



Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem - Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani (OSMTH)

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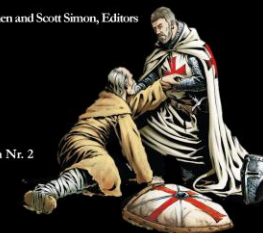
THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR FROM HISTORY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MISSION



Nine Hundred Years Since the Foundation of the
Poor Knights of Christ in the Temple of Jerusalem

Pasi Pöllänen and Scott Simon, Editors

OSMTH Publication Nr. 2



Non Nobis, Domine, Non Nobis,
Sed Nomini Tuo Da Gloriam
~
Not Unto Us, O Lord, Not Unto Us,
But To Thy Name Be Given Glory



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OSMTH International Grand Commander V**

Much has been written and said concerning the Order of the Temple. As much fantasy and elucubrations have also been developed around the so-called "secret of the Templars" or alike.

Far from all these, and in line with the spirit of the twelfth century Templars, the Modern Order has made a major restructuring and evolution in the late 1990's, as will appear in this book.

In the late 1990's, the Grand Priors (elected "presidents" of the Order in different nations) representing the Grand Priories ("nations") of Austria, England, Finland, France, Italy, Germany, United States and the "NATO" Grand Priory, meeting in Salzburg, Austria, expressed their highest concerns on how the Order was organized, and submitted to the Regent, Mr Fontes, some important changes to include the way of accounting, and their desire to see actual charities and diplomatic actions taken in line with the mission of the Order. The Grand Priors decided to focus on the defense of Christians at risk in the Middle East and throughout the world, diplomacy and Human Rights advocacy.

This was reconfirmed later and finalized during successive meetings held in Paris, France, in March 1996, in Salzburg, Austria, in 1997, resulting in a statement of separation from Mr Fontes' organization and the election of the first Grand Master of the Order in Turku, Finland, in 1998, Major General Sir Roy Redgrave (United Kingdom). Since then, under the successive elected Grand Masters (GM) and Grand Commanders (GC).

My parish priest has a favorite way of looking at, well, everything. It doesn't matter whether it is a civic group, a church committee, a church, a person, the turn of the seasons, or Jesus Christ Himself. He constantly reminds the parish that, "To everything there is a life cycle: Birth, death, resurrection."

There have been any number of histories detailing the creation, rise, and fall of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (Knights Templar). We all know well the story of how Bernard of Clairvaux developed the Order, blending military prowess with monastery virtues to create the "Warrior-Monk"; how in 1128 he convinced the Council of Troyes to provide them with a Rule to make them the ideal of Christian nobility who reported to no master but the Pope. We know well the story of how the Order was deployed to the Holy Land to fight in the Crusades, and to guard the pilgrim road for those making pilgrimages to the Holy Land; how in the meantime, the Templars "invented" something like the banking system we still use today. We have all heard the stories of the "great wealth" of the Templars, and how King Philip IV, "The Fair" of France and Pope Clement V may have conspired to dissolve the Order and relieve them of their wealth, beginning with a surprise attack on Friday, 13 October 1307. We know that the Templars were questioned, tortured, charged, and many executed in the weeks and years following the attack, and that the Council of Vienne on 22 March 1312 abolished the Order by papal decree.

We know all that. But what about the "rebirth" part of the life-cycle? But what happened AFTER that, owing to a paucity of documentary evidence, has remained largely unknown and, so we thought, unknowable. Absent this, evidence the story of the Knights Templar has become the stuff of mythology; the stuff of legend, really. A virtual industry of perpetuating the legend of the Knights Templar has sprung up. Until now.



Figure 1 Chevalier Scott Simon

The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH), through its History and Archive Committee set about to fill in the gaps, to produce a history that would tell (in the words of the late Paul Harvey) the "rest of the story." Diligently combing through ancient and modern documents

the Committee, ably led by Chev. Scott M. Simon, GOTJ, Archivist-General of OSMTH and Chairman of the History and Archives Committee and Chev. Pasi Pöllänen, KCTJ, Deputy Chairman of the History & Archives Committee and Head of the History Division, OSMTH together have produced a brilliant document that has placed the Order under the microscope, subjecting it to the rigors of scientific inquiry; hypothesizing, examining, arguing the findings to arrive at salient conclusions.



Figure 2 Chevalier Pasi Pöllänen

This work is a study in historic inquiry where the history is not written by the winners, as so often the case; rather, it is reasoned, logical, and factual in its examination of the facts that came before it, to arrive at the most reasoned of conclusions. Many of the gaps have been filled in; though I am sure not all. I am certain that the History and Archive Committee will remain vigilant in their search for more, currently missing documents that complete the story of the Order through the Ages. Meanwhile, this history from 1312 to the present day tells the story of a spirit of chivalry that would not die; how it changed, reinvented itself, and rose again and again to bring into the world once more the Knights and Dames who carry on in the spirit of chivalry to bring help, aid, and light to Christians in trouble at home and particularly in the Holy Land. It is our mission; it is our cause; it is our raison d'etre.

I congratulate the Committee, the contributors, and the editors on a job well done. I commend this book to your reading, that you may know and perhaps finally answer, "What happened after that?"



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