

Ordre Souverain et Militaire du Temple de Jérusalem.  
Sovereign and Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem.



## ORIGINS OF MASONIC TEMPLARISM IN THE FRENCH ORDRE DU TEMPLE

### PROLOGUE

For the past century and a half, Masonic Templarism has been nearly synonymous with the name *Knights Templar*. If one has a notion of a modern Templar, it is probable that it is a Masonic one.

The official stance of the Masonic Templars today is that there is no historical connection between the medieval Order and modern Freemasonry,<sup>1</sup> but was created by "*Thomas Dunckerley, [who] wanted to promote a concept of chivalry and Christianity within a masonic framework.*"<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there is a strong undercurrent of rumor, legend, and pseudo-history that has existed for centuries that asserts a real, historical connection to the original Order.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the historical origins of Masonic Templarism based on verifiable datapoints, limited speculation, and from a perspective uncolored by Masonic favor.

The modern historians of Freemasonry have largely already done this, however, the appearance of the Templar degrees are still considered imprecise, although universally agreed that they were inspired by the famed oration of Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay in 1737.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as Chevalier Ramsay's oration cited the Crusaders and the

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1 <https://www.freemasonrytoday.com/more-news/the-masonic-family-knights-templar> "*There is no historical connection between the medieval Christian military order and the masonic body known as the... Knights Templar.*"

2 Ibid.

3 <https://scottishrite.org/blog/about/media-publications/journal/article/freemasonry-qa-what-was-ramsays-oration/>  
"*Which came first: Ramsay's Oration or the theory of Templar descent? In the absence of the slightest hint of any*

Order of St. John as the origin of Freemasonry, the idea of the chivalric high degrees was birthed into Freemasonry and quickly proliferated. It is for this reason, Ramsay becomes the start of this investigation.

Ramsay was a Scottish exile of the Jacobite Stuart Cause<sup>4</sup> in France, and became a Freemason between 1725 and 1730.<sup>5</sup> He was Grand Orator of a lodge in Paris when he delivered his oration in 1737.<sup>6</sup> From 1741, a frenzy of high chivalric masonic degrees were created, some said to have been developed by Ramsay himself.<sup>7</sup>

*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* summarizes the shift his oration inspired: "Rejecting all references to the Traveling Architects from Como, to the Stone Masons of Germany, and the Operative Freemasons of England, he had sought a noble and chivalric origin for Freemasonry, which with him was not a confraternity founded on a system of architecture, but solely on the military prowess and religious enthusiasm of knighthood."

Yet the question remains, where did these rites and degrees originate from?

## BEFORE THE ORATION

Most investigations of Masonic Templary do not probe the life of Ramsay prior to 1730, when he began his involvement with Freemasonry. Fewer still have made any serious inquiry into pre-existing Templar movements.

Prior to the oration of 1737, the only known and historically verifiable Templar claim is the French *Ordre du Temple* of Larmenius descent, whose existence has been certified to as early as 1681.<sup>8</sup>

The Jacobite Stuart exiles from Scotland arrived in the French Court starting in 1688 into a pre-existing Templar revival. The *Ordre du Temple* was boastful about the memberships of learned and godly men, such as Bishop Jean Baptiste Massillon and Archbishop Francois Fenelon, in their registers.<sup>9</sup> Fenelon was initiated into the Order of the Temple on Oct. 18, 1695, and Massillon, Feb. 12, 1703, according to rolls of the

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*knightly connection with Freemasonry before 1737, the nod must go to Ramsay's Oration. "*

4 The Stuart Cause (1688-1788) was the attempt to reclaim the throne of England by the Scottish House of Stuart, and most notably, by Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, "Bonnie Prince Charlie."

5 <https://scottishrite.org/blog/about/media-publications/journal/article/freemasonry-qa-what-was-ramseys-oration/>

6 Ibid.

7 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Volume 20, pg. 18.

8 *The Freemasons Magazine And Masonic Mirror*, Jan-Jun. 1870, pg. 68

9 *Sketch of the History of the Knights Templars*, James Burnes, pg. 52

Order.<sup>10</sup>

Fenelon became the spiritual father and mentor of Ramsay, and they lived together from 1710-1713.<sup>11</sup> Fenelon was instrumental in Ramsay's conversion to Catholicism. After Fenelon's death in 1715, Ramsay wrote his biography. The closeness of their relationship cannot be overstated. Andrew Mansfield, author of *Fenelon's Cuckoo*, goes as far as saying that his admiration developed into outright *emulation*.<sup>12</sup>

For this reason, one should not be surprised that in the period between 1710 and 1713, Fenelon himself initiated Ramsay into the French *Ordre du Temple*.<sup>13</sup>

At this point it should be acknowledged that Freemasonry existed only as a disorganized body of operative, practicing stone masons.

Famed Freemason and Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Albert Pike has said, "*Prior to 1700, [Masonic] assemblies consisted of beer-drinking, pipe-smoking, and working men without ritual.*"<sup>14</sup> As such, it is difficult to believe that claims of Masonic Templar continuance is represented in such a fraternity that existed without ritual, and whose mysticism was only in the seed.

The Grand Lodge of England, founded in 1717, is considered the official beginning of Speculative Freemasonry, ie, the formal introduction of non-working masons.<sup>15</sup> When Ramsay became a Freemason in 1730, it was only beginning to introduce the Third Degree, such was the primitive state of the fraternity at the time.<sup>16</sup> High Degrees of any kind, including the Templar degrees, did not appear in Freemasonry until the 1740s.

