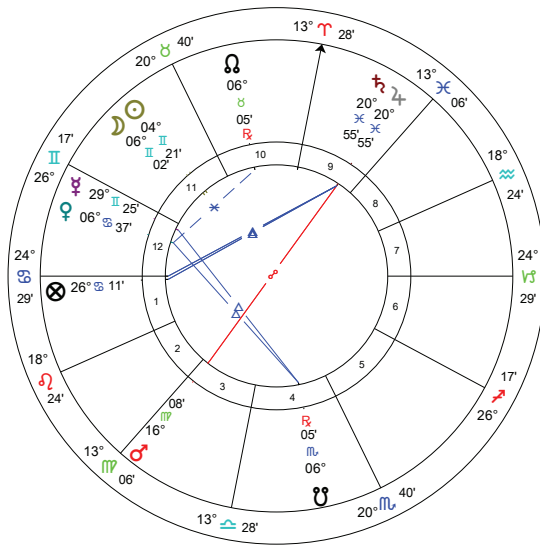
largely been interpreted to refer to Persian, Ethiopian, and Indian philosopher-kings. (Balthasar is often represented as a king of Arabia or Ethiopia, for example, Mechior as a king of Persia, and Caspar, as a king of India.) Some have supposed they were Chaldeans. The word “magi” was applied to Zoroastrians and Persians predominantly. These realms (and indeed the title, *Magi*) are readily associated with astrology, the highest and noblest of arts in olden times. Magi would almost certainly have been “astrologers.”

This technique was transmitted to modern times in the writings of Abu Ma’shar Ja’far ibn Muhummad ibn ‘Umar al-Balkhi (787-886), an astrologer at the court of the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. Abu Ma’shar was widely read and highly influential on the West.

In his book, *On Historical Astrology, the Book of Religions and Dynasties*, Abu Ma’shar treats of various cycles, among them, the

Great Conjunction 7 BC
 Natal Chart
 May 29 0007 BC, Fri
 8:33 am LMT -2:20:56
 Jerusalem, Israel
 31°N46°03'E14°
 Geocentric
 Tropical
 Regiomontanus
 Mean Node

Great Conjunction 7 BC
 Natal Chart
 May 29 0007 BC, Fri
 9:57:30 am LMT -2:20:56
 Jerusalem, Israel
 31°N46°03'E14°
 Geocentric
 Tropical
 Regiomontanus
 Mean Node



The Great Conjunction (where the planets occupy the same degree of zodiacal longitude) of 7 B.C. starts in the ninth house for a chart cast for Jerusalem (left). Mean time for the conjunction is shown by the second chart (right). Extending an arc from the ascendant of the mean time of the conjunction to the point of conjunction yields a distance of 218° 45’.

great conjunctions specifically. Jupiter and Saturn are the outermost planets in medieval astrology (the sixth and the seventh spheres respectively, winding greater circles beneath the primum mobile comprising the ogdoad, or eighth sphere). They are the slowest planets – the “Greater Fortune” and “Greater Malefic” respectively.

Abu Ma’shar uses the cycle of great conjunctions to demonstrate the succession of ages from the creation of the world to the birth of Muhammad (may peace be upon him).

Jupiter makes its course through the zodiac in around twelve years. Saturn, more ponderous, every twenty-nine years give or take. This means that the two planets conjunct (that is occupy the same longitudinal degree in the zodiac, though not necessarily the same celestial latitude) approximately once every twenty years. Thus, astrologically speaking, great conjunctions are quite common. However, not all great conjunctions are equal. Greater cycles are evincible between the joining of these superior bodies.

For example, Jupiter and Saturn will initially conjoin in Aries (the first zodiacal sign) once every 960 years. This is the beginning of a great cycle, termed a great year (obviously different than the 26,000 year “great year” of the precession of the equinoxes). Interestingly, the great conjunctions will then fill out signs of like element: that is, the great conjunction will occur in fire signs twelve or thirteen times in succession (though backwards through the

order of the signs) thus: Aries; then twenty years later, Sagittarius; then, twenty years later, Leo; then twenty years later, Aries; and so on, twelve or thirteen times. After the last conjunction in the element, the great conjunction “switches triplicity,” jumping to another element. (Signs of like element are termed “triplicities” because there are three signs in each element; fire, Aries-Leo-Sagittarius; water, Cancer-Scorpio-Pisces; air, Gemini-Libra-Aquarius; and earth, Taurus-Virgo-Capricorn; each 120° apart.) The great conjunction switches triplicity, then, once every 240 to 260 years, or so. This is a cycle that skips generations. It is therefore significant for dynasties.

Abu Ma’shar tells us that when the great conjunction switches triplicity a prophet may be signified:

We say when the conjunctions shift from one triplicity to another, and one of the three superior planets is in the ninth [house] or third [house] from the ascendant of that conjunction indicating their appearance, especially Saturn, that is an indicator of the birth of prophets.¹

There are a few things to realize here. First, the great conjunction switching triplicity signifies a birth of a prophet; however the place where the prophet is born is signified by the physical location where the planets perfect

the conjunction at the position in the sky where the sun would be early afternoon (that is, in the ninth house) or approximately four hours before dawn (the third house). This sets up lines of longitude across the Earth whereat the birth may occur.

