TEMPLAR ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY.

The theory that Freemasonry originated in the Holy Land during the Crusades, and was
instituted by the Knights Templar, was advanced by the Chevalier Ramsay, for the
purpose, it is supposed, of giving an aristocratic character to the association. It was
subsequently adopted by the College of Clermont, and was accepted by the Baron von
Hund as the basis upon which he erected his Rite of Strict Observance. The legend of the
Clermont College is thus detailed by M. Berage in his work entitled Les Plus Secrets
Mysteres des Hauts Grades, Most Secret Mysteries of the High Degrees (iii, page 194).

The Order of Freemasonry was instituted by Godfrey de Bouillon, in Palestine in 1330,
after the defeat of the Christian armies, and was communicated only to a few of the
French Freemasons, some time afterwards, as a reward for the services which they had
rendered to the English and Scottish Knights. From these latter true Freemasonry is
derived. Their Mother Lodge is situated on the mountain of Heredom where the first
Lodge in Europe was held, which still exists in all its splendor. The Council General is
always held there, and it is the seat of the Sovereign Grand Master for the time being.
This mountain is situated between the west and the north of Scotland, sixty miles from
Edinburgh.

There are other secrets in Freemasonry which were never known among the French, and
which have no relation to the Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Degrees which were
constructed for the general class of Freemasons. The high Degrees, which developed the
true design of Freemasonry and its true secrets, have never been known to them. The
Saracen having obtained possession of the holy places in Palestine, where all the
mysteries of the Order were practised, made use of them for most profane purposes.
The Christians then leagued together to conquer this beautiful country, and to drive all
these barbarians from the land. They succeeded in obtaining a footing on these shores
under the protection of numerous armies of Crusaders which had been sent out there by
the Christian princes. The losses which they subsequently experienced put an end to the
Christian power, and the crusaders who remained were subjected to the persecutions of
the Saracens, who massacred all who publicly proclaimed the Christian faiths. This
induced Godfrey de Bouillon, towards the end of the third century, to conceal the
mysteries of religion under the veil of figures, emblems and allegories.

Hence the Christians selected the temple of Solomon because it has so close a relation to
the Christian Church of which its holiness and its magnificence make it the true symbol.
So the Christians concealed the mystery of the building up of the Church under that of the
construction of the Temple, and gave themselves the title of Masons Architects or
Builders, because they were occupied in building the faith. They assembled under the
pretext of making plans of architecture to practise the rites of their religion, with all the
emblems and allegories that Freemasonry could furnish, and thus protect themselves from
the cruelty of the Saracens.

As the mysteries of Freemasonry were in their principles, and still are only those of the
Christian religion they were extremely scrupulous to confide this important secret only to
those whose discretion had been tried and who had been found worthy. For this purpose
they fabricated Degrees as a test of those to whom they wished to confide it, and they
gave them at first only the symbolic secret of Hiram, on which all the mystery of blue
Masonry is founded, and which is, in fact, the only secret of that Order which has no
relation to true Freemasonry.
They explained nothing else to them as they were afraid of being betrayed, and they
conferred these Degrees as a proper means of recognizing each other, surrounded as they
were by barbarians. To succeed more effectually in this they made use of different Signs
and words for each Degree so as not only to distinguish themselves from the profane
Saracens, but to designate the different Degrees. These they fixed at the number of seven,
in imitation of the Grand Architect, who built the Universe in six days and rested on the
seventh, and also because Solomon was seven years in constructing the Temple, which
they had selected as the figurative basis of Freemasonry. Under the name of Hiram they
gave a false application to the Masters, and developed the true secret of Freemasonry
only to the higher Degrees.

Such is the theory of the Templar origin of Freemasonry, which, mythical as it is, and
wholly unsupported by the authority of history, has exercised a vast influence in the
fabrication of advanced Degrees and the invention of Continental Rites. Indeed, of all the
systems propounded during the eighteenth century, so fertile in the construction of
extravagant systems, none has played so important a part as this in the history of
Freemasonry. Although the theory is no longer maintained, its effects are everywhere
seen and felt.