Therefore, the Templary which Ramsay was initiated into in 1710-1713 was completely non-masonic, as high degrees did not yet exist. Masonic Historian John Yarker confirmed this when he evaluated the *Ordre du Temple* initiation ritual in effect from 1705, saying, "*He is drawn from the coffin and takes the vow, which he signs with his own blood, and a lock of hair, as a tonsure, is cut off and secured with the vow. The chaplains anoint him with chrism, incense him, sprinkle holy water upon him and upon the habits with which he is invested. A chapter is read from the Rule of St. Bernard,*

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10 Fenelon and Massillon were members of the Order during the Mastership of the Duke of Duras according to the Charter, and the Order under the name of "*Le Petit Resurrection des Templiers.*"

11 *Fenelon's Cuckoo*, Andrew Mansfield, pg. 79

12 Ibid. pg. 79

13 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 20*, pg. 18

14 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 17*, pg. 86

15 The history of operative masonry extends much further back, and the first admittance of non-operative masons, though rare, was in 1634.

16 <https://scottishrite.org/blog/about/media-publications/journal/article/freemasonry-qa-what-was-ramseys-oration>  
"*Ramsay joined the Horn Lodge in Westminster in 1730, about the same time the Third Degree was being introduced.*"

*and the ceremony concludes with the 132nd Psalm. There is not the slightest trace of Masonry or its symbolism in any part of the ceremony.*"<sup>17</sup>

The Ritual and Statutes of the *Ordre du Temple* were reformed in 1705 by Philippe II, Duke of Orleans, future Regent of France, who was then Grandmaster of the Templars, and a member the Order of St. Lazarus. Chevalier Ramsay was a member of both Orders, and developed a fond friendship from these dual relations.<sup>18</sup>

With his dear mentor Archbishop Fenelon dead in 1715, and his friend and Grandmaster Philippe II, Duke of Orleans dead in 1723, Ramsay likely felt unmoored. When he joined the Freemasons as early as 1725, it seems he found a renewed purpose and a new field for the seed of Templarism.

## INTRODUCTION INTO FREEMASONRY

Early Masonic Templary has always been characterized by an admitted and well-known political ambition: The Jacobite Stuart Cause. These Jacobites were the guests of the French Court, the seat of the *Ordre du Temple*. Ramsay himself, as Scottish Jacobite, was in personal contact with the greatest Jacobite personages of the time – Derwentwater, the Duke of Perth, Hamilton, the Duke of Bouillon, John Erskine, Earl of Mar, James III, the Old Pretender, and Charles Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie" – many of whom were deeply entwined with the Masonic Templar movement. These Scottish Degrees, or Stuart Templary was founded and headquartered at Clermont in Paris in 1741, and was known as the Clermont Chapter.<sup>19 20</sup>

Chevalier Ramsay was not only in "contact" with the Stuarts, but was himself the tutor of Charles Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie", who would become the Masonic Templar Grandmaster in 1745. This line of transmission is uncontroversial, as you see from Freemason's Monthly, Vol 23, *"Other Freemasons asserted that the chivalric or military Order of the Templars had been actually suppressed, but that the ecclesiastical portion or priesthood had been continued in Scotland and was subsequently transferred into Freemasonry. But history shows that this Templar Masonry was invented in France about the year 1740, by the adherents of the Stuarts, and was introduced by Ramsay and others, as higher degrees, into Freemasonry."*

Furthermore, Charles Stuart, as Masonic Templar Grandmaster, is remembered as using Freemasonry especially for his political motivations, not his necessarily his love

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17 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 17*, John Yarker, pg. 98

18 *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, Nesta Webster, pg. 136

19 *Freemasons Monthly*, Vol 23 pg. 106

20 Bishop Massillon, member of the French Ordre du Temple, was Bishop of Clermont.

for the Craft. Consider *The Masonic Dictionary's* entry on "Stuart Masonry"<sup>21</sup>: "*Prince Charles Edward took a more active part than either his father or grandfather in the pursuits of Freemasonry; and there is abundant historical evidence that he was not only a Freemason, but that he held high office in the Order, and was for a time zealously engaged in its propagation; **always, however, it is supposed, with political views...** On Sept. 24, 1745, he was admitted into the Order of the Knights Templar, an office which it is said, he held until his death.*"

It is generally accepted that Prince Charles Stuart desired to leverage the reach, popularity, and prestige of Freemasonry and the Templars for his ambitions to the throne. In tying the lineage of the Templars to Scotland, he sought to engender a brave nationalism that would inspire the Scottish to stand up to the English.

In 1743, Baron Von Hund claimed to be initiated by Scottish Knights in Paris into the Templar Order by the "Knight of the Red Feather," which he hinted was Prince Charles Stuart,<sup>22</sup> and in the presence of senior Jacobites. Von Hund was commissioned to bring the Templars to Germany, which he did, and by 1751, he officially organized the *Rite of the Strict Observance*, which rapidly proliferated as the premier Templar rite, with related branches spreading into Sweden, Russia, and elsewhere.

In 1745, a pamphlet entitled *Freemasonry Divested of All its Secrets* published by an ex-mason in Strasburg, contains the first glimpse of the *Strict Observance*, and demonstrates how much they expected the Brotherhood to "*contribute towards the expedition in favor of the Pretender.*"

*The Masonic Dictionary* on "Stuart Masonry" says: "*One Degree was openly called the 'Scottish Master of the Sacred Vault of James VI', as if to indicate its Stuart character. The Degree still exists as the Thirteenth of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, but it has been shorn of its political pretensions and its title changed.*"<sup>23</sup>

