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FOREWORD

“Many authors, novelists or historians, have studied the history, often pathetic, of the famous phalanx of the Hospitallers of Saint John. Some have only found the story of epic battles on the ground or on the sea. Some have on the contrary indulgently spread over more or less political intrigues. Some others have tried with a zeal to a greater or lesser degree successful, to give an idea of the mood, the atmosphere in which were living these soldier-monks, sensitive to the suffering of the others, whatever would be the religious or racial origin of the suffering, ready at the same time to raise the arms against those who were then called the ‘Infidel’, and even often the same they were trying a moment before to relieve the sufferings ; and then a moment after, to lose themselves into Paternosters.”

“Following the passing centuries, many of these writers, sometimes for prejudice or personal reasons, sometimes by passion, never stopped evading facts and even distorting texts. So, they have concealed or falsified the real features of History.”

“We have tried, in a total objective mind and total truth, to evoke rapidly the essential basis of an already long epic, all the same respecting the diverse influences shouldered by the destiny of the Hospitallers of Saint John”.

In this way were expressing themselves, at the beginning of 1967, Guy and Paul JOUVEAU du BREUIL, in a prologue to a short internal note distributed not as it deserved.

I will certainly not have the presumptuousness to add what it could be to their writings of those times, as far as I have neither the ambition nor the university titles to pretend to be a historian. I only have learnt to read History at the Saints Gabriels' Brothers in Vendée, and later on to understand it, particularly thanks to the Jacques BAINVILLE's books.

During the years 1950, ending my scout's initiation, I found out the survival of the Chivalric Orders of the Middle Ages.

The little group of passionate Scout Brothers we were forming in 1959 got the surprise to read in the newspapers, under the pen of Paul de CASSAGNAC, a name smelling the musketeer 'Saga': Several articles modifying oddly the ideas we were impressed with up to there. The matter was to be deepened !

CASSAGNAC directed us to Paul JOUVEAU du BREUIL, young Knight only a few years older than us.

Then it was the discovery of the 'VERTOT', rather uneasy to read because printed in small characters and moreover in a 1726 French language. Nevertheless the enthusiasm for being acquainted with our heroes' life made us devour the 6 or 7 volumes within a few weeks.

But the 'VERTOT' was stopping its narration on 1725 (*date of its publishing*) and the Order was still alive in the 20th century. So, we had to carry on our investigations,

going even to the U.S.A. and that happened to split our group. So I remained almost the only one, in 1961, going on my 'Noviciate' period.

And in June 1961, during a first European Chapter, I realized the discoveries we had found out about the life of this Order.

These first fancying discoveries were taking shape. The Order of Saint John (O.S.J.) was born before the Crusades, stemming from the Benedictines. It had fixed by itself its Rule and its internal regulations, while the Templars, others of our heroes, had begged Saint Bernard to write down theirs'. Concerning a Chivalric Order and above all Religious, this was most surprising, as the Pope, following the capture of Jerusalem, grants them this right and also the one to rule all by themselves. They had never fought against Christian Princes. Absent from the sack of Constantinople, according to Abbé de Vertot himself, they welcomed the Orthodox in their Fraternity and even Protestants without changing their way of life ! 'Ecumenical' Christians before the times. Sovereigns in their Government even without territory. Republicans ruled by a Prince becoming such by his election at their head. Chivalrous in their behaviour and Hospitallers to the sick and the wounded, in the body or in the soul, Christians or not. Promoters in their buildings, innovators in medical research, trainers of the European navies. The long list of their humanitarian activities puts them at the head of the actors-founders of the 'Public Health' of today. These activities being, after the defence of Faith, the first *raison d'être* of the Order, we will not incorporate them in this Chronology.

To attempt to summarize concisely this History, without forcing each new Brother to read entire shelves of libraries, the method to be used had to be simple.

The Sovereign Council of the Order, interested by an initiative of our Canadian Brothers, put me in charge of a chronological list of our historical documentation.

I think I have responded to this request, keeping as only criteria :

- the welcome and respect of all the Christians,
 - the independence from any power other than the one of the Brothers,
 - the taking care of the sick, whoever would they be,
 - and at last, the Christian Chivalry.
- That is to say, to sum up :
Christian, Sovereign, Hospitaller, Chivalric.

That is why the developing of the branches of the initial Order which have accepted the tutelage of an authority whatever would it be, other than of the electoral body internal to the Order, is not mentioned in this chronology, in spite of our respect and often our admiration for their hospitaller works.

One last word of gratitude, first to my wife, who endures the invasion of our library ; then to my two ‘godfathers’ in the Order, Guy and Paul JOUVEAU du BREUIL, who have initiated me in the acknowledgement of the OSJ and have made me discover its treasures ; and at last to my Brother, Prior of France, Youenn de QUELEN, for his stimulating role to finalize the layout of the results of my researches.

Guy Jean JOLY, osj
Conventual Grand Curator

N.B. To make easier the reading of this chronology, we have used the present names of the varied Councils of the Order

SUMMARIZED BIBLIOGRAPHY

All the dates quoted in the present opusculé appear on the archive documents constituted in the books publicly known, and up to now uncontested.

