

REAL AULA MALLORQUESA

THE BULLETIN



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REAL AULA MALLORQUESA
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EDITORIAL

I hope that this current edition of the Bulletin of the Royal Aula Mallorquesa vividly illustrates two important aspects of our service of the Royal House of Aragon.

Our first article deals roundly with that sad specimen the professional debunker. Reputations take a long while to build and are easily shattered. Our epoch is sadly another which loves to detract and fears to ennoble. We must resist this. We are affiliated to a Military Order and as our predecessors, when attacked, would prepare their response and then sally forth in the defence of Truth, so the Marquis von Wowern has got his attacker in his sights, noted his weaknesses, prepared the ammunition and consequently scored a victory over Falsehood. Such nonsense as is put about by the likes of Stair Sainty gains easy credibility since it has the pretence of truth. This systematic rebuttal is of great help to us.

As the Marquis remarks, we shall be in Catania again in 2004 for the Feast of our Patron Saint Agatha. At the invitation of the Archbishop we shall process through the city as part of the escort of the Offering of the Candles. This is our link to the second article wherein the Countess of Val de Aïsa recounts the amazing story of how Faith triumphs over the centuries against amazing odds but only by dint of much sacrifice. Her story is all the more astounding for being absolutely true.

The Editor
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THREE ITALIAN ROYAL HOUSES IN EXILE – AND THE DYNASTIC ORDERS IN THEIR GIFT

Don Jan-Olov marquis von Wowern

Probably the best known Italian Royal House is that of Savoy, which ruled various parts of Italy from 1713 until Italy became a Republic in 1946. Perhaps lesser known is the Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies, which ruled the united Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily from 1816 until 1861. Even lesser known, except to the readers of these pages, is the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily (Paternò Castello Guttadauro di Carcaci), whose realm included variously Aragon, the Balearic Islands, Sicily, Sardinia and parts of Greece during the period from 1035 until 1410.

The Royal House of Savoy. The founder of the dynasty was Umberto I (1003-48), but the first Duke of Savoy to achieve royal status was Victor Amadeus II, who became King of Sicily in 1713, which was exchanged for the kingdom of Sardinia in 1720. After the war with Austria and successful invasions of Tuscany, Parma, Modena and the Two Sicilies, Victor Emmanuel I was proclaimed King of the united Italy in 1861. Following a referendum in 1946 Italy became a Republic, and the King went into exile without abdicating or renouncing his claims.

The present Head of the Royal House is H.R.H. Prince Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Savoy.

The active chivalric Order of the Royal House of Savoy is the Order of Ss. Maurice and Lazarus, founded in 1434. The Order has Delegates in many countries where there are groups of Knights, while the work in Italy is divided in several regions.

The highest Order of the Royal House of Savoy is The Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation, founded in 1362. It has only one class and is held to rank with the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Garter. Other Orders are the Civil Order of Savoy and the Order of Merit of Savoy.

The Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies. This Royal House reigned over the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (southern Italy and Sicily) from 1734 to 1861. The Capetian dynasty goes back to Hugues Capet, King of France from 987. In 1734 Prince Charles of Spain (later Charles III of Spain) was installed as King of the Two Sicilies. The dynasty ceased to reign when the Kingdom was invaded and annexed to the new Kingdom of Italy on 17 December 1860, but H.M. King Francesco II held the fortress of Gaeta until 13 February 1861, when he was forced to surrender and went into exile without abdicating or renouncing his claims.

After the death in 1960 of Ferdinand Duke of Calabria (a grandson of Francesco II), the succession has been disputed with two branches of the family both claiming to be Heads of the Royal House and Grand Masters of the dynastic Orders in their gift. The so called Italian branch (its head lives in France and his heir in England !) is headed by H.R.H.

Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Castro, while the so called Spanish branch is headed by H.R.H. Don Carlos, Duke of Calabria where his cousin King Juan Carlos has given him the rank of Infant of Spain and President of the Council of the Spanish Royal Military Orders. (One result of the dispute is that the title of Duke of Calabria is also worn by H.R.H. Don Carlo, heir to the Duke of Castro).