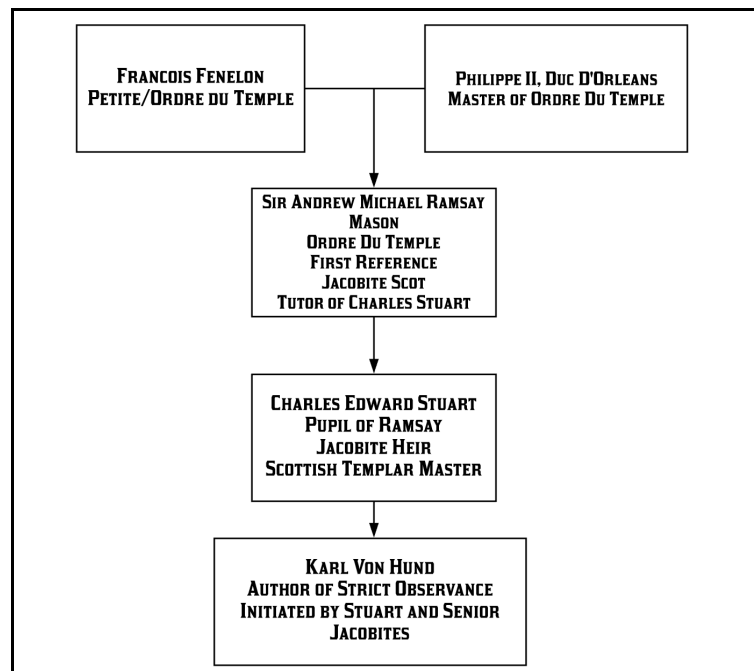
The evidence shows that Templarism was introduced into Freemasonry by Scottish Jacobites for that specific political purpose. A summary of the transmission runs thus:

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21 *Masonic Dictionary*, entry on "Stuart Masonry." This public domain book was book converted to webpage: <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/stuart.html>

22 *A Concise History of Freemasonry*. R. F. Gould., pg 411-414

23 *The Masonic Dictionary*, entry on "Stuart Masonry." <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/stuart.html>



To summarize simply the events of the formation of Masonic Templarism we can say thus:

- The French *Ordre du Temple* exists.
- Speculative Freemasonry begins.
- House of Stuart in France weaponizes Freemasonry for political ends.
- Certain key Stuart Masonic supporters are bought into *Ordre du Temple*.
- Templarism proliferates in Masonry and takes on Masonic character

After the establishment of the *Rite of Strict Observance*, the Scottish Templars released a list of their own line of purported Grandmasters in Scotland, with no mention of the French succession. While they produced no documents or evidence to support these claims, several legendary and pseudo-historical tales were generated to attempt to connect the dots back to the original Templars.

Unfortunately, the actual history of Freemasonry in Scotland disproves this premise at the outset. *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* states, "*This theory of Templar origin which, mythical as it is and wholly unsubstantiated by the authority of history, has exercised a vast influence in the fabrication of advanced Degrees and the invention of Continental Rites.*" <sup>24</sup>

Masonic Scholar John Yarker affirms, "*Whilest at Derby, in December 1745, Prince Charles Edward granted a warrant for the Longnor Lodge of Ancient Freemasons, as Grand Master, and many writers, amongst the rest, the learned Brother Van Lennep,*

<sup>24</sup> *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, pg. 347

*deny any formal connection betwixt the Templars and Freemasons prior to this date.*<sup>125</sup>

Even in 1745, at the time of the election of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, *"some kind of Templar Order in Scotland was in existence – probably introduced from France by the Pretender's partisans..."* and *"...the probability is that these Templars were not Masonically aligned."*<sup>126 27</sup>

## LEGENDARY DEVELOPMENT

### Kilwinning: Home of the Templars

Many of the Scottish Templar legends that were maintained in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are still prominently advocated today.

There are too many to be exhaustively covered here, like the legend Pierre d'Audmond, who supposedly lead the Templars to Scotland, and who, according to Stephen Dafoe, Past Grand Historian of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada, *"is a Templar continuation myth"* and *"is said to be the brainchild of the Rite of Strict Observance, which was largely promoted by Baron von Hund."*<sup>28</sup>

But the heart of Scottish Templarism, and even Scottish Freemasonry as a whole, is tightly connected to the Mother Kilwinning Lodge, which is arguably the oldest Masonic lodge in Scotland. *"The claim to the honor, however, ...depends on the bare authority of a legend, the authenticity of which is now doubted by many Masonic historians."*<sup>29</sup>

The story runs that Templars fled to Scotland after their suppression in the guise of stonemasons, assisted Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn, who then established the Order of St. Andrew at Kilwinning, where the Templars embedded themselves into the lodge.

Thory puts it like this: *"Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, under the title of Robert I, created the Order of St. Andrew of Chardon, after the battle of Bannockburn, which was fought on the 24th of June, 1314. To this Order was afterwards united that of Heredom, for the sake of the Scotch Freemasons, who formed a part of the thirty thousand troops with whom he had fought an army of one hundred thousand Englishmen. King Robert reserved the title of Grand Master to himself and his successors forever, and founded*

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25 *Notes of the Orders of the Temple and St. John*, John Yarker, pg. 13

26 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 18, Origin of Masonic Knight Templary in the United Kingdom*, W.J. Hughan pg. 91

27 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 13, On the Origin and Progress of Chivalric Freemasonry in the British Isles*, Sir Charles A. Cameron, pg. 157

28 <https://www.travelingtemplar.com/2013/07/the-1782-congress-of-wilhelmsbad.html>

29 *Masonic Dictionary, Entry: Kilwinning*, <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/kilwinning.html>

*the Royal Grand Lodge of Herodem at Kilwinning.*<sup>30</sup>

While the great antiquity of operative masonry at Kilwinning lodge is historically likely, every other extravagance of the story is unable to integrate with known history. In regard to these legends, it is imperative to understand the distinction between Operative Masonry and Speculative Masonry. Operative Masonry was a guild of working tradesman who shared closely held methods for their skill, banded together to assert their rights against employers, and maintained high standards for their craft. This form of Masonry has established history into antiquity.