Of course, local time is relative to the sun’s position, and depending on the elongation of the conjunction from the sun, the great conjunction can occur at any local time even though the event is at the same universal time. (In other words, in Australia, the great conjunction could perfect, say, at 2:52 p.m. on Tuesday while it would perfect at 8:52 p.m. on Monday in Colorado – different local times and even dates, but one universal event.)

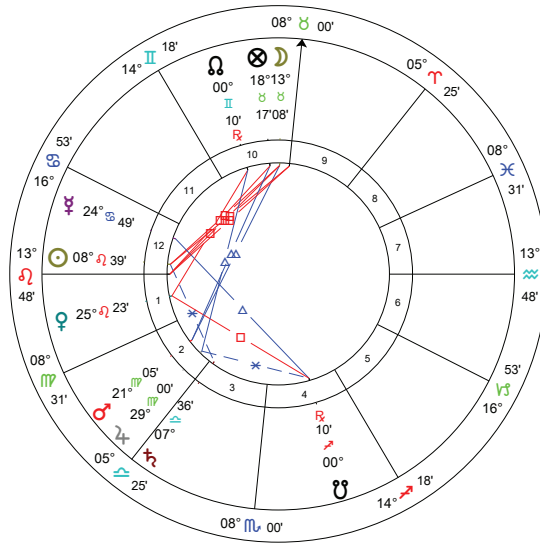
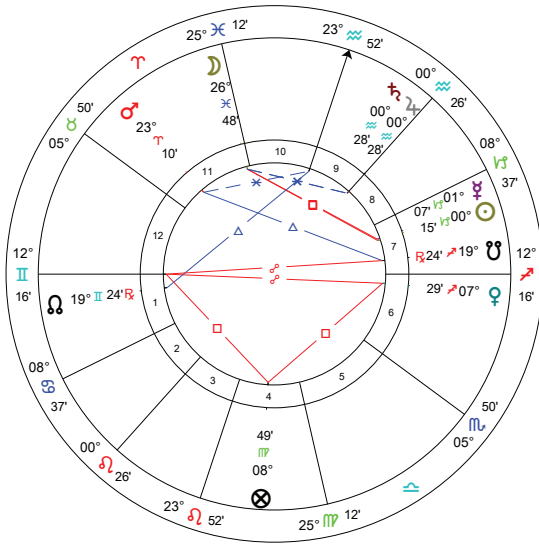
In order for the birth of a prophet to be signified, then, the great conjunction would also need to be conjunct (or close) to the Sun in Australia (to be in the 9th house) or in opposition with the Sun (to be in the third house) at this time.

To determine the Star of Bethlehem, the first question, then, is did the great conjunction in 7 B.C. “switch triplicities”? Using *Solar Fire*, astrological software, we find that the great conjunction of 7 B.C. occurred at 20° Pisces 55’. Pisces is a water sign (and, of course, in esoteric Christian teaching, Christ comes in the Age of Pisces). The previous great conjunction occurred in 26 B.C. at 3° Leo 17’. Leo is a fire sign. Thus, there is a change of triplicities – the conjunction moved from Leo to Pisces, from fire to water. Further, Jupiter is the “ruler”

1 Ma’Shar, Yamamoto and Burnett (eds.) *Historical Astrology*, vol. 1 (Brill: 2000), 37.

2020–Great Conjunction–9th House–Marrakech
 Event Chart
 Dec 21 2020, Mon
 4:14 pm UT +0:00
 Marrakech, Morocco
 31°N38' 00"W00'
 Geocentric
 Tropical
 Regiomontanus
 Mean Node

Birth of Prophet – 2040 – Marrakech Morocco
 Natal Chart
 Jul 31 2040, Tue
 6:16:36 am UT +0:00
 Marrakech, Morocco
 31°N38' 00"W00'
 Geocentric
 Tropical
 Regiomontanus
 Mean Node



The Great Conjunction of 2020 also changed triplicities – into Aquarius, an air sign. Doing the same technique (and adding twelve signs to the projected arc due to the “double-bodied sign” rising, as Ma’Shar instructs, yields a birth of an avatar in 2040, according to this methodology.

of Pisces in medieval philosophy – that is, Jupiter finds agreement there. Under Jupiter, the prophet signified will be a great ascetic, magnanimous, compassionate, abundant, loving, and kind. And, in Pisces, the fish may be a fitting symbol.

The next question, though, is to determine where the great conjunction perfected in the ninth or third house. If it didn’t happen in Jerusalem, then Judea could not be the right place.

Setting the chart for Jerusalem (the capital of Judea) we may raise a horoscope for the great conjunction. The great conjunction lasted from 8:33 a.m. to 11:23 a.m. local mean time. At 8:33 a.m. the great conjunction occupies the same degree and is in the ninth house, the house associated with religion, inspiration, and faith.²

The middle of this time is 9:57:30 a.m. At this time, 12° Leo 10’ rises (a lion rising in the east). The conjunction is still near the ninth cusp. So far, the great conjunction, as viewed

in Jerusalem (or set to Jerusalem), according to Abu Ma’Shar’s teaching, heralds the birth of a prophet. Since the great conjunction perfected in the ninth house in Jerusalem, magi who performed this technique in contemplation of what would in those times be considered among the learned a very significant event, would expect the birth to be in Judea (a land is signified by its capital). They might, therefore, travel there to make further inquiry.