They are spotted by a capital letter (X) which refers to the bibliography published below after, and consequently to the bibliographic documents used by the authors.

- (B) Alain BELTJENS
Aux origines de l'Ordre de Malte, éd. 1995
(cf Guillaume de Tyr, Jacques de Vitry,
Jean d'Ypres, etc...)
- (Bu) M. de BUSSY
Histoire des Chevaliers de Malte, éd. 1852.
- (C) Moshe CATANE
Jérusalem à travers trois millénaires, éd. 1984.
- (Cas) Paul de CASSAGNAC
Livre Rouge, éd. 1962.
- (Co) Dom Maur COCHERIL
Les Ordres Religieux, tome I, éd. 1979.
- (G) René GROUSSET
L'épopée des Croisades, éd. 1939.
- (GG) Patrick de GMELINE & Gérard GOROKHOFF
La Garde Impériale Russe 1896-1914, éd. 1986.
- (Gl) Roger GLACHANT
Suffren et le temps de Vergennes, éd. 1976.
- (H) Various authors
Historians and General History.

- (J.O.) Journal Officiel de la République Française
- (K) Elias KOLLIAS
Les Chevaliers de Rhodes, 1991.
- (Lv) Ludovic de VAUX
La Palestine, éd. 1883.
- (M) Thierry MICHEL de PIERREDON
reference book, Roman version, éd. 1956
- (O) Albert OLLIVIER
Les Templiers, éd. 1958,
J.-J.-E. LEROY, Histoire des Templiers, éd. 1848.
- (OSM (date...)) Official publications of the Order of Malta.
- (P) M. POUJOULAT
Histoire de Jérusalem, éd. 1874.
- (Pe) Claude PETIET
Des Chevaliers de Rhodes aux Ch. de Malte, 1994.
- (PL) P. de LUZ
Histoire des Papes, ed. 1960, 2 vol.
- (S) Eric MURAISE
Histoire sincère des Ordres de l'Hôpital, éd. 1978.
- (T) Michel de TAUBE
L'Empereur Paul 1^{er} de Russie, éd. 1955.
- (TB) Gaston TONNA-BARTHET
A Short History of the Order of St John, éd. 1964.
- (V) Abbé de VERTOT
Reference book of the Order, 1726.
- (VK) Patrick Van KERREBROUCK
Généalogie de la Maison de France, 4 vol. pub. 1999.
- (W) K. WALISZEWSKI
Le fils de la Grande Catherine: Paul 1^{er}, éd. 1912.
- (Y) Félix YOUSSEPOFF
Mémoires, éd. 1990 — and photographic Archives.

We don't mention the stories forged in 1160-1170: the "Miracula", that make start the origins of the Hospital of Jerusalem from Julius Caesar, the father of St John-the-Baptist, and the terrestrial life of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

PREHISTORY OF THE ORDER

— **c. 600**

The Pope St GREGORY the GREAT puts monk PROBUS in charge to build up a hospital in Jerusalem. (B)

— **614**

Destruction of this hospital during the Persian invasion.

— **630**

Jerusalem liberated becomes Christian again. (B)

— **638**

Seizure of Jerusalem by the Arabs, without too much troubles for the pilgrims. (B)

— **796**

After the slaughter of the monks of St Saba in Jerusalem, CHARLEMAGNE sends an embassy to the Caliph of Bagdad, HAROUN AL RACHID, who gives him the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. (B, V)

— **c. 807**

That Caliph gives the property of it to CHARLEMAGNE and allows him to start up a hospital, a church and a library confided to the Benedictine monks of Saint Mary the Latin. (B, V)

— 1000

HAKEM AL AZIZ BIAMRILLAH, Caliph since 996, makes set fire to all the Christian buildings in the Holy Land. (B, V)

— 1021 — 1036

His son, ZAHER AL HAKEM, becomes Caliph when he dies, and starts with difficulties to establish contacts again with the European merchants. (H)

It is unlikely that, during his reign, there were possible Christian re-buildings. (H, B)

— 1036

His grand son, Caliph MOSTANSER AL HAKEM BILLAH divides up Jerusalem into four districts ; the one of the Holy Sepulchre is reserved for the Christians who may reconstruct their buildings. (H)

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS IN JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY LAND

— 1048

After the rebuilding of the Sanctuary, the merchants of Amalfi help the Benedictines to reconstruct their buildings, among which were two hospitals.

Birth of the Hospitaller Friars, and then of the Hospitaller Sisters, put under a ‘softened’ Benedictine Rule. (B, V)

It is unlikely that they have reconstructed elsewhere than on the Carolingian lands, since in these times the grant of new pieces of land was forbidden in favour of Jews or Christians. Later on, the buying back of the ruins will be obligatory to reconstruct without new concessions of land. (B, C)

— c. 1055 — 1061

GERARD becomes Rector of the Hospital. Beginning of the tenseness with the Benedictine Abbot of Saint Mary the Latin, following very free adaptations of the Rule. The Hospitallers keep their patron saint, St JOHN ELEEYMON (*Almoner*), Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Sisters, St MARY MAGDALENE. (B, V)

— 1055

Beginning of the Turkish invasion in the Middle East. (G)