TEMPLARS OF ENGLAND.
An important change in the organization of Templarism in England Ireland took place in
1873. By it a union took place of the Grand Conclave of Masonic Knights Templar of
England and the Grand Conclave of High Knights Templar of Ireland into one body,
under the title of the "Convent General of the United Religious and Military Orders of the
Temple and of Saint John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta." The following is a
summary of the Statutes by which the new Order is governed, as given by Eminent Sir
Knight W. J. B. McLeod Moore, Grand Prior, in his circular to the Preceptors of Canada:

1. The existing Grand Masters in the Empire are to be termed Great Priors, and Grand
Conclaves or Encampments, Great Priories, under and subordinate to one Grand Master,
as in the early days of the Order, and one Supreme Governing Body, the Convent
General.

2. The term Great is adopted instead of Grand, the latter being a French word; and grand
in English is not grand in French Great is the proper translation of Magnus and Magnus
Supremus.

3. The Great Priories of each nationality—England, Scotland, and Ireland, with their
Dependencies in the Colonies—retain their internal government and legislation, and
appoint their Provincial Priors, doing nothing consistent with the Supreme Statutes of the
Convent General.

4. The title Masonic is not continued; the Order being purely Christian, none but
Christians can be admitted consequently it cannot be considered Strictly as a Masonic
body: Freemasonry, while inculcating the highest reverence for the Supreme Being, and
the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, does not teach a belief in one particular creed, or unbelief in any. The connection with Freemasonry is, however, strengthened still more, as a candidate must now be two years a Master Mason, in addition to his qualification as a Royal Arch Mason.

5. The titles Eminent Commander and Encampment have been discontinued and the original name Preceptor and Preceptory substituted, as also the titles Constable and Marshal for First and Second Captains. Encampment is a modern term, adopted probably when, as our traditions inform us, "at the suppression of the ancient Military Order of the Temple, some of their number sought refuge and held Conclaves in the Masonic Society, being independent small bodies, without any governing head." Prior is the correct and original title for the head of a langue or nationality and Preceptor for the subordinate bodies. The Preceptories were the ancient Houses of the Templar Order; Commander and Commanderies was the title used by the Order of Saint John, commonly known as Knights of Malta.

6. The title by which the Order is now known is that of The United Religious and Military Orders of the Temple and of Saint John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta." The Order of the Temple originally had no connection with that of Malta or Order of Saint John, but the combined title appears to have been adopted in commemoration of the union which took place in Scotland with "The Temple and Hospital of Saint John," when their lands were in common, at the time of the Reformation. But our Order of "Saint Solon of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta," has no connection with the present Knights of Malta in the Papal States, or of the Protestant branches of the Order, the lineal successors of the ancient Knights of Saint John, the sixth or English langue of which is still in existence, and presided over, in London, by His Grace the Duke of Manchester. The Order, when it occupied the Island of Malta as a sovereign body, was totally unconnected with Freemasonry.

7. Honorary past rank is abolished substituting the chivalrie dignities of Grand Crosses and Commanders, limited in numbers and confined to Preceptors. These honors to be conferred by His Royal Highness the Grand Master, the Fountain of Grace and Dignity; and it is contemplated to create an Order of Merits to be conferred in like manner, as a reward to Knights who have served the Order.

8. A. Preceptor holds a Degree as well as rank, and will always retain his rank and privileges as long as he belongs to a Preceptory.

9. The abolition of honorary past rank is not retrospective, as their rank and privileges are reserved to all those who now enjoy them.

10. The number of officers entitled to precedence has been reduced to seven; but others may be appointed at discretion, who do not, however, enjoy any precedence.