So far so good – and quite surprising. But there’s still more that must work out. The odds here are long – much needs to coincide in specific and mathematical ways.

In order to forecast the time of the birth, Abu Ma’Shar tells us to extend an arc from the ascendant of the chart to the degree where the conjunction perfects. This arc through space gives us a dimension of time: each sign is a year which can be broken by degrees into months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. Following Abu Ma’Shar’s instructions, then, the distance from the Ascendant to the degree of the mean conjunction is 218° 45’.

Break this down, the distance translates to 7 years, 106 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 54 seconds. Adding this time to the time of the great conjunction gives a future moment wherein the birth is meant to occur in the lands where the conjunction perfected in the ninth (or third) house.

Right away we see that this places the birth in the year 1 A.D. (there is no year zero in the Gregorian calendar). Under this technique,

according to the math, the birth would be on September 12, 10:44 p.m. local mean time, in the year 1 A.D. Intriguingly, 10:44 p.m. is in the evening, and September 12 is close enough to Rosh Hashanah that Bethlehem could indeed have been busy and the inns full. This is quite remarkable – the time could just as easily have worked out to 10 a.m. and in the wrong year.

All this is of course complete speculation. Minor errors in calculating the time of the conjunction change the date substantially. But as an exercise in the ancient techniques of mundane astrology (the astrology of religions, dynasties, and nations), it certainly raises some interesting questions and gives food for thought. Was this (or one like it) the technique the Magi employed in heralding the birth of the Christ?

Lastly, there was a great conjunction that occurred on the winter solstice in 2020. There were many intriguing aspects to this event. And that great conjunction switched triplicity, too – into Aquarius.

Setting a chart following Abu Ma’Shar’s techniques we find the birth of a prophet signified in Morocco on July 31, 2040, at 6:16:36 a.m.

I’ll be close to 70 by then. But I might hobble over there with some frankincense, just in case.

Merry Christmas! **KT**

2 Note that in the chart illustrating the mean time of the conjunction, used to project the longitude, the planets are in the eighth house. However, the conjunction *began* in the ninth. Note further, the houses used in this illustration are Regiomontanus’s houses. Regiomontanus was a Renaissance astrologer and, while one of my personal favorites, it is unlikely magi of 1,500 years prior would use his enumerations. Thus, the cusps as shown are not accurate for the period. However, since we do not know exactly what houses the magi might have used, it is significant enough for our purposes that the conjunction starts and perfects at the right ascension the sun attains at around 2 p.m.

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar



THE APARTMENTS OF THE GRAND PRELATE

and

THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Year of Our Lord 2023 to all valiant and magnanimous Knights of the Temple, wheresoever dispersed throughout Christendom ~ Salutations and Knightly Greetings:

A TOAST TO OUR MOST EMINENT GRAND MASTER

CHRISTMAS 2023

Most Eminent Grand Master, greetings in the name of the Christ our Lord

On behalf of the Sir Knights of our Grand Encampment, we raise a Toast in your honor this Christmas as our Grand Master. We join with you Grand Master echoing the words sang by the Angels to Shepherds who *“abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night,” “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace goodwill toward men.”*

Our hearts are filled with hope and anticipation as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Son of God, our Redeemer Kinsman, the Wonderful Councilor, the Prince of Peace, and the Lamb of God.

Like the Angels we bid to you *“good tidings of great joy”* joining our hearts with yours we celebrate those tidings *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”*

With you, Grand Master, we raise our voices in celebration, rejoicing in all that God has done. We again commend to your prayers all the Sir Knights of our great Order, especially those who are homebound and unable to enjoy Knightly Fellowship due to health. Those who God has summoned home, we remember in our meditations. We pray God’s richest blessings upon our great Order, our great charities, you, Grand Master, and all who labor for the cause of Christ.

A Toast to you Grand Master!

In Christ’s Service,

The Reverend Sir Knight Terry L. Plemons, KGC, Chairman

The Committee on Religious Activities

The Reverend Robert J.F. Elsner

The Reverend Paul D. Erickson



GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE CHRISTMAS 2023

To the Right Eminent Grand Prelates, the members of the Committee on Religious Activities, and to all Knights wheresoever dispersed:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A profound appreciation from Lady Kim and me to the Right Eminent Grand Prelates and the members of the Religious Activities Committee for their most gracious toast this Christmas Season. Our world continues to be one of unrest and uncertainty. However, we do have a reason during this blessed season to celebrate.

Sir Knights, this is the joyous season we commemorate the Birth of JESUS of Nazareth, Emmanuel, author of our salvation, and the Great Captain under whose Banner all of us have enlisted.

On this day so long ago, there was born in Bethlehem of Judea, one who laid aside the godhead, and assumed mortal flesh; one whose glory, worth and grace no language can express; one who was born that our lives might be purified, and who died that our souls might be redeemed from the penalty of sin.