Speculative Masonry, which admits non-masons into the lodge, granted degrees, and taught mysticism is a much later invention, which can scarcely be said to extend before 1700,<sup>31</sup> and for Scotland, much later. Speculative Masonry is a necessary precursor to High Degrees. High Degrees, being anything outside of the Craft Masonry (the first three degrees), are necessary for a Templar degree to exist. Therefore, for a Templar degree to exist, a lodge must engage in Speculative Masonry, not simply Operative.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland was founded only in 1736, one year before Ramsay's oration. But speaking of 1720, Masonic Historian Findel says "*[Speculative] Freemasonry could hardly be said to exist in Scotland then.*"<sup>32</sup> If Speculative Freemasonry did not exist yet in Scotland even in 1720, how much can be said for a Masonic continuation in Scotland of the Knights Templar back to 1307?

Masonic scholars with a commitment to tangible history recognize that Kilwinning Lodge being anything other than an Operative Mason's guild is all but impossible.

*"It should be borne in mind that previous to the introduction of Speculative Freemasonry into Scotland, the number and quality of officers necessary to direct the affairs of lodges were not such as could render practicable the working of any elaborate ritual. A Deacon, Warden, Clerk (who was no Craftsman) and Officer, were the only officials in Mother Kilwinning until December 1735, and in some other lodges till a later period; and with such a meager array of officers, how by any possibility could the dramatis personae of Speculative Masonry been sustained?"*<sup>33</sup>

*"Even the first 'Right Worshipful Master of the Lodge of Kilwinning... knew nothing of Masonic degrees until the 18th of May, 1736.'*"<sup>34</sup>

While we can maintain a historical assent to the antiquity of the stonemasons guild at Kilwinning, anything beyond that is not supported by history, and often contrary to

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30 *Acta Latomorum*, Thory,

31 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Volume 17, pg. 86

32 *History of Freemasonry [English Translation]*, Findel, pg. 209

33 *Freemasons Monthly and Masonic Mirror*, Vol 19, pg. 21-22

34 *Ibid.* pg. 21-22

it.

In conclusion on Kilwinning, *"Seeing that the Fraternity of Kilwinning never at any period practiced or acknowledged other than Craft degrees, and have not preserved even a shadow of a tradition that can in the remotest degree be held to identify Robert Bruce with the holding of Masonic Courts, or the Institution of a Secret Order at Kilwinning, the Fraternity of the "Herodim" must be attributed to another than the hero of Bannockburn, and a birthplace must be sought for it in a soil still more favorable to the growth of the high grades than Scotland has hitherto proved."*<sup>35</sup>

But where did these legends of the knights of Kilwinning arise from?

*"In treating of the origin of the "high degrees," Bro. Findel remarks: "Ramsay pronounces the famous word Kilwinning, and the promise which it held out of reviving the Order, was, in the then state of things, only too alluring... There can be no doubt that here we have the source of the high grades." The votaries of "Scotch Masonry" should... bear in mind that the place of Chevalier Ramsay's nativity was within a short distance (fourteen miles) of Kilwinning, — and that to this circumstance may be attributed his knowledge of the traditional fame of that village as the ancient Scottish centre of the Mason Craft, and his subsequent use of its name in the promotion of his newly-promulgated Masonic inventions; although at the time of his birth, and even during the period in which he was engaged in the preparation of what has been termed "the corner-stone of the high grades", the Mason Court of Kilwinning was a purely operative institution, and its members for the most part were composed of masons and wrights, whose education was not such as could have fitted them for the study or understanding of those ineffable and sublime rites of which they were the alleged conservators. It is certain that Ramsay was not a member of the Kilwinning Lodge; nor is it likely that he ever had any communication with it... In tracing the movements of Robert Bruce... he may have visited Kilwinning, but that he ever did so cannot be established from contemporaneous history."*<sup>36</sup>

### **Grand Cross at the Battle of Killiecrankie**

The entire timeline of the Scottish Templar claim is incredibly sparse. Apart from Kilwinning, another significant datapoint in purported history of the Scottish Templars is the story of David Grahame, Viscount of Dundee, Leader of the Scottish Armies under James VII, who supposedly died at the Battle of Killcrankie in 1689 wearing the Grand Cross of the Order. The story is as follows:

*"Abbé Calmet received from David Grahame the Grand Cross of the Order worn by his gallant and ill fated brother [John Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee,] at*

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<sup>35</sup> *Masonic Dictionary*, Entry: Kilwinning, <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/kilwinning.html>

<sup>36</sup> *Freemasons Monthly and Masonic Mirror*, Vol 19, pg. 142

*the battle of Killiecrankie. "He was, " says the Abbé , "Grandmaster of the Order of the Templars in Scotland."*

This story is frequently relayed as evidence to demonstrate the secret operation of the Templars within Scotland with John Grahame, Viscount of Dundee as its Grand Master of the entire Order. The historicity of the story is unproven, and its first mention isn't until a pamphlet in 1843, being a third hand account which appears 150 years after the supposed event.<sup>37</sup> For the sake of argument, however, we will treat the story as relating true events.

An additional detail was added to the story after the fact, that the cross he bore was an authentic, pre-1307 Templar cross, a detail likely intended to strengthen the claim of direct descent.<sup>38</sup> This detail is conspicuously absent from the purported testimony of Calmet, the only source of the story.

The first thing that ought to be noticed about this story is that it takes place within the time frame of known Templar revival in France from 1681.

The second thing is that it takes place after the Stuart exile to France in 1688, with John Grahame, Viscount of Dundee, being a leader in the Stuart Cause. His surviving brother, David Grahame and other prominent Scottish exiles were given important posts in the French Army.<sup>39</sup>

And third, it does not say he was Grandmaster of the Templars – but that he was Grandmaster of the Templars **in Scotland**. This indicates that it is more likely that Grahame was a regional or provincial master over Scotland, what is called a Grand Prior today. This is further justified by the fact that his brother, David Grahame, did not retain the Grand Cross in Scotland, but returned it to France. He did not present it to the succeeding Scottish Grandmaster, John Erskine, the Lord of Mar, but gave it to a French Priest, Abbé (Abbot) Antoine Augustin Calmet.