The active chivalric Order of the Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies is the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. George, with claims to have been founded in 312 by Emperor Constantine. Because of the above mentioned dispute, the Order has two branches, each headed by a Grand Master and with totally separate international organizations. The Italian branch has delegations in 16 countries including numerous delegations in Italy. The Spanish branch has national Commissions in five countries.

The other Orders of this Royal House are likewise conferred separately by the respective Heads of the two branches of the family. The highest ranking Order is the Illustrious Royal Order of Saint Januarius, which comes in one class. Other Orders are the Illustrious Royal Order of St. Ferdinand and of Merit, The Royal Order of St. George and the Reunion, and the Royal Order of Francis I.

The Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily. The first King of Aragon was Ramiro I (1035 – 1063). James I the Conqueror gave in his will of 1272 Aragon its first formal law of succession. However, after Martin I died in 1410 without legitimate successor, the order of succession was set aside due to the political gerrymandering known as the “Compromise” of Caspe in 1412. The closest heir to

Martin I, James Count of Urgell, died in captivity without having renounced his rights and, when his own closest heir the Duke of Gandia also died in 1454, the lawful succession to the Throne of the lands of the Crown of Aragon thereafter passed to the House of Ayerbe (through James of Ayerbe, the elder son of Peter of Ayerbe, the youngest son of James I the Conqueror). The reason the succession passed to a cadet branch was of course that the senior branches had become extinct. This cadet branch had since 1390 resided in Sicily. Over the centuries the descent had thrown off many branches, many of which had intermarried, and so when Joseph the last Prince of Cassano died in 1851 it was not clear who held the dynastic rights to the lands of the Crown of Aragon. Thus a family conclave was called in 1853 by the then Duke of Carcaci, and a family pact was signed and registered in the Royal Registers of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, stating that the dynastic rights belonged to the line of the House of Paternò Castello Guttadauro di Carcaci.

The present Head of the Royal House is H.R.H. Don Francesco, Prince of Emmanuel and Duke of Perpignan.

The legal rights of the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily were ascertained most recently by the International Arbitration Court in Ragusa (2003).

The active Order of the Royal House of Aragon is the Order of the Collar, or the Military Order of the Collar of Saint Agatha of Paternó. The Order has four active Grand Priorities with members in twelve countries.

The highest ranking honorific Order of the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily is The Royal Aragonese Order of

the Knights of St. George and the Double Crown, which ranks with the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Garter. It comes in one class and is restricted to 12 Knights Companions and 12 Squires (one for each Knight), with Provisions in the Statutes for supernumerary Knights who are not Knight Companions. Other honorific Orders in the gift of the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily are The Royal Order of San Salvador of Aragon, The Order of the Royal Balearic Crown, the Royal Order of James I of Aragon and The Royal Order of St. Elisabeth of Aragon (for ladies).

THE GRANTING OF KNIGHTHOOD IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ARAGON AND CATALONIA

Don John Barden, Count of Palmaret

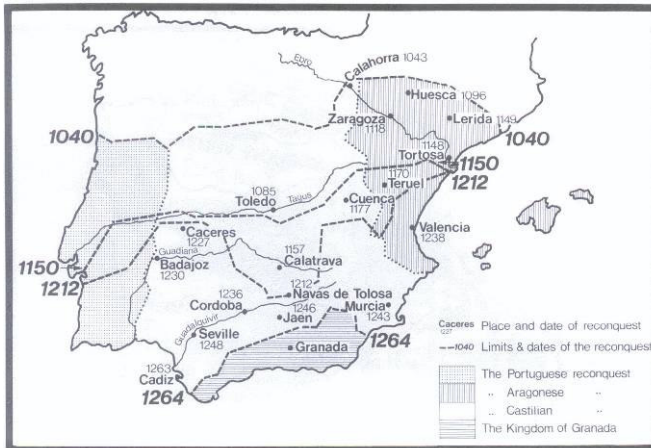
In modern times, we associate the accolade of knighthood with exactly that, i.e. an accolade granted by a head of state or jurisdiction, or similar, in recognition of some major achievement or involvement on the part of the recipient. In other words, it is often given as an expression of thanks or appreciation. However, it will be recognised that in the case of some orders, knighthood can be conferred upon an individual as part of an admission or acceptance procedure, which – debatably – denigrates it somewhat from the practice of denoting recognition or reward. But was this how it was originally awarded?