Let us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, strive to profit by the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of that divine Master, and remain His faithful soldiers unto death. Seeking strength to continue that struggle let us now offer this prayer of grace.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, remember us with pity, we beseech thee, and blot out the multitude of our transgressions, for thy beloved son's sake. And may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

FATHER in heaven command thy blessing to rest upon all true Knights of the Temple wherever dispersed; bestow upon them a spirit of Truth, Justice, Courage, Constancy, Faith, and Humility, and make of them valiant defenders of thy holy religion. Teach them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted, for Jesus' sake. Amen!

The officers of the Grand Encampment and their families join with Lady Kim and me in wishing each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a most fruitful New Year.



Courteously,

⚔️ *David J. Kussman*

David J. Kussman, GCT
Grand Master

The foregoing toast to the Most Eminent Grand Master and his response thereto are transmitted to you with the request that you extend an invitation through the proper offices to all Sir Knights within your jurisdiction to join in the sentiments thus conveyed at some convenient hour, on or near the birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day, December twenty-fifth, in the Year of Grace 2023.

Right Eminent Gr

Anno Domini



C. Sterling Hughes
Grand Commandery of Alabama



Bruce A. Wethered
Grand Commandery of Idaho



John C. Sharlow
Grand Commandery of Louisiana



Sheldon Gately
Grand Commandery of Arkansas



Richard T. Carnall
Grand Commandery of Illinois



Bradley D. Andrukitis
Grand Commandery of Maryland



Roger S. Ross
Grand Commandery of California



Randal Ellington
Grand Commandery of Indiana



James I. Ogilvie
Grand Commandery of
Massachusetts & Rhode Island



Robert Salazar
Grand Commandery of Colorado



Domenico Rufa
Grand Commandery of Italy



Alan Mackenzie
Grand Commandery of Minnesota

Grand Commanders

2023-2024



Kevin B. Sample
Grand Commandery of Missouri



Kaleb R. Brown
Grand Commandery of
New Hampshire



R. Conrad Johnson
Grand Commandery of New York



Jerry W. Hall
Grand Commandery of Montana



E. Eugene Fricks
Grand Commandery of
New Jersey



Richard L. Ganion
Grand Commandery of Ohio



Brandon L. Penley
Grand Commandery of
North Carolina



James D. Lamb
Grand Commandery of
New Mexico



Dale E. Imbleau
Grand Commandery of Oregon



Mark Gauslow
Grand Commandery of
North Dakota



Robert Peterson
Grand Commandery of Nevada



José Almeida Gomes
Grand Commandery of Portugal



Ted C. Thomas
Grand Commandery of
South Carolina



T. Chance Chapman
Grand Commandery of Texas



Roland Woodard
Grand Commandery of Vermont



Robbie Beam
Grand Commandery of
Tennessee



Timothy L. Stenner
Grand Commandery of Utah



Michael J. Roering
Grand Commandery of Wisconsin



Marc Kpakpovi ByBy Adote
Grand Commandery of Togo



Dennis M. Haas
Grand Commandery of Virginia



Christopher P. Schroeder
Grand Commandery of Wyoming



Non nobis Domine non nobis Sed nomini Tuo da Gloriam!

List of Grand Commanders by State

Alabama	C. Sterling Hughes	Montana	Jerry W. Hall
Alaska	Harry Telling	Nebraska	Steven Barchus
Arizona	William R. Greenen, Sr.	Nevada	Robert P. Peterson
Arkansas	Sheldon Gately	New Hampshire	Kaleb R. Brown
California	Roger S. Ross	New Jersey	E. Eugene Fricks
Colorado	Robert Salazar	New Mexico	James D. Lamb
Connecticut	Edward C. Page	New York	R. Conrad Johnson
Delaware	Mark K. Button	North Carolina	Brandon L. Penley
District of Columbia	Annas F. Kamara	North Dakota	Mark Gauslow
Florida	Rusty Ludlam	Ohio	Richard L. Ganion
Georgia	Ditmar W. Chavez	Oklahoma	John E. King
Hawaii	Anthony J. Escasa	Oregon	Dale E. Imbleau
Idaho	Bruce A. Wethered	Pennsylvania	Thomas C. Helm
Illinois	Richard T. Carnall	Portugal	José Almeida Gomes
Indiana	Randal Ellington	South Carolina	Ted C. Thomas
Iowa	Nathaniel F. Renner	South Dakota	Bruce Crisman
Italy	Domenico Rufa	Tennessee	Robbie Beam
Kansas	William P. Leonard	Texas	T. Chance Chapman
Kentucky	W. Michael Yount	Togo	Marc Kpakpovi ByBy Adote
Louisiana	John C. Sharlow	Utah	Timothy L. Stenner
Maine	Richard J. Phillips	Vermont	Roland Woodard
Maryland	Bradley D. Andrukitis	Virginia	Dennis M. Haas
Massachusetts & Rhode Island	James I. Ogilvie	Washington	Bryan D. Bechler
Michigan	Jay P. Kennedy	West Virginia	Charles R. Krafft
Minnesota	Alan Mackenzie	Wisconsin	Michael J. Roering
Mississippi	Matthew K. Ballard	Wyoming	Christopher P. Schroeder
Missouri	Kevin B. Sample		

Don't see your picture? Talk to your Grand Recorder. We didn't get it on time or, if we did, it was not usable.

Annual Supreme Assembly of the Social Order of the Beauceant

The 102nd Annual Supreme Assembly of the Social Order of the Beauceant was held September 25-30, 2023, in Waco, Texas, at the Hilton Convention Center with members from across the country representing forty different Assemblies.