Furthermore, historically and today, a Grand Cross is not a synonym for the Grand Master, but is an award of merit, even within the Scottish Templars of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> This series of events is more consistent with the cross of a regional leader being returned to an Order headquartered in France, rather than in Scotland.<sup>41</sup>

However, some serious anachronisms exist in the story as well. To begin, if the

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37 *The Temple and the Lodge*, Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, *Master of the Scottish Templars?* [No page numbers]

38 Ibid. [No page numbers]

39 Ibid. [No page numbers]

40 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Volume 25, pg. 72, "Dr. Burnes was a zealous Mason... he was also a Grand Cross of the Scottish Order of the T."

41 It's possible that the line of Grandmasters of the Scottish Templars is actually a list of the Grand Priors of Scotland in the French Order, which is an elegant solution compared to the idea of complete fabrication.

transfer of the cross occurred in or near 1689, Abbé Calmet was neither an Abbot, nor a priest in 1689, but was only a teenager of 17, and was not ordained until 1696. Calmet certainly became a great and respected churchman, historian, and theologian later in life, but at the time of the events, he was no great personage, and of no accomplishment. It seems very strange that a 17 year old would be the chosen recipient of an authentic pre-1307 cross of the Templar Grandmaster.

Similarly, if the transfer occurred in or around 1689, the supposed successor of John Grahame, Viscount of Dundee as Scottish Grand Master was John Erskine, Earl of Mar, would have only been a boy of 14 at the time of death of Viscount John Grahame. Unless this Templar succession line was tantamount to a high school boys club, the inconsistencies in the tale lend the judgment to fiction.

David Grahame died in 1700,<sup>42</sup> so the transfer must have at least occurred before that, making the maximum age of the men, 25 for the Earl of Mar and 28 for Calmet. In this scenario, the evidence suggests this Scottish group was a jurisdiction subordinate to the *Ordre du Temple* in France. It is known that Earl of Mar became a close confidante of Ramsay.<sup>43</sup>

Surprisingly, this is not the only legend that has developed around John Grahame at the Battle of Killiecrankie, *"the best known of which was the long prevalent but of course entirely false tale that he was invulnerable to lead (due to having made a pact with the Devil) and was killed by being penetrated by a silver button from his own coat."*<sup>44</sup> Being such a prominent champion of the King and the Jacobite Cause, who died in such a valiant way, he was the likely target of numerous spurious inventions.

Concluding remarks will be left to esoteric historian, A.E. Waite, who says of this tale: *"If this story be true, we are brought at once to the presence of a Templar survival or restoration which owes nothing to the dreams or realities of Chevalier Ramsay, and nothing to masonry itself. We know that evidence is wanting at every point for the alleged perpetuation of the old Templar Order in connection with Masonry and that the legends of such perpetuation bear all the traces of manufacture..."*<sup>45</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT OF RITUAL

While John Yarker established that the ritual undergone by Ramsay was non-masonic

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42 <https://www.geni.com/people/David-Graham-3rd-Viscount-of-Dundee/6000000024013010611>

43 "Charles Edward Stuart, Grand Master": English original of entry published in French in *La Monde Maçonnique des Lumières*, eds. Charles Porset and Cécile Révauger (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013).

44 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Graham,\\_1st\\_Viscount\\_Dundee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Graham,_1st_Viscount_Dundee)

45 *The New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Vol 2, A.E. Waite, pg. 223.

in character,<sup>46</sup> the history of ritual development must be examined. The most robust documentation of the Masonic Templar rituals, however, exists across the ocean in America. The travel of the Templar degrees to America is summarized: "*The first reliable evidence of a Knight Templar Masonic ritual being practiced is in France in 1740 and shortly afterwards it was 'exported' to England via the main trade routes.*"

*"On October 1, 1768, several regiments of British soldiers arrived in Boston, Massachusetts. Among them were the 14th Regiment (Irish), in which Army Lodge No. 581 was held, and the 29th Regiment (Irish) in which Army Lodge No. 322 was held. In the second week of November 1768 the 64th Regiment (Irish) in which was held an Army Lodge also arrived. These Army Lodges brought to Boston a knowledge of the Order of the Temple."*<sup>47</sup>

The earliest references to this Templar ritual is routinely referred to as "*conferring the Order of the Temple*" and represented an early Templar ritual tradition in America.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, this ritual was conferred with only a loose association to Freemasonry upon its arrival.

*"At the time of the introduction of Templarism into the United States, it was entirely disconnected with Freemasonry proper, the degree of Templar being conferred on persons who were not Masons."*<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, "*there were many encampments established which were not connected with Craft Lodges, nor under the control of any body.*"<sup>50</sup>

One early non-mason is recorded as being installed as "*one of the most Noble Order of Knighthood, a Templar of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, and Knight of Malta*" on his certificate, an "*ignorant conglomeration of titles*" that only seems to make sense if the Templars embedded in the Knights of St. John, as proposed in the previous paper, "*Re-Examining the Larmenius Charter.*"<sup>51</sup>

These earliest rituals that were brought to America through the British, Irish and Scottish soldiers via France were therefore not expressly Masonic. Conferring "the Order of the Temple" was still able to be accomplished outside a purely Masonic context. In fact, the name of conferring the *Order of the Temple*, may be a vestige of French roots, *Ordre du Temple*.