In the case of the Military Order of the Collar of St. Agatha of Paternò, we can look at how knighthood may have originated in Aragon and Catalonia in early medieval Iberia, before Spain became a unified country.

In the early eleventh century, the Iberian peninsular (and referring to that part that later became the kingdom of Spain) consisted of a group of independent kingdoms or territories, which included – in the west – the kingdom of the Asturias and Leòn and the kingdom of Castile (from

1035 AD); in the east, and in the general area of the Pyrenees, were the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon (Aragon becoming a kingdom in 1035), the counties of Barcelona and Catalonia and the adjacent kingdoms of Majorca and Valencia. The Crown of Aragon was formed in 1137 from Aragon, Barcelona and Catalonia, and later the kingdoms of Majorca and Valencia were also incorporated into the Crown of Aragon by conquest. However, the two most salient points about this territorial consolidation was that not all the gains were made politically but by force and the fact that the growth of the kingdom was achieved in the face of the domination of a huge area of the Iberian peninsular by the Muslims, who had occupied most of modern Spain by the end of the tenth century. Thus, the King of Aragon needed good quality fighting men and a large number of them.

The aim of these kings and rulers was to conquer (actually, to re-conquer, this evolution becoming known as the “*Reconquest*”) Muslim lands that lay in middle or southern Iberia, and thus widen and enlarge their own territorial holdings at the expense of the said Muslims. The King of Aragon, and any other ruler for that matter, was heavily dependant upon warriors from all around Europe, but most notably from Southern France and Italy, who migrated southward over the Pyrenees. The map below at Figure 1 shows the extent of the reconquest, and illustrates the lands recovered and held by the Crown of Aragon, the main instigator of this being King Alfonso the First (known as “The Battler”).



With such soldiers, and in as large a number as he or the land could possibly sustain, the king was gradually able, from the eleventh century onwards, to conquer more land, and retain it under his name and jurisdiction; the rewards for the soldiers were often grants of land from which they could subsequently derive both income and a powerbase of their own. It should be realised that we are referring here to a completely feudal system, where the successful soldier might be given land by the conquering king, which the soldier then held against possible attack, and occupied, in return for military service to the king.

The important point about this is that these soldiers were not necessarily knights; the word that is used most often in historical records to describe these warriors is *miles*, which simply meant “soldier”, but was also used in various contexts to mean “warrior”, “armed vassal” or “armed retainer”. However, another word that was often

interchanged for *miles* was *caballero* (or *equis* in Latin), meaning “horseman”, and thus we can start to get the impression that many of these fighting men were mounted *miles*. Again, we should also bear in mind that the provision of mounts and equipment for warfare was expensive (so what has changed, I would ask?), so it is a fair assumption that the *equites/caballeros* were men from mixed backgrounds, but predominantly either from more prosperous families, perhaps nobility, and those who had already made their mark, and gained an income, from soldiering. In either case, the pre-requisite for both the provision of the necessary finance and the end result was the same – land tenure, which also brought with it a form of social status and responsibility. With that status came formal recognition; a military-minded and politically sensitive king wished to surround himself with powerful and trustworthy nobles, so the answer was simple – if they were not already ennobled, then the king would bring the soldier up to the first rung of the ladder by knighting him. Thus, knighthood in Aragon was, from these early days, almost inevitably associated with success in the military field, conquest, land tenure, income, feudal obligation and – above all – recognition of achievement. As probably every single man so rewarded was equestrian in nature, the term “caballero” started to dominate which shares a common derivation with the title “chevalier”. In this way, the conferment of knighthood in those times seems to match the formal and public reward systems that we see today.

