

THE  
 TEMPLAR DEGREES  
 OF THE  
 ANCIENT & ACCEPTED  
 SCOTTISH RITE  
 OF  
 FREEMASONRY



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**The Order of the Temple of Solomon.** “The Poor Fellow-soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon,” better known as “The Knights Templar,” or “The Order of the Temple of Solomon,” were a religious military order during the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Prior to their formation, so-called “orders of knighthood” were unknown. Religious orders consisted of monks and canons, but did not include soldiers or knights. But, in 1129, with the sponsorship of Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot of the Cistercian Order, the Council of Troyes granted recognition to the Templars as a religious military order – warrior monks.

Over the next two centuries the Order became the largest and wealthiest army in the world. Their wealth and power incurred the jealousy of King Phillip IV of France who ordered the arrest of the Templars in Paris on Friday, 13 October 1307. A Papal Bull ordered the arrest of all Templars, who were then tortured and forced to confess to false charges. After the trials, the Pope dissolved the Order in 1312. The last Grand Master of the Order, Jacques DeMolay, and the Preceptor of Normandy, Geoffrey de Charney, were burned at the stake in front of Notre Dame Cathedral on 18 March 1314.

The Supreme Council, Thirty-Third Degree, of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, a neo-Templar organization, represents the spiritual, if not the historic, survival of the Knights Templar, and that is evident in its hierarchical structure, in the titles of its officers, and in its regalia. Demonstrative of its Templar character, the six highest and last degrees conferred by the Scottish Rite are all Knight Templar degrees, more than by any other regular rite of Freemasonry.

**28<sup>th</sup> Degree: Knight Commander of the Temple.** The *Legenda*, or Traditional History of the Degree, preserves the legend of the survival of “The Knights of the Temple of Solomon” in Germany. The *Legenda* begins with the siege at Acre in 1191, and continues through the official dissolution of the Templars in 1312, and the subsequent absorption of Templar survivors by the Teutonic Order, where the Templars were permitted to adopt the red mantle with black cross as it now appears in this Degree.



**29<sup>th</sup> Degree: Scottish Knight of St. Andrew.** The Traditional History of the Order gives the history of the Knights Templar from their formation in the year 1118, through their betrayal in 1307, and the trial and martyrdom of their Grand Master in 1314. It further preserves the legend of their alliance with King Robert the Bruce of Scotland at the Battle of Bannockburn, St. John’s Day, 1314, where was defeated the English army of King Edward II.

To commemorate their service, King Robert Bruce created, and received these knights into, the Scottish Order of St. Andrew *du Chardon*, meaning “of the Thistle.” The History of the Order states that the hereditary Grand Mastership of the Order passed down from King Robert the Bruce in succession through the Stuart Royal family to Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the last Grand Master in Scotland, who, after his defeat by the English in 1745, escaped into exile in France and established there a Chapter of Rosé Croix of Heredom which encompassed the Order of St. Andrew. The Order was in the possession of the founders of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry at its formation in 1801, at which time the legend of the Degree was still combined with the Rosé Croix as a part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Degree. It was subsequently separated from the 18<sup>th</sup> Degree and moved to its present position as the 29<sup>th</sup> Degree.

**30<sup>th</sup> Degree: Knight Kadosh of the White and Black Eagle.** The drama of this degree takes place after the death of the twenty-first and last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques DeMolay.

His initials, “J.B.M.” are evident upon his tomb, upon the shield of a Knight Kadosh, and upon the Cross of the Order. During the degree, the Beauseant, the white and black standard of the Order, is

prominently displayed. Among the officers of a Council, or Preceptory, of the Order are bearers of the White Standard, the Black Standard, and the Beauseant.

The Commander of Knights Kadosh opens a Council with the words, "*Knights of the Holy House of the Temple, poor fellow soldiers of the Temple of Solomon....*" In the reception of a candidate for the Degree he is referred to as "one who aspires to the rank of Knight Kadosh, or *Knight of the Temple.*" The Hebrew word "Kadosh" means "holy," "pure," or "separated."



The history of the medieval Knights Templar is a treasured part of the Degree, although often abbreviated during conferrals. It preserves the legend of the survival of the Templars and their traditions in the Masonic degrees of the Scottish Rite, of the duplicity of the rival Knights of St. John, the Hospitalers, also called the Knights of Malta, who profited from the fall of the Templars, of the Hospitalers persecution of Freemasonry as late as the mid-1700s, and of the special enmity reserved for the Order of Malta by the Knights Kadosh.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Kadosh Degree was the 24<sup>th</sup> of the 25-degree Order of the Royal Secret, the immediate predecessor of the Scottish Rite. At the formation of the Scottish Rite in 1801, the Kadosh Degree was listed as the 29<sup>th</sup>, and was later moved to the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**31<sup>st</sup> Degree: Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander.** This is the second of the three "Kadosh Degrees" of the Scottish Rite. In The

Scottish Rite Manifesto of 1802, this degree, along with the 30<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> are listed simply as "Prince of the Royal Secret." The Degree represents the judiciary of the Order of Knights Templar, and it has always been utilized as the final test of the candidate before he is admitted to the Thirty-Second Degree.

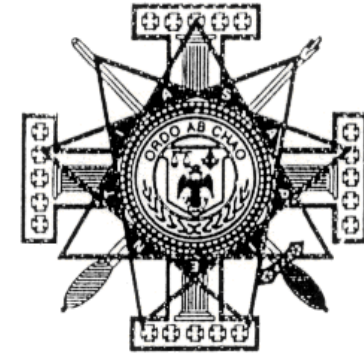


After the suppression of the Knights Templar it was imperative that one claiming to be a fugitive knight seeking refuge in a Templar asylum where he was not known be tested fully to determine if he was worthy, and not a spy or enemy of the Order. In one early version of the Degree, the candidate was tested in his knowledge of the eight degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft, Master Mason, [Perfect] Elect Mason, Scottish Master, Knight of the East, Sovereign Prince Rosé Croix, and Knight Kadosh, before being permitted to advance. The "Court of the Dead" from Egyptian mythology is an allegory for this final judgment, and is the final test of the initiate before he is given The Royal Secret.

**32<sup>nd</sup> Degree: Master of the Royal Secret.** The third of the Kadosh degrees of the Scottish Rite, its object is to gather together all the degrees of the Scottish Rite into the Symbolic Camp. The costume of a Master of the Royal Secret is that of a Knight Kadosh, and the Knights Kadosh are the legitimate successors of the medieval Knights Templar. The distinctive Scottish Rite cap is the last vestige of the chivalric regalia of a Kadosh of the Thirty-Second Degree. In Legenda A of the Thirty-Second Degree we are taught that "only by constant labor in the daily walks of life ... can the Knights Kadosh become the true soldiery of the *Holy House of the Temple of Solomon.*" In "The Readings of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree" we find "The Templar

Dogma," wherein is explained the war *à outrance* between Light and Darkness.

**33<sup>rd</sup> Degree: Inspector General.** Conferred only by the Supreme Council, 33°, the Degree of Inspector General is a Templar degree throughout, in both substance and symbolism. The officers of the Supreme Council are the officers of a Grand Preceptory of Knights Templar, presided over by a Grand Commander. The symbol of the Grand Commander, the Salem Cross with crosslets, is the symbol of the Grand Master of Knights Templar.



The fact that the Scottish Rite is the spiritual descendant of "The Poor Fellow Soldiery of the Temple of Solomon" (The Order of Knights Templar), is best betrayed, however, in the full name of "The Supreme Council (Mother Council of the World) of the Inspectors General *Knights Commanders of The House of the Temple of Solomon* of the Thirty-Third Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America."