11. Equerries, or Serving Brethren, are not to receive the accolade, or use any but a brown habit, and shall not wear any insignia or jewel: they are to be addressed as Frater, not Sir.
Knight. In the early days of the Order they were not entitled to the accolade, and, with the esquires and men-at-arms, wore a dark habit, to distinguish them from the knights, who wore white, to signify that they were bound by their vows to cast away the works of darkness and lead a new life.

12 The Apron is altogether discontinued, and a few and a few immaterial alterations in the insignia will be duly regulated and promulgated: they do not, however, affect the present, but only apply to future members of the Order. The apron was of recent introduction, to accord with Masonic usage: but reflection will at once show that, as an emblem of care and toil, it is entirely inappropriate to a Military Order, whose badge is the sword. A proposition to confine the wearing of the star to the Preceptors was negatived; the star and ribbon being in fact as much a part of the ritual as of the insignia of the Order.

13. From the number of instances of persons totally unfit having obtained admission into the Order, the qualification of candidates has been increased. A declaration is now required, to be signed by every candidate that he is of the full age of twenty-one years, and in addition to being a Royal Arch Masons that he is a Master Mason of two years’ standings professing the doctrines of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and willing to submit to the Statutes and Ordinances, present and future, of the Order.

TEMPLARS OF SCOTLAND.

The Statutes of the Grand Priory of the Temple of Scotland prescribe for the Order of Knights Templar in that kingdom an organization very different from that which prevails in other countries.

'The Religious and Military Order of the Temple" in Scotland consists of two classes:
1. Novice and Esquire.
2. Knight Templar.

The Knights are again divided into four classes:
1. Knights created by Priories.
2. Knights elected from the companions on memorial to the Grand Master and Council, supported by the recommendation of the Priories to which they belong.
4. Knights Grand Crosses, to be nominated by the Grand Master.

The supreme legislative authority of the Order is the Chapter General, which consists of the Grand Officers, the Knights Grand Crosses, and the Knights Commanders. One Chapter is held annually, at which the Grand Master, if present, acts as President. The anniversary of the death of James de Molay, March 11, is Selected as the time of this meeting, at which the Grand Officers are elected. During all intervals of the meetings of the Chapter General, the affairs of the Order, with the exception of altering any Statutes, is entrusted to the Grand Master's Council, which consists of the Grand Officers, the Grand Priors of Foreign Langues (or Districts), and the Knights Grand Crosses.

The Grand Officers, with the exception of the Past Grand Masters, who remain so for life,
the Grand Master, who is elected triennially and the Grand Aides-de-Camp, who are appointed by him and removed at his pleasure, are elected annually. They are as follows:

- Grand Master
- Past Grand Masters,
- Grand Seneschal
- Preceptor and Grand Prior of Scotland,
- Grand Constable and Mareschal
- Grand Admiral
- Grand Almoner or Hospitaler,
- Grand Chancellor
- Grand Treasurer,
- Grand Registrar,
- Primate or Grand Prelate
- Grand Provost or Governor-General,
- Grand Standard Bearer or Beaucennifer
- Grand Bearer of the Vexillum Belli, War Flag.
- Grand Camberlain,
- Grand Steward.
- Two Grand Aides-de-Camp.

A Grand Priory may be instituted by the Chapter General in any nation, colony, or langue, to be placed under the authority of a Grand Prior, who is elected for life, unless superseded by the Chapter General. A Priory, which is equivalent to an American Commandery, consists of the following officers:

- Prior
- Subprior,
- Mareschal or Master of Ceremonies,
- Hospitaler or Almoner,
- Chancellor,
- Treasurer,
- Secretary,
- Chaplain panel Instructor,
- Beaucennifer, or bearer of the Beauseant
- Bearer of the Red Cross Banner, or Vexillum Belli,
- Chamberlain,
- Two Aides-de-Camp.

The Chapter General or Grand Priory may unite two or more Priories into a Commandery, to be governed by a Provincial Commander, who is elected by the Chapter General.