Members and Sir Knights enjoyed the Waco area including the Homestead Heritage Craft Village, the Waco Mammoth site, McClane Stadium, and the Texas Sports Hall of Fame.

The week was filled with fun, fellowship and hard work by Supreme officers and committees.

The 2023-2024 Supreme Officers of the Social Order of the Beauceant were installed on Friday, September 30, 2023 in Waco, Texas, as the culmination of a week of Faith, Loyalty, and Love came to an end.



Supreme Officers Social Order of the Beauceant for 2023-24



Front Row: (Mrs. Ryan) Patricia Nelle, Supreme Marshal; (Mrs. John) Jackie Ellermann, Supreme Recorder; (Mrs. Daryl R.) Michele Burt, Supreme Worthy Second Vice President; (Mrs. Jon) Melissa Spann, Supreme Worthy Oracle; Ms. Tara B. Shulas, Supreme Worthy President; (Mrs. David) Wynn Evans, Supreme Worthy First Vice President; (Mrs. Daniel) Erin Marr, Supreme Worthy Preceptress; (Mrs. James) Norma Burkett, Supreme Treasurer; (Mrs. Gary) Kimberly Rock, Supreme Assistant Marshal.

Back Row: (Mrs. James) Deb Pulley, Supreme Inner Guard; (Mrs. Maurice L.) Terri Blackman, Supreme Daughter of the Household; (Mrs. Derrick) Mallory Grafton, Supreme Standard Bearer; (Mrs. Lyle) Mary Wilkes, Supreme Chaplain; (Mrs. John) Ruth Habel, Supreme Historian; (Mrs. Gerald) Kelly Hill, Supreme Courier; (Mrs. David) Lecia Caudle, Supreme Director of Music; (Mrs. Roger) Lynn Ross, Supreme Color Bearer; (Mrs. Ron) Elaine Birely, Supreme Mistress of the Wardrobe; (Mrs. Ronald) Tamara "Tami" Stites, Supreme Outer Guard.



1. These Texas ladies of the 2023 Hostess Group made certain everyone knew where we were! 2. This Arch Angel is presented to every Supreme Worthy President upon the completion of her term. She will hold it in her possession and honor her predecessor. 3. Past Most Eminent Grand Master Kenneth B. Fisher and Lady Arlene, who is a Past President of Park Place Assembly, No. 205, TX, at the Wednesday evening banquet. 4. Ladies from Denver Assembly, No 1, CO, pause for a quick picture before Wednesday's School of Instruction. 5. (Mrs. Micheal) Hazel Sutton, Midvale Assembly, No 247, UT, at the Black and White banquet. 6. Members of Kingsport Assembly, No. 244, TN, are ready for the session to begin. 7. Members of Melrose Assembly are always ready and willing to contribute and make the Supreme session successful. 8. Supreme Worthy Chaplain, Mrs. Patrick Dertien, Grand Rapids Assembly, No. 68, MI, and Mrs. Jerry Marr, Worthy President of Dallas Assembly, No. 63, enjoy a break in the Texas sunshine.

GRAND MASTER'S CLUBS

July 2023

AL Roger K. Harrison
CA Wallace A. Kelley
CA Larry C. Taylor
FL Grover G. Childress Jr.
FL Austin C. Drukker Jr.
FL James M. Hafling
FL Benjamin P. Minichino
IN Irvan Boeglin
IN Joe F. Gust
IA Dave B. Beerman
IA William R. Clark Jr.
MA/RI Donald G. Hicks Jr.
MA/RI Russell W. Wolf
MI Stanley R. Steinke
NH Dennis A. Tuttle Sr.
NJ Charles E. Taylor Jr.
NY John P. Murray
NC Steven A. Wilson
OH James V. Jeffreys
OK Robert L. Bradway
OK Gerald K. Hornung
PA David E. Barlieb Jr.
PA Brenden R. Hunter
PA Kevin H. Lindsey
PA BaoPhung Q. Truong
TN Glen B. Lanier
VA Robert E. Lee
VA Raymond D. Steele
VA Jason C. Trenary
WA Arne C. Hansen
WA David L. Hisel
WA James E. Nero
WI Richard J. Rausch
WY Lewis E. Shepherd

August 2023

AL Bobby K. Jordan
AZ Clayton J. Howard
CA David M. Edwards
CA Carl H. Reusser III
CO George A. McCollum Jr.
CT Robert L. Thomas
DC Roger E. Cundiff
FL Mark S. Balester
GA James B. Flanagan Jr.
IL William B. McLane
IA William R. Clark Jr.
ME Paul D. Hamilton
MD Delmar R. Slinger
MA/RI Mark E. Brown
MA/RI Richard W. Van Doren
MN Brian K. Dimatteo
MN Douglas G. Kuchera
MT Jeffrey A. Bolstad
NJ Michael Cefaratti III
NJ Mark E. Megece