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46 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Volume 17, John Yarker, pg. 98

47 These Irish regiments came Irish Kilwinning lodges that were under the authority of Mother Kilwinning in Scotland.

48 *Highlights of Templar History*, William Mosely Brown, pg. 63

49 *Freemasons Monthly*, Vol 23 pg. 107

50 *Irish Masonic History and the Jewels of Irish Freemasonry*, <http://www.irishmasonichistory.com/the-order-of-the-temple---a-history.html>

51 *Freemasons Monthly*, Vol 23 pg. 107

However, later on, the ritual was developed to take on a specific Masonic character. Regarding the evolution of the ritual, William Moseley Brown, writing for the Masonic Grand Encampment of the United States says, "*The ritual of the Order of the Temple has so far presented the most satisfactory research as well as a number of interested and, as yet, unsolved problems. . . . The legend of the origin and development of the present Grand Encampment ritual is based on the old "Webb Work." The story runs that Webb and others took the then existing ritual, rewrote it in dramatic form and also included certain features typical of our ritual today.*"<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, the original ritual that Webb edited and his original notes have been lost to time. However, what can be gleaned is that the previous ritual that initially landed in the Americas was not uniquely Templarism of Freemasonry, but of another character that required Masonic revision.

## THE MASONIC REJECTION OF TEMPLARISM

In the 1780s, the Jacobite Stuart Cause was officially failed. As a consequence, the tremendous rise of the *Strict Observance Rite* met an equally tremendous fall. In 1782, a large meeting was held in Germany, called the Wilhelmsbad Congress, presiding was Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, head of the *Strict Observance*. It took place over 30 sessions, with the endeavor to "*to discuss the general reformation of Freemasonry, the origin of the different systems, rites, and doctrines that had formed, and to solve the question as to whether or not Freemasonry is a modern society or derived from something far more ancient.*"<sup>53</sup>

The conclusions of the Congress were the ultimate disavowal of the *Rite of the Strict Observance* as well as the Templar continuation myths. The result was the final and immediate collapse of the *Strict Observance*. The Fraternity was in agreement, the scholars spoken in unison.

*"In this opinion of Barruel, a great number of Masonic writers concur - Clavel, Ragon, Rebold, Thory, Findel, and others too numerous to mention; all indicate Craft Masonry as the only true kind and the upper degrees as constituting a danger to the Order. Rebold, who gives a list of these writers, quotes a masonic publication, authorized by the Grand Orient and the Supreme Council of France, in which it is said that "from all these rites there result the most foolish conceptions, ... the most absurd legends, ... the most extravagant systems, the most immoral principles, and those the most dangerous for the peace and preservation of States," and that therefore except the first three degrees of Masonry, which are really ancient and universal, everything is "chimera, extravagance, futility, and lies." Did Barruel and Robison ever use stronger language*

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<sup>52</sup> *Highlights of Templar History*, William Moseley Brown, pg. 63

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.travelingtemplar.com/2013/07/the-1782-congress-of-wilhelmsbad.html>

than this?'<sup>54</sup>

The Grand Lodge of Scotland in October of 1800 even issued a decree, "*prohibiting and discharging its daughters to hold any meetings above the degree of Master Mason, under penalty of forfeiture of their Charter.*"<sup>55</sup>

There is strong evidence that the Craft Masons of the first three degrees rejected the claims of Templar descent long before the Wilhemsbad Congress. There exists a forged document called the *Cologne Charter*, written in Latin, which purports to be from 1535. The entire purpose of this document is to roundly disavow any historic association with the Knights Templar. Its known as a forgery because "*the customs are referred to in it were not known in the rituals of initiation until 1731; that the Advanced Degrees were nowhere known until 1725... the declaimer against Templar Freemasonry was unnecessary in 1535, as no Templar Degrees existed until 1741.*"<sup>56</sup>

Its authenticity is irrelevant, simply because it conveys the existence of a rejection of Templar origins and degrees by a strong and resourceful subset of Freemasonry prior to the official conclusions of the Wilhemsbad Congress.

With the Masonic Templar descent proclaimed a fraud bringing the death of the Strict Observance, there left an opportunity for the Templar chivalric tradition to reform as way "*to promote a concept of chivalry and Christianity within a masonic framework,*"<sup>57</sup> just as the current position is today.

The new Masonic Templar Order was officially founded in 1805<sup>58</sup> when a charter was issued to Alexander Deuchar, a seal engraver, from an Irish lodge operating under the Mother Kilwinning Lodge in Scotland and became the first Grand Assembly of Knights Templar in Edinburgh.<sup>59</sup>

## THE FRENCH AND THE SCOTTISH

One might imagine that after the end of the *Strict Observance* and a firm disavowal of Tempalr continuation by the Freemasons, any future Masonic Templar movement would have very little to do with the French *Ordre du Temple*, but this is not the case.

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54 *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, Nesta Webster, pg. 112

55 Irish Masonic History – Order of the Temple, <http://www.irishmasonichistory.com/the-order-of-the-temple---a-history.html>

56 *Masonic Encyclopedia Entry On Cologne, Cathedral*, <https://masonicshop.com/encyclopedia/topics/entry/?i=4503>

57 Ibid.

58 Upon the formation of the Grand Assembly it was said that "*the early encampment had been in existence for 100 years*", which squarely lands on 1705, the year Philippe II, Duke of Orleans reformed the Statutes and the Order came to light.

59 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Deuchar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Deuchar)

Just one year before the establishment of the Grand Assembly, in 1804, is when Bernard Raymond Fabre-Palaprat first publically revealed the French *Ordre du Temple*. As was the fashion at the time, many members were also Freemasons, and over the course of the next several decades, much cross-pollination occurred between the French and the newly reformed Scottish Templars.

One such man, Dr. C. Morison de Grenfield, held extremely high position in both Orders, being the Ex-Grand Chancellor of the *Ordre du Temple*, and Grand Cross in the Masonic Scottish Templars from 1798.

Dr. Morison had a falling out with Grand Master Fabre-Palaprat and left the Order late in life, but retained his membership with the Masonic Order.