It is easy to assume that this system worked well, and it did to a certain extent, but it had problems. The main problem was that very often, the *caballero* did not remain under the service of one king or ruler; there are many instances where a knight served another king or ruler, and if successful, was similarly rewarded by land in that king's jurisdiction. Then, the knight had to pay his feudal due and homage to two or more rulers, which clearly was both anomalous and contradictory, and led to many clashes of interest. In practice, the knight normally chose – as his main liege lord – the ruler who had given him most land! Thus, in Aragon, we have cases where Aragonese (and I use this term only to loosely denote those knights who held land in Aragon) knights also owed homage and feudal obligations to the King of Castile and to the Count of Barcelona (before it became part of the Crown of Aragon).

It was this situation that led nearly all the kings and rulers of the jurisdictions in Iberia to consider ways of keeping their landed vassal knights exclusively loyal to, and dependant upon, themselves; one of the most obvious solutions was to group their knights into a sort of cohesive and formal brotherhood that swore allegiance only to the head of that brotherhood, which was the king or ruler himself, thus observing a direct and personal tie. In this way, wandering *caballeros* would not have been quite so prone to wandering – at least, that was the theory! In this way, the concept of the monarchical chivalric order was introduced, with the knights and nobles becoming sworn members of the group under the full control and permanent obligation to the head of the order – the king, the founder.

I can argue that the concept of such orders was not new, because by the time of King Alfonso the Battler (1104-34), the Templars were already predominant in Aragon, and although they were not a monarchical Order (i.e. they owed allegiance only to, and directly to, the Pope himself) they nevertheless set the standard in terms of organisation, fighting ability, administration and - above all - their religious and military zeal, and it was these commendable traits that the monarchs of Iberia wished to emulate within their own orders, when formed. Add to this the fact that the reconquest of Iberia from the Muslims was seen very much as something of a crusade, and bearing in mind that the crusading spirit was very much alive in Europe at this time, then we can begin to see that what actually occurred was both frontier warfare and a quasi-religious exercise, with King Alfonso the Battler actually trying to capture Valencia to use this as his port for launching his forces into a crusade in the Holy Land. Accordingly, he tried to adopt something of the Templars' *modus operandi*, and attempted to form two military monarchical orders under his own remit, namely the Order of Monreal and the Order of Belchite, by recruiting some of his landed knights; sadly, both orders did not succeed, mainly because his tenant knights still wished to retain their independence. In frustration, and in a fit of religious enthusiasm, he left the whole of his kingdom jointly to the Templars and the Hospitallers in his will of 1131, but the terms of the will were never exercised and it was arranged for Alfonso's brother Ramiro (until then a monk) to succeed to the estates.

I would like to interject a hypothesis of my own here, which appears in far more detail in another publication of mine, so for the sake of brevity and relevance, I will keep this short. I strongly believe that the idea of a quasi-religious monarchical order did not stem from Christian countries or realms, but from the Muslim “enemy”. There were already in existence, in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, Muslim communities known as *ribats*, which were frontier religious houses where the incumbents combined a strictly Muslim way of life with a form of professional military service against the infidel (an enemy of Islam), and were directly influenced, to the point of being controlled by, their local Muslim rulers; many *ribats* were in Iberia (as well as the Middle East), and thus I strongly suspect that this is where the idea for the formation of the Templars (who must have known about *ribats*) originated, as did, perhaps, the idea of monarchical orders, although this is pure speculation on my part.

Thus in Aragon, unfortunately, the practice of using monarchical military orders was not successful, but, oddly, it was very successful elsewhere in the peninsular, with the Orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcàntara being formed and which grew to be very powerful orders indeed. These orders were all very similar in that they were formed to bind a group of knights together into a brotherhood that was sworn, under the rule of the king, to hold, defend and protect specific areas against the attack of the Muslims; thus, we can see clearly the combination of land tenure, professional military service, religious zeal and monarchical control all starting to coalesce into something

that has survived until today, in its various forms. As an example, the Order of Santiago was formed by King Ferdinand II of León in 1170 to defend the town of Càceres, was then joined by another similar group of knights known as “the Brothers of Avila”, and by 1175 the Order of Santiago, as it became known then, was confirmed by the papacy.