NC James B. Steele
NC Jonathan C. Strange
OH Martin R. Trent
OR Gavin B. Reid
PA Roger B. Early
PA Edward H. Hawk
PA James T. Hays Jr.
SC John R. Carlisle
SC George S. Mabry Jr.
SD Robert D. Rademacher
TN Stanley W. Elder
TN David D. Smith
TX Michael D. Phillipus
VA Andrew S. Hilton
VA Raymond D. Steele
WV Tyler M. Perry
WI Richard J. Rausch
WY Lewis E. Shepherd

September 2023

AL Sidney R. Cooley Sr.
CA Scott L. McNair
CA Roger S. Ross
CA Courtney M. Scandrett
DC Louis N. Abreu III
DC Roger E. Cundiff
DC Nicholas J. Sampogna
FL William A. Sorbie
GA Timothy P. Kelley
GA Harry R. Strazzella
IL John E. Brayton
KY Howard L. Hazelwood
KY Kevin A. Jones
KY Barton E. Wilber
MA/RI Michael D. Wolfe
MI Jeffrey M. Lewis
MI Michael Malone
MN Eric J. Thiem
MO Christopher L. Story
NV Alan B. Power
NM Randall C. Bond
NY Earl G. Wilkinson
NC Robert W. Erwin Jr.
NC Kelly Townsend
OH Vance J. Bogнар
OH Douglas K. Mele
PA David W. Park
PA Jerome J. Phillips
PA Howard L. Smith
PA Randolph J. Thompson Jr.
SC Robert D. Chastain
TN Ronald L. McVey Jr.
TX Phillip R. Sloniger
TX Franklin A. Zepp
VA Thomas G. Little
VA Raymond D. Steele
WI Richard J. Rausch
WY Lewis E. Shepherd

October 2023

AL Amos G. Welborn
AR Levert E. Stringfellow
CA Phillip K. Crumm Sr.
CA W. Bruce Pruitt
CA George Ross
CT John A. Amarilios
DC Nicholas Mastron
DC James W. Mitchell
FL Dennis A. Barbarisi
FL Robert H. Eisenhardt
FL Joseph A. Schoonover
GA James G. Mashburn
GA Walter D. Waddell Jr.
ID John W. Zeller Sr.
IL Richard R. Sinclair Jr.
IL Timothy J. Ward
IN James L. Mahan
IN Jeffrey J. Oesterle
IA William R. Clark Jr.
IA David M. Dryer
LA Charles R. Bertrand
MD William M. Beattie
MA/RI Robert A. Caron
MI James D. Rutherford
NY Stephen A. Licht
NC Raymond B. Casey Jr.
ND Gregory B. Taylor
OH John W. Huffman
OH James K. Lawson
OK Robert L. Bradway
PA Blake W. Daniels
PA Christopher W. Edwards
PA R. Lawrence Hicks
PA Larry D. Horath
SC Howard T. Burgess Sr.
TN Anthony L. Hunter
TX Charles E. Campbell
TX Guy R. Niles
TX Patrick D. Richardson
UT Lonnie M. McCulloch
VT Pierre N. Letourneau
VA Adam C. Duncan
VA William Searcy III
VA Raymond D. Steele
VA Roger W. Taylor
VA Alan S. Truax
WA Earl W. Fordham

November 2023

AL John F. Bradshaw
AL Emory J. Ferguson
AL Michael Kozlik
AL Richard M. Wright
CA Joseph L. Andre
CO Joseph D. Edwards
CO Darren Klinefelter

CT William R. Crawford II
CT Harry A. Elliott III
CT Duane L. Mason
FL Paul W. Friend
FL Paul J. Mast
FL Edward J. Mayfield Jr.
FL Benjamin P. Minichino
FL Frank R. Wilson III
GA Monte M. McDonald
GA John R. Moore
IL Marshall E. Ninmer
IN Charles R. Ellis
IA William R. Clark Jr.
IA John D. Determan
KY Clarence W. Browder
LA William J. Surls
MD Robert D. Goldsborough
MD Vernon H. Huebschman
MA/RI David A. Ogilvie
MI Clifford T. Wimmer Jr.
MN Michael C. Crosby
MN Scott A. Cummings
NJ John J. Russo
NJ Charles E. Taylor Jr.
NJ Richard W. Westergaard
NY Allen E. Boyce
NY James Ruggiero
NC Michael T. Aycock
NC Louis E. Lamphear
NC Dewey R. Preslar Jr.
OH Douglas O. Brenneman
OK John L. Logan
PA Theodore D. Hervol
SC Robert J.F. Elsner
SC Christopher M. McDonald
SC Hoyt B. Palmer
TN Stanley W. Elder
TN Larry W. Mick
TX James W. Bush
VA Joel T. Bundy
VA Craig A. Cox
VA Jimmy D. Davis
VA Joseph B. Hale
WI Jeffrey S. Clark
WI Richard J. Rausch



GRAND COMMANDER'S CLUBS

July 2023

AR Thomas E. Winningham
 CA Wallace A. Kelley
 CA Larry C. Taylor
 FL Austin C. Drukker Jr.
 FL James M. Hafling
 FL Benjamin P. Minichino
 IA George S. Eichhorn
 IN Joseph S. Pask
 FL Edward O. Kellner
 LA Coty J. Hardy
 LA Dorian P. Heroman
 MA/RI Jonathan J.M. Arata
 MI William B. Ten Eyck
 NJ Richard W. Westergaard
 NC Michael J. Pritchard
 NC Brian M. Turner
 OH Frank C. Sundquist
 SC Christopher M. McDonald
 VA Raymond P. Raehn
 VA Jason C. Trenary
 VA Brian P. Van de Meulebroecke
 WA Arne C. Hansen
 WA David L. Hisel
 WI Richard J. Rausch