A series of letters by Dr. Morison written from 1843-1846 have been preserved in *Ars Quatuor Coranti Vol. 25*, which demonstrates an alarming shift in policy by the Masonic Knights.<sup>60</sup>

Within the last few years (four or five only) the Order of the Temple in Scotland appear to consider themselves the successors of the Antient, Noble, and Glorious Order of the Temple, formed in 1118 by Hugh de Pagan (Payans in French, not Hugh de Payance) and destroyed in 1314. *Error*. The Order of the Temple was introduced at Edinburgh in 1798, by certain non-commissioned officers and men of the Nottingham Militia, then quartered in the Castle\* (see the “Revue Historique Scientific and Morale de F. Maç., 1 vol. 8vo. page 134, Paris Galerie de Lorme, No. 11 et 13, 1830.”). They became frequent visitors or Members of St. Stephen’s Lodge, then No. 193, now No. 145; they introduced into that Lodge the Royal Arch and Templar degrees, such as practised in England,\* but individually and without any legal authority to do so, from any regular Masonic body entitled to constitute Chapters, or Encampments.

He relays his concern that in the last four or five years (since 1840-41), the Scottish Templars have again begun to claim descent from the original Templars, and then quickly asserts the true origin of the new Scottish knights, because he was there.

The Scottish Grandmaster Deuchar had only recently passed away in 1844, and it seems shortly thereafter, the policy began to turn.

Dr. Morison, a friend of Deuchar for decades, exposes this shift:

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60 John Yarker, from the same article believes the Royal Arch was introduced to St. Stephens lodge by the Nottingham Militia in 1778, not 1798. Morison's overall point stands, however.

I possess the correspondence between the late Mr. A. Deuchar and myself for many years past. Though Grand Master for upwards of 25 years it never once entered into his imagination that the Society of which he was Chief, and which in fact he had made what it is, was anything else than the Masonic Order of the Temple, imported from England in 1798 by certain non-commissioned Officers and Men of the Nottingham Militia.

Noting that the history they sought to tie themselves to was similar to that which was previously disavowed as false, Morison said:

Even supposing the history of the Scottish Order, prefixed to this Statute of 1843, to be true; and that Sir W. de Clifton, Lord Dundee, the Earl of Mar, the Duke of Athol, Prince Charles Edward, and Oliphant of Bachilton, have been Grand Masters of the Order in Scotland, with the exception of Sir W. de Clifton, who was one of the Old, Noble, and Glorious Order of the Temple, all the others can only be considered Chiefs of a political Society who took the name of The Order of the Temple. It appears to have been altogether composed of the adherents of the House of Stuart, to be made use of when a favourable opportunity might offer.

Granting that even if the previous manifestation of Scottish Templars were legitimate, Morison points out that they cannot even prove their descent from the previous generation!

As one of the only surviving authorities of the origins of the new Scottish knights, having joined even before Grand Master Deuchar, the adaption of its history inspired Morison to a palapable anger.

I not only know the origin of the Scottish Order of the Temple, but am one (perhaps now the only one) of those Masons received Templars in St. Stephen's Lodge in 1798. I do not think it right, nor acting honourably, to publish to the world that I am one of the legal and undoubted successors of the Old, Noble, and Glorious Order of the Temple, and as such assist in receiving Esquires and Chevaliers. In plain English I conceive it conniving at making dupes.

He then proceeds to cap his complaint with a threat: either do not publish this false history, or take me off the membership rolls.

The strength of his passion regarding the publishing of this false history is so powerful that he was willing to discard a distinguished Scottish Templar career of nearly 50 years, based purely on principle.

If the Members of the Order of the Temple at Edinburgh will be contented to call themselves simply Templars, without asserting whether they are Masonic Templars, or whether they are successors of the Old, Noble, and Glorious Order of the Temple, I shall be most happy to remain on the Roll, in that case I hereby beg leave to authorise you to be so good as to replace my name on it, particularly as I propose going to Edinburgh next summer, and may perhaps fix myself there. If however they intend, in the forthcoming Statutes, to reprint the historical notice of the Order, such as it is in the printed Statutes of 1843, continue to make use of the Arms, such as they are on the title page of that edition, and to keep in force certain Articles of those Statutes, it is with much regret I must decline the favour of having my name replaced on the list.

Ultimately, Morison was forced to keep to his word, and ultimately left the Scottish Order when they insisted on printing the false history.

After what you say in that letter it is impossible for me to allow my name to remain on the Roll of the Scottish Order of the Temple; shall therefore be much obliged by your having the goodness not to insert either my name, or my Arms, in the forthcoming edition of the Statutes.

The final, and most significant accusation by Dr. Morison is that the Scottish Templars openly pilfered certain distinct elements of the French *Ordre du Temple* in recent times. These accusations, remember, are being made by a man who was *presently* a member of the Scottish Order, but no longer a member of the French.

About sixteen or eighteen years ago, I sent a copy of the Statutes of the French Order (those of 1825 falsified by Fabré) to the late Mr. Deuchar, from which a great part of those of the Scottish Order, in particular the Arms, Diploma, etc., have been taken. Unfortunately, they have taken the Arms invented by Fabré in 1822, a Cross surmounted by a sort of Crown Mitre.<sup>1</sup> The true Arms of the French Order are those which I enclose.

Morison plainly states that many of the elements of the Scottish Templars were taken from the French, from Statutes, Diplomas, even the cross and crown motif, which has since evolved and is characteristically identified with the Masonic Templars.

