

The Larmenius Charter and the legitimacy of Modern-Day Knights Templar

By Chev. Vincent G. Zubras, Jr., KGCTS, KGCTJ

Notwithstanding what “mainline historians” say (they are only quoting what the old Roman Church of the Crusade period wants everyone to believe), the Knight Templar Order did ***NOT*** end with the 7-year-long persecution by the Church ending with the burning at the stake of Jacques DeMolay. This was simply what we of the Modern Era call the end of the "First Phase" of the Order... that being the Crusade-period Order, from its inception in 1118 (some believe actually as early as 1114) to the death of DeMolay in 1314.

Approaching his death (DeMolay knew that, once he recanted his confession to the Inquisition, he was doomed), DeMolay *verbally* “transmitted” the Grand Mastership of the Order (through remaining underground Brethren of the Order in Paris) to his “No. Two Man,” that being the Palestinian-born Christian and Knight Templar Seneschal, Johannes Marcus (French: Jean-Marc) Larmenius. Larmenius at the time was fairly aged himself, and was holding the last of the remaining Templar Order together on Cyprus.

Larmenius held the Grand Mastership of the Order from the death of DeMolay in 1314 until 1324, when, in February of that year, Larmenius caused a document to be written, now historically referred to as “**The Charter of Larmenius,**” but which is actually entitled the “**Charter of Transmission.**”

In this document, Larmenius states that he has grown too old to continue the rigors of the Office of Grand Master of the Order, and further “transmits” his Grand Mastership, with the approval of the General Council of the Order, to the ranking Templar next in line, Franciscus Theobaldus. Theobaldus at that time was the Prior of the Order at the Priory of Alexandria in Egypt. Theobaldus accepted the assignment, and signed the document as such. Since then, up until 1804, each Grand Master or controlling General Council Secretariat Official has signed the document.

The Charter was written in a well-known Knight Templar “Codice” (coded writing) of the time, an alphabet based on positioning of portions of the Templar (Maltese quad-triangled) Cross. When decoded and translated, The Charter has proven to be 13-14th Century Latin... still, some few “naysayer” historians claim the document is a hoax.

This document is also referred to as the “Charta Transmissionis”... the “Charter of Transmission,” as its sole function was to “transmit” the Grand Mastership of the Order under the then-dire circumstances, to safely maintain the integrity of the continuation of the Order itself, and to legitimize the historical lineal descendency of the Knight Templar Order into the future.

It is the written verification giving credence to the belief that the greater portion of the Order had “gone into hiding” in France and around the rest of the world, after being “secularized” by the Papal Bull *Vox in Excelso* of 1312, issued by Clement V, the puppet Pope of the evil French King, Phillippe IV (“Phillip the Fair”).

The Order came into semi-public view in Versailles, France in 1705, when a Convent General of the Order elected the Philippe, Duke of Orleans, later Regent of France, to the Grand Mastership of the Order. However, there is no *known* reference to the existence of the Larmenius Charter from those proceedings.... But, there normally would be no public mention of the document any way.

The document's existence was later publicly revealed in 1803-04 by the then-Grand Master, Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat, a French Doctor close to the Court Of Napoleon, well-after the French Revolution. Palaprat revealed the history of the document also.

Since then, the Order flourished predominantly in France. In the mid-1800's, the Grand Mastership went to Britain, then to Belgium, where there was not an elected Grand Master, but the Office of such was held "in Regency" by the Council General and Grand Secretariat of the Order, at that time in office in Brussels.

It is historical fact that the German Army under Adolf Hitler invaded Belgium in World War II. Hitler was well-known to be a practitioner of the Occult ("Black") Arts. One of the first things he did after the invasion was to send the Gestapo (Secret Police) to seek out the Offices of the General Secretariat of the Order of the Temple in Brussels. This was in 1942. Hitler believed he might find, through the records of the Order, the secret location where, supposedly, the Templars had hidden the Ark. It was believed by various historians that the Templars had excavated under the Temple of Solomon while quartered there during the Crusades, found the Ark and other Treasures, and secreted them out of Palestine and back to Europe.

An interesting point: If you study further, you'll find that the story-line behind the modern movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark" was mostly true history... Hitler believed the Ark had magical powers as claimed historically in the Bible that could help him rule the world... or at least, a good part of it.

It is a bit of our Order's historical lore that, on the night before the Gestapo showed up, then-General Secretary and Regent and Guardian of the Order, Emile Clement Vandenburg, gathered up all the records of the Order, and secreted them out of Belgium, across France, across the Pyrenees Mountains, across Galicia (Northwestern Spain) and into then-wartime-neutral Portugal. He presented the records he had and conferred the Regency of the Order to the then-Marshall (equivalent to a Grand Prior) of Portugal, a Portuguese nobleman, **Don Antonio Campello Pinto Pereira de Sousa Fontes**.

Prince Regent Dom Antonio Fontes kept the Regency and Guardianship of the Order throughout World War Two (he was never elected the Grand Master), and continued to hold such after the war was over.