August 2023

AL James B. Banks
 DC Roger E. Cundiff

IL William B. McLane
 KS Andrew G. Mosley
 LA James G. Russell
 MN Brian K. Dimatteo
 NY Gilbert A. Schweiger
 NC Steven A. Wilson
 OH Martin R. Trent
 PA James D. Amos
 VA James B. Bartley
 WI Richard J. Rausch
 WY Vint K.H. Bonner

September 2023

CA Roger S. Ross
 DC Roger E. Cundiff
 FL Philip R. Catchpole
 GA Timothy P. Kelley
 KY Bryan W. Smith
 MA/RI Michael D. Wolfe
 MI Christian Gilbert
 MN Eric J. Thiem
 NV Alan B. Power
 NM Randall C. Bond
 NY Earl G. Wilkinson
 ND Blayne T. Stearns
 OK Robert L. Bradway
 TN Timothy G. Love
 TN Dustin T. Shearin
 WI Richard J. Rausch

October 2023

AR Levert E. Stringfellow
 CA Robert E. Welch
 CO George A. McCollum Jr.
 CO Brady Pitt
 FL John H. Paugh
 FL Joseph A. Schoonover
 GA Harry R. Strazzella
 IL John E. Brayton
 LA Steven Gagliano
 MD Jeffrey S. Burt
 MA/RI John E. Bean
 NJ Mark E. Megee
 OH James K. Lawson
 OH Douglas K. McLe
 OK Thomas S. Ivan
 PA John E. Becker
 PA Howard L. Smith
 SC Michael E. Wiggers
 TX Charles E. Campbell
 TX Franklin A. Zcpp
 VT Pierre N. Letourneau
 VA Richard W. Ellis
 VA William Searcy III
 VA Robert G. Tallent
 VA Alan S. Truax

November 2023

AL Emory J. Ferguson

DC Robb C. Mitchell
 FL Benjamin P. Minichino
 GA James G. Mashburn
 ID John W. Zeller Sr.
 IA John D. Determan
 KY Clarence W. Browder
 LA Charles R. Bertrand
 MD John Morris III
 MI Mark Walters
 MI John D. Weaver
 NJ Richard W. Westergaard
 NY Richard Narog
 ND Gregory B. Taylor
 OH Arthur F. Koeniger
 OK John G. Bishop
 OK Robert L. Bradway
 PA Thomas B. Insley Sr.
 PA Donald E. Zipp III
 SC Jeffrey W. Greenway
 SC Christopher M. McDonald
 SC Hoyt B. Palmer
 SC Michael W. Smith
 SC Richard A. Wesner
 TN Larry W. Mick
 VA Joel T. Bundy
 VA Craig A. Cox
 VA Joseph B. Hale
 VA Tommy W. Steffey Sr.
 WI Richard J. Rausch
 WY Kraig A. Kobert



ANNUAL MEETING

by Ben Williams

The annual board meeting of the KTEF was held August 18-19 in Dallas, TX. After the invocation and pledge of allegiance, the meeting commenced with a presentation by Dr. John S. Penn, KTEF Endowed Director of Pediatric Vision Research Ophthalmology and Visual Science, who presented on leading research ongoing at Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Penn's research is primarily focused on combating diseases of the eye caused by diabetes. Diabetes remains a significant problem in the United States. Approximately 40 million Americans with diabetes are at risk for retinopathy, he said. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in working age Americans. Over 60% of patients with Type 2 diabetes will develop retinopathy. Nearly all patients with Type 1 diabetes will develop retinopathy over the course of twenty years.

"Understanding the onset and early progression of diabetic retinopathy that occurs before irreversible retinopathy damage is key," Dr. Penn said, "so we can intervene early."

Current pharmacological research includes the development of anti-inflammatory drugs, application of steroids, and experiments with nuclear factor of activated T-cells (NFAT) endocannabinoids. New drugs are in development. A treatment for early diabetes retinopathy is expected within five years.

"I have a lot to celebrate because of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation," Dr. Penn said. "I'd like to celebrate the good that you have done for the vision community and for the children suffering blindness around the world." Without the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the great strides in eradicating preventable blindness would not have been possible today.

"Every leader in our department has been funded at an early and vulnerable time of their career by the KTEF," Dr. Penn said. "The impact of your generosity is felt far and wide. I don't know if that can be repeated enough," he said.

Audit Report

The foundation's funds increased \$4,864,686. Three percent is allocated to endowments; that's a 1% increase over last year to keep up with inflation. Still less than 5% of spending goes to administration (4.8%) – of every dollar spent, \$0.86 goes directly to funding research. Nine percent goes to fundraising.

Foundation funds are currently around \$158 million.

NEW ENDOWED CHAIR AT MAYO CLINIC

by Ben Williams



Dr. Michael W. Stewart, M.D. is the new Endowed Chair of Ophthalmology at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida

Dr. Michael Brodsky, Mayo Clinic Endowed Chair for the Knights Templar Eye Foundation (KTEF) retired from the Mayo Clinic in November. Dr. Michael Stewart has been appointed to take his place.