The statements in these private letters are not unexamined, however. John Yarker, famed Masonic historian says, *"The writer has examined the vow of the Scottish Order and finds that it is but a modification of that of the French Order. The Latin Certificate of the Scottish Order is word for word that of the French Order, saving the officers*

*names; and the idea of granting certificates to Commanders, and Grand Cross, is taken from the French Statutes which were printed in 1825, and previously by Thory in 1815.*<sup>61</sup>

Dr. Morison is evidentially correct when he asserted that certain elements of the new Scottish Templars were pilfered from the French *Ordre du Temple*. However, after these events, the French Order was on the decline, and the Masonic Order was on the ascent, taking advantage of its vast network of lodges in Europe and in the Americas.

Today, the Masonic Templars are essentially synonymous with modern Templarism.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Masonic Knights Templar continue today as a fraternity of honorable men who, at least in the official capacity, have come to terms with the lack of history tracing them back to the original Templars. Evidence shows that the true origins of Masonic Templarism were birthed out of the pre-existing French *Ordre du Temple* during the Stuart exile in the French Court. Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, a man with a foot in both worlds, was the main catalyst to introduce Templarism into Freemasonry.

Nevertheless, the perception of Templar continuation from Freemasonry is still a widely held belief which has produced dozens of books on the topic.

New legends continue to be birthed to substantiate a Scottish Templar line, such as the legends surrounding Rosslyn Chapel, which began to proliferate in the 1980s. This is done despite facts like:

1. The Sinclairs testified against the Templars at their trial, not for them.<sup>62</sup>
2. The three pillars, beginning with the Apprentice Pillar, representing the Three Degrees would have had to exist hundreds of years before the existence of the Third Degree, introduced in 1730.<sup>63</sup>
3. Rosslyn Chapel underwent a Masonic renovation in the 1860s.<sup>64</sup>

Despite this, the official position of the Masonic Knights Templar stands. Furthermore, it has now been demonstrated that the Masonic Templar High Degrees originated from an interplay with the Stuarts in the French Court during their exile, being exposed to the *Ordre du Temple*. Chevalier Ramsay, member of the *Ordre du Temple* for nearly 15 years before being a Mason, carried his Templarism into Freemasonry to inspire support

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61 *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Volume 17*, John Yarker, pg. 98

62 Oxbrow, Mark; Robertson, Ian (2005). *Rosslyn and the Grail*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing.

63 Robert L D Cooper, *The Rosslyn Hoax?*, Lewis Masonic 2006, pg. 146-7

64 "The St Clair Family". [rosslynchapel.org.uk](http://rosslynchapel.org.uk). Retrieved 6 December 2020.

for the Stuart Cause.

A summary timeline of all significant events is as follows:

- 1681 - Petit Resurrection des Templiers.
- 1688 - Stuart exiles first arrive in Court of France.
- 1695 - October 18 - Fenelon initiated by "Apostolic Princes."
- 1703 - February 12 - Massilon initiated.
- 1705 – Duke of Orleans reforms Statutes under *Order du Temple*.
- 1710-1713 - Ramsay initiated by Fenelon.
- 1717 – Grand Lodge of England founded, officially starting Speculative Masonry.
- 1725-1730 – Chevalier Ramsay becomes a Freemason.
- 1736 - Grand Lodge of Scotland Founded.
- 1737 - Ramsay's Oration tying Masonry to the Crusaders.
- 1740s - High Templar degrees of Masonry begin to appear.
- 1741 - Clermont Chapter of Masonic Templars established. Massilon is Bishop of Clermont.
- 1743 - Von Hund claims to be initiated into Templarism by Senior Jacobites.
- 1751 - Von Hund officially organizes Strict Observance Rite. Templarsim rapidly proliferates as a high degree in the lodges.
- 1769 - William Davis, first Masonic Templar initiated in Americas brought over by Irish regiment conferring the "*Order of the Temple*." The initiation of "*The Order of the Temple*" established encampments "*which were not connected with Craft Lodges nor under the control of any body*." This is also true within Ireland itself.
- 1783 - A Masonic Convent at Wilhelmsbad resolved and declared that the freemasons were not the successors of the Templars, and that the playing at Knight Templars was to be discontinued. In effect, the *Strict Observance* ceased to exist.
- 1791 - Thomas Dunckerley begins to gather the scattered Templar groups.
- 1798 - Dr. Morison de Grenfield joins the reformed Scottish Templars.
- 1802 - Alexander Deuchar joins the reformed Scottish Templars.
- 1804 - Fabre Palaprat goes public with *Ordre du Temple*, 1705 Statutes, Larmenius Charter, and former registers.

- 1805 - Grand Assembly of Masonic Knights Templar officially founded. First official warrants given to grant Knights Templar Degrees.
- 1830 - Dr. Morison sends Statutes to Scottish Grand Master Deuchar.
- 1830+ - Scottish Templars co-opt French Templar materials into their own.
- 1843 - Scottish Templars begin to claim authentic descent once again.
- 1846 - Dr. Morison again disavows Scottish Templar origins.

In the present day, the Masonic Knights Templar are a uniquely distinct representation of the modern Templar heritage. The descendents of both Orders of the 1800s have arrived at two unrelated chivalric traditions. It must be acknowledged that greater detail into fine specifics of this narrative is possible, but largely fall into the perview of Masonic Templar development without adding anything to the history of the *Ordre du Temple*, and are there left to the skill of Masonic researchers for their own benefit.

This research in no way is designed to disdain or discredit the Masonic Templars with malice – they ascent to many of these same conclusions. For this reason, the majority of the sources used are Masonic ones.

It is the joy of any sincere reseacher to discover the truth of a matter. Anyone who dearly holds a fondness for Templar tradition, Masonic or otherwise, can learn that we ought to resist the pull of wishful thinking and confirmation bias and hold only to the positions that the facts lead us to. While every whisper of a lead is worth investigating, we must not trust some new or popular claim simply because we desire for it to be so.

Freemasonry has done an admirable job at self-examination and critical inquiry. This is a virtue that ought to be an example to all – not just on an occasion, but as a matter of habit. May we so do.

nnDnn.



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