Some "complaining historical naysayers" that have caused trouble within our Order say that, supposedly, Vandenburg demanded the return of the records and the Regency to Belgium after the War. Again supposedly, Dom Antonio Fontes refused, stating that Vandenburg had *confirmed* to him upon its transfer that the transmission of the Regency and Guardianship was complete, and that the transfer was **permanent**.

As the story goes, the old Belgian group was going to try to file a civil court case in Portugal, or try "by whatever means," to get Dom Antonio Fontes to return the records and give up the Regency and Guardianship. However, right at that point, Vandenburg was killed in a car accident in Belgium, and no one ever pushed the issue on Fontes after that.

Fontes continued to build the Order around the world, until his death in February, 1960. Then, something else unusual happened at this point: Don Antonio *willed* the Regency and Guardianship of the Order to his son, then-30-year-old Don Fernando

Campello Pinto Pereira de Sousa Fontes. Apparently this was considered a “willable holding” under Portuguese Law, hence the action.

Don Fernando assumed the Regency and Guardianship of the Order at that point (February, 1960), and took over leadership of the Order. This is another point our “historical naysayers” have complained about: Not only would Dom Antonio not return the records of the Grand Secretariat to Belgium, but now, after his death, supposedly the Convent General (the general membership at large) of the Order was supposed to convene, and elect a new Regent, or take the further step to elect a Grand Master (according to its Statutes and just as in the old Templar Rule of the ancient Order).

The naysayers (as I call them) were wrong, however. Don Fernando's Regency and Guardianship of the Order was confirmed by a subsequent Convent General.

Then, yet another element: Don Fernando introduced an amendment to the Statutes that set up for the following factor: If a Grand Master was not elected by the Convent General within (I believe) 6 months after the close of the *previous* Convent General, the Regent of the Order would automatically assume the Office of Grand Master, and the Regent would hold, effectively, the combined Offices of Prince Regent and Grand Master.

The six months (or whatever time frame) passed, and the Office was passed to Dom Fernando. It is my understanding that the next Convent General held confirmed Don Fernando in this position of combined Offices... and today, he is the Grand Master and Prince Regent of the Order.

Some of the dissidents of the Order in Spain split off from the legitimate Order under Don Fernando back sometime in the 1970's or early 1980's under the leadership of (another!) Fernando... a Spaniard named Fernando Toro y Garland, and set up their own Order, stealing the same title of the International Order, the coat of arms, the Cross, etc., etc., and "sub-titled" their Order the “International Federated Alliance.” This group of dissidents is generally referred to as the “IFA group.”

Another schismatic coup by dissidents in the United States, Britain, Germany, and a parts of a few other European countries happened back in 1995, when a group of “military egotists” broke away and attempted to steal the Order. This was a coordinated effort by some senior former military members and a couple of “civilians” who were also members of the Order.. a Brit, a German, a Scot, and most of the Grand Priory of the USA.

The USA group separated themselves further through a trumped-up Federal Court Civil Lawsuit claiming "trademarks violations" against another group formed directly by Grand Master Fontes in the USA.

This turned out to be the largest split in the Order to date. Since then, these schismatic groups have since gone off and formed their own organizations, again stealing the Order's title, Cross, etc., and claiming their own supposedly-elected “Grand Masterships.”

The important part of this whole story is that, today, Grand Master Dom Fernando Fontes is still internationally recognized as the **true, historical, lineal** Grand Master, and carries with him the legitimate lineage of the Larmenius Charter.

He directs the Order today from the Offices of the Grand Magistery located in Porto, those of us remaining "Portuguese Discipline Loyalists" in the various Countries around the world Portugal, and when he passes away, the remaining true and legitimate Convent

General will come together and elect a new Grand Master. He is now 70 years old, still in good health... and is in the process of rebuilding the Order after the sad harm the schismatics have caused.

The "Loyalists" are the ones who carry on the legitimate historical lineal descendency of the Knight Templar Order through the history of the Larmenius Charter. The schismatic groups, by their dissident actions, have cut themselves off from this lineal descendency, thereby rendering themselves illegitimate.

We of OPCCTS in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Carribbean are a small group currently, and growing. Due to the constraints of the Court Order resulting from the trademarks lawsuit, we have been forced to form a separate organization from the International Order in Portugal... however, we are "in Fraternal Relations" with the Order in Portugal, we recognize the *legitimacy* of Dom Fernando Fontes as Grand Master, (although by virtue of the Order's structure and the limitations of a Court Order, he can not hold control or authority over us)... yet, by desire and design, we are still part of the International "Loyalist" family.

We (in North America) have taken upon ourselves the old, original name of the ancient Order of Knights Templar as originally formed, and are structured much like the original Order in our Rites and Practices. We are a legitimate Ecclesiastical Chivalric Order of Knighthood, complete with a Fons Honorum, (a spiritual "Fount of Honors") according to Chivalric Law.

I hope this all helps with your research and discovery, and I invite you to keep in contact with us... and let us get to know you, and you to know us... and, if it is a good and mutual friendship, to determine if you would like to become a part of our Order.

Our best wishes to you in your research efforts....

... +Vincent Zubras, Jr.

Great Preceptor, OPCCTS- Knights Templar of North America