Therefore, perhaps the reason that the King of Aragon’s own orders failed is that they were not specific enough in purpose or role, but I cannot say for sure; regardless, it was not until later in the history of Aragon that Aragonese monarchical orders were created and survived, with the Order of Montesa being formed almost exclusively from displaced Templar knights. The rest, as they say, is history, and is easily found in the history of our own Order and the other Aragonese Orders that are under the remit of our Grand Master.

Several key facts emerge about our knightly forbears. Firstly, to become a feudal tenant meant, more often than not, that the incumbent was either already a man of nobility or was created one by knighting; secondly, knighting under such circumstances was the result of achievement and was a form of reward; thirdly, membership of the monarchical orders was limited to men who were already knights or nobles; lastly, the successful monarchical orders were formed for a purpose, often incorporating both religious and military aims.

Therefore, it is safe to say that our modern methods of admission and knighting are purely functionary when compared to the original manner in which knights were both created and became members of orders.

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ON THE LEGITIMACY OF THE MOC – PART 2

Don Göte Appelberg LLD, Count of Torre la Fueba

In my last article I discussed mainly the judicial perspective of the legitimacy issue. The original meaning of the word “legitimate” is also “legal/recognized by law”. It is however common to use the term in a more extended sense, where something more than the question of legal – illegal according to national or international law is referred to. Usually the matter addressed is if the Order in question is recognized in a certain form. Various dictionaries also support this meaning of the term.

The use of this more extended meaning may however cause some confusion, as several countries have legislation regarding freedom of association, and some countries have laws forbidding the wearing of certain insignia (e.g. France and Italy). In the discussion one may easily designate perfectly lawful organisations or Orders as illegitimate, while decorations awarded by lawful organisations or Orders in some countries are forbidden. For the sake of clarity it would be better to limit the use of the terms “legitimate/illegitimate” to their original meaning, that is what is legal/illegal. To indicate Orders or organisations who have not been founded in a proper manner, it is better to use the terms “recognized/not

recognized”, “proper/improper” or “true/false”. Though it cannot be said to be wrong to use the terms “legitimate/illegitimate”, because they also have this extended meaning. My point is only that greater clarity would be achieved if the terms “legitimate/illegitimate” were limited to their meaning of legal/illegal.

The form of recognition, which seems to be internationally accepted, is that the Order was founded by or recognized by (that is, under the protection of) a state through its main authority a Head of State (Pope, King, ruling Queen, sovereign Prince, President or similar). Orders founded by a reigning Monarch, especially during the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, could also be connected to the princely House as an Order of the Court or a dynastic Order. These Orders are considered recognized (legitimate) even if the princely House was later overthrown or somehow lost the possession of the Throne, as long as the Order is tied to the princely House in question and its Head.

In the international debate about true and false Chivalric Orders there seems to be a certain disagreement about whether or not a dynastic Order must have worked in unbroken succession from its foundation up until today to be considered a true chivalric Order, or if it is acceptable that the activities of an Order may have ceased during a longer or shorter period of time, after which it was reactivated in a more or less reorganized form. In the same way there seems to be disagreement on whether or not the Head of a ruling Princely House retains *fons honorum* after the House lost the power of government. There seems

however to be agreement on the fact that if an Order whose activity has been in abeyance during a certain period of time is reactivated with the approval of the ruling Head of State then the revival is legitimate. There also seems to be agreement on the fact that if the constitution of the State at the time the Princely House lost its power of government admitted the Prince to retain *fons honorum* (that is, this was tied to the person of the Prince and not to his office as Head of State) then the Princely House retains *fons honorum* as long as they have not renounced it. As the MOC and the Royal House of Aragon fulfil those criteria, as is also verified by several court rulings, the questions regarding MOC are most likely due to ignorance.

In order to make a discussion of those matters meaningful it is required that the participants act on grounds of fact and comprehension. It is then a great advantage if the participants can start from the same criteria, otherwise there is a great risk the participants will talk at cross-purposes. Then there will be no real discussion, but only more or less extensive declarations seldom leading anywhere. Sadly it is not unusual for such declarations to be dressed in the shape of discussion, which only adds to the confusion surrounding the facts.