Dr. Stewart grew up in Melville, Saskatchewan. He studied chemistry at Harvard and did his doctorate at McGill University Faculty of Medicine in Montreal. After completing his residency in ophthalmology at Emory University, he took fellowships at Touro Infirmary in New Orleans and the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Stewart joined a private surgery in

Jacksonville, Florida, in 1989. He moved to the Mayo Clinic in Florida in 1999. He became a professor of ophthalmology in 2004 and then chair of the Department of Ophthalmology in 2005. He holds the position presently.

"I have always had a research interest that covered the breadth of vitreoretinal diseases and surgery and I have published on both medical and surgical problems," Dr. Stewart wrote in a letter to the KTEF. "But I developed a strong interest in chorioretinal vascular diseases twenty years ago when I began to mathematically model various drug responses and vitreoretinal techniques." Chorioretinal vascular diseases are among the leading causes of blindness in industrialized countries and include diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration. Dr. Stewart is regarded as a clinical expert on drug pathways affecting the vitreous of the eye. In 2017 he authored Diabetic Retinopathy, Current Pharmacologic Treatment and Emerging Strategies, a twelve chapter monograph at the cutting edge of curative science.

"I would like to thank the Knights Templar [Eye] Foundation for its generosity," he said. "Your generous gift will allow me and my colleagues to further our understanding of ophthalmic diseases and to educate physicians around the world regarding treatment of blinding eye problems." **KT**

Year in Review

The voluntary campaign brought in \$1.5 million. Projects funded in 2023 included the American Academy of Ophthalmology's virtual reality simulation program; extended travel grants for students to attend the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO); and continuing partnership with the American Association for Pediatric

Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS) along with the Children's Eye Predictive Medicine at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles.

Twenty-five career starter grants were awarded, at \$90,000 each. Five competitive renewal grants were approved (also at \$90,000 each).

Funding Budgeted by the Board for 2024

For 2024 fiscal year, almost \$6.5 million in funding was approved.

AAPOS Children's Eye Foundation, Travel Grants Program:	\$75,000
Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Predictive Medicine (5th year):	\$192,750
Endowments (Professorships and Research):	\$2,000,000
AAPOS Pediatric Virtual Reality Simulation Program:	\$500,000
Starter and Renewal Grants:	\$3,000,000
ARVO Travel Grants:	\$100,000
ISER Travel Grants:	\$60,000
Eye Care Seniors Program:	\$250,000
AAPOS Children's Eye Foundation	\$250,000

56th Voluntary Campaign

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

Merry Christmas Sir Knights!

As we approach the Christmas season it holds such a special time for giving and receiving with our loved ones. Sir Knights, as we observe this Christmas season and the birth of our Lord and Savior, let us remember that Jesus is the real reason for the season. Make plans to celebrate the birthday of the Greatest Man who ever lived, our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. In John 1:14 we read “and the Word became flesh and dwell among us” let each of us always give thanks for the sacrifice He made for us.

Recently I had the opportunity along with several other Sir Knights in Florida representing the Knights Templar Eye Foundation to make a special visitation to the University of Miami School of Medicine, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. We were given a tour of the research facilities and met many of the doctors who were doing the research. Then we had the privilege of meeting with Dr. Anh H. Pham, MD, PHD recipient of the Career Starter Grant on behalf of the KTEF.

I learned a while back about a commitment that KTEF has made to the American Academy of Ophthalmology to sponsor their Pediatric Ophthalmology Virtual Reality (VR) Simulation Program. The KTEF has committed to donating \$5 Million over 10 years and the Academy plans to build both a virtual ecosystem and the first simulated ophthalmic patient encounters designed specifically for children’s eye care, including but not limited to retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) and strabismus surgery. Amazing things are being accomplished because of your continued support to the foundation.

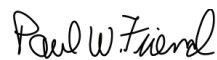
We are now in the middle of our campaign, and I hope each will consider making that end of the year contribution for tax write-offs. One way is to donate from your retirement plans such as IRA, SEP, Simple IRA, 401K, or other qualified retirement plans. When

an individual reaches the age of 72, they must take a required minimum distribution known as (RMD) each year. The IRS will allow individuals to donate from their RMD each year to a 501c-3 charity and that’s where the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. comes into the picture. Another way you can contribute is through Wills and Trusts. Recently the foundation received a gift of over \$5 million through a Will. There have been many Trusts that have been given to the Foundation over the years. Please consider the KTEF in your Will. Individual situations vary greatly, so please be sure to check with your attorney, financial advisor, and tax advisor for specific advice. So, you may determine which option may be the most advantageous for you and your family.

Lastly every Knight Templar should take pride in all the accomplishments that have been achieved. The late Sir Knight W. Clement Stone made the following statement, “I think there is something more important than believing: ACTION! The world is full of dreamers. There aren’t enough who will move ahead and begin to take concrete steps to actualize their vision”. Thank God for Sir Knight Walter Allen Delamater, Most Eminent Grand Master, First President, and Founder of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14 [KJV]).

In Christ Service,



Paul W. Friend, PGC, KTCH
Chairman 56th Annual Voluntary Campaign



