



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

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Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

Upcoming 2023 Events:

Oregon Grand York Rite.....April 6-8
Idaho Grand York Rite.....April 13-15
Washington Grand York RiteMay 11-13
Montana Grand York RiteJune 1-3

The Sword and the Trowel

By Barry E. Newell

Introduction

Freemasonry, a fraternity whose past is lost in the fogs of time. The earliest Lodge records are dated to July 31, 1599, in Edinburgh. There are other, older documents such as the Regius Poem (or Halliwell Manuscript) which dates Freemasonry back to 926 AD in York, England, and retells the

story of King Athelstan forming a General Assembly of the Craft.

There are also the Cooke Manuscript, Landsdowne Manuscript, Roberts Manuscript, Briscoe Manuscript, and Sloane Manuscript; each one gives its own theory as to the creation of Freemasonry and each of these manuscripts is worthy of its own paper. There are also theories involving the Roman Collegium of Artificers, the Comacine Masters, King Alfred, King Athelstan, and the Carolingian Dynasty.

This article centers on one of my favorite romanticized theories: that our venerable institution was born out of a group of exiled knights, martyred by a greedy tyrant, and betrayed by their pontiff. I'm talking, of course, about the Knights Templar.

Beginning

While the exact date is debated to this day, it is believed that sometime in 1119 (most likely toward the end), Hugh de Payens and a contingent of knights established the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon, also known as the Knights

Templar; according to William, Archbishop of Tyre, it was nine knights while Michael the Syrian, Patriarch of Antioch, spoke of thirty knights. The Templar first received recognition from Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, and Warmund, Patriarch of Jerusalem, which would occur in January of 1120 at the Council of Nablus. At the Council of Nablus in 1120, Warmund donated some land to the Knights Templar and the King gave the knights the Stables of Solomon as their residence as well as some villages.

The Templar order wouldn't receive papal recognition for a decade, first by Pope Honorius II, and then, in 1139, by Pope Innocent II who issued *Omne Datum Optimum*, Latin for "Every Good Gift." This papal bull allowed the Templars to keep their spoils of war, placing donations directly under papal protection, and exempting them from paying tithes to the Roman Catholic Church. This proclamation also added a priest class to the hierarchy answerable only to the Grand Master.

The Order was governed by what is known as "The Rule" which was originally written by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, nephew of Andre de Montbard, who was one of the founding knights and future Grand Masters. The Rule covered all aspects of the life of the Knights Templar. The Rule included topics such as the knight renouncing his former life and property, dress, eating, prayers, the hierarchy of the order, penalties, conventional life, penitence, and the manner of his reception into the order.

The Order became very popular among the European nobility and would exponentially grow in numbers and wealth with a presence across Europe and the Levant. The Templars would become known

for their protection of pilgrims to the Holy Land while also being known for their impact during military operations. They would be mythologized for their financial acumen as well as their downfall in the 14th century culminating in the martyrdom of Jacques DeMolay. Even today there are many theories and myths about the order before and after its suppression by the French king, Philip. The Templars became associated with the rise of Freemasonry, the Holy Grail, alternative theories on Christ, and occultism.

In the following parts, I will discuss the downfall of the medieval Templars, the martyrdom of DeMolay, Templar suppression outside of France, and the continuation myths surround the Templars.