An example of this type of illusory discussion is the statements about MOC spread by Mr Guy Stair Sainty from his homepage at the Internet. The main source for the statements he is spreading seems to be Lieut-Col Robert Gayre's book "The Knightly Twilight". This book, published in 1973, was as I understand it written after a personal dispute between Gayre and Professor Vincent

Powell-Smith (a dispute Gayre lost after a trial in court). Because the source contains many errors of fact, as has been convincingly shown by Don Jan-Olov marquis von Wowern, a propagation of statements based only on an uncritical rendering of this source will suffer from the same errors of fact. Besides making the discussion pointless, this uncritical rendering will only surround the propagator with an air of ridicule, as it will become obvious that he is not able to carry on a serious discussion on an otherwise rather important issue. The many errors on fact will conceal obscurities, which would have been interesting to have had illuminated from different viewpoints.

On the arbitration from Ragusa

On the 9th May 2003 there was published in nr 19 of the Official Gazette from the Sicilian Region the decision of the permanent Arbitration Court in Ragusa. The Official Gazette is a Gazette published by the Republic of Italy for the announcement of court decisions and administrative rulings. The arbitration, pronounced 8th January 2003, was about a matter between the Higher Institute of Nobiliary Law and Sig. Francesco Nicola Roberto Paternò Castello di Carcaci (Italian courts do not use Royal or nobiliary titles to designate persons).

Once again an Italian Court has tried who is the lawful Head of the Royal House of Aragon and carrier of its dynastic rights as *jus majestatis* and *jus honorum*. Earlier the Tribunal of Bari in 1952 and the Court of Appeal in Pistoia tried these matters in 1964. In these Courts the

matters were tried according to the procedure of criminal law. The now published arbitration follows the procedure of civil law. This means the decision is primarily binding for the contending parties. This is so particularly regarding the binding parts and the fulfilment of certain obligations. In the parts where the decision is stipulative, e.g. establishes a specific status, it has also legal force in regard to third party, authorities and other official bodies. The decision is final and without appeal.

In the court decision the court initially stipulates that Mr Francesco Nicola Roberto Paternò Castello di Carcaci is as direct descendant the legitimate heir and pretender to the Throne of the last Sovereign of the Royal House of Aragon. He is therefore carrier of the qualities then listed by the court, the rights and the privileges,

- a) the quality of Royal Highness and Royal Prince of the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily;
- b) the right to designate himself Sovereign and Head of Name and Arms of the Royal House of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily, never renounced, with the right for himself and his successors for an unlimited period whether male or female, to all the qualities prerogatives, attributes and styles of that rank and with the ability to use coats of arms, titles and designations which belong to him by hereditary right,
- c) the nobiliary style of Nobleman of the Dukes of Carcaci, Prince of Emanuel, Duke of Perpignan and by the Grace of God and hereditary right, as legitimate Pretender to the Thrones of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily, the titles of Prince of Catalonia, Count of Cerdagne, Count of

Rousillon, Patrician of Catania, Lord of Valencia, Lord of Montpellier, Count of Urgell, Viscount of Carlades, etc, etc, Sovereign Grand Master of the Military Order of Saint Agatha of Paternò, Grand Master of the Royal Order of the Balearic Crown, Grand Master of the Royal Order of James I of Aragon, Grand Master of the Order of San Salvador of Aragon and of the Royal Aragonese Order of the Knights of Saint George and the Double Crown.

d) the sovereign prerogatives known as *jus majestatis* and *jus honorum*, with the ability to confer nobiliary titles, with or without predicates, noble arms, honorific titles and chivalric distinctions relating to the hereditary dynastic Orders,

e) the quality of a subject of international law and of Grand Master of non-National Orders within the terms of the Law of the 3rd March 1951, No. 178.

f) the present judgment, which has an irrevocable character under Italian Law, takes effect, as the responsibility of and at the expense of the interested party, in the territory of those States which have signed the New York Convention of the 10th June 1958, which was effective in Italy by virtue of the Law of the 19th January 1968, No. 62 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Italy of the 2nd of February 1968, No 66);

g) the annotation, by right or by choice, on the baptismal register, retained in the territorially appropriate parish church of the Catholic Church of the text that follows: His Royal Highness the Royal Prince Don Francesco Nicola Roberto Paternò Castello di Carcaci, of Aragon, Majorca and Sicily;

It is of particular interest to note that the court under e) certifies the position of H.R.H. as Grand Master of non-National Orders in the sense in which this term is used in the Italian Law nr 178 of 1951. The Tribunal in Pistoia, which arrived at the same conclusion, also tried this issue. This means that the honours and awards given by H.R.H. and the insignia worn by members of those Orders are not included in the prohibition made by this law. The court also lays it down that this arbitration is regulated by the New York Convention of 10th June 1958 regarding the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards (1). This means the judgement has international legal force and can be carried out in all those countries having signed the Convention. These include all countries where the MOC is established. The status according to family law and the status as Grand Master of the dynastic Orders listed in the judgement of H.R.H. the Duke of Perpignan are thereby legally certified. It is therefore correct to say e.g. that the MOC is an internationally juridical legal and legitimate dynastic Order.

That the MOC is a true/recognized/proper/legitimate Order of Chivalry, in any case since the 18th March 1853, should now be beyond question for a serious participant in the debate regarding these issues.

It is however uncertain when the Order was originally founded. Fragmentary source documents point in the direction of the last quarter of the 13th century (1275-1300). Further historical research is desired, although in all probability we will never know all details surrounding the foundation of the Order.

Another issue of interest in connection with this is to what extent the activities and content of an Order can be altered without disturbing its status as true/recognized/proper/legitimate. For dynastic Orders it is normally true that there is a clause in the Statutes saying the Grand Master by power of his *fons honorum* can reform the Order and alter the Statutes. This is also the case of the MOC (1983 Statutes, chapter 9, article 29). It should also be noted that on our part we have court rulings verifying both the legitimacy of the MOC and the position of H.R.H. the Duke of Perpignan as *fons honorum* both from the time before and after the coming into force of the present Statutes. Regarding the MOC it is thus certified that both the Statutes and the present direction of the activities are a part of its status as a legitimate dynastic Order.

INNOVATIONS IN PAPAL HERALDRY

The Arms of Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of
Catholic Heraldry

Rev. Guy Selvester, M.Div., M.A.

Shortly after his election on April 19, 2005 Pope Benedict XVI (the former Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger of Germany and the Roman Curia) adopted a new coat of arms to replace the arms he had borne as a cardinal. In doing so he was not doing anything unusual or extraordinary. Many of his predecessors had, in fact, modified or even completely changed their armorial bearings upon election to the Papacy. In the 20th Century alone Pius XII, John Paul I and John Paul II modified their coats of arms in some way after they became Pope.

However, in addition to rearranging the design on the shield of his arms Pope Benedict XVI decided to adopt two innovations in Papal heraldry. The design of the shield still employs the scallop shell from his former arms and also the bear of St. Korbinian. This bear, a symbol of one of the Pope's predecessors as Archbishop of Munich-Freising, comes from a legend about the saint. Korbinian was on his way to Rome when a bear attacked and killed his horse. The saint rebuked the bear who submitted to him and upon command carried Korbinian's belongings to Rome in a pack on his back. Pope Benedict likes this image as it evokes an unlikely candidate submitting himself in service to the Lord.

The Pope sees a fitting symbol for himself in this as the unlikely candidate as he assumed the highest office in the Church. Included on the shield is also the Moor's head, or Ethiopian's head. This crowned African's head is used in the arms of the Archdiocese of Munich-Freising in Germany. Like some popes before him, Benedict XVI wished to retain some element of the arms of his former diocese. Popes John Paul I, Blessed John XXIII and Saint Pius X each retained the winged lion of St. Mark which is employed in the arms of Venice, the diocese which they each served as bishop prior to becoming Pope. The scallop shell is used in the Church as a symbol of Baptism and is also used as a symbol of pilgrimage. In addition to this the Pope uses it as an allusion to the writings and theology of St. Augustine who once reflected while looking at a sea shell that the human mind could no more fully comprehend the enormity of God than could a shell contain the waters of the sea.

Originally, the bear and the shell were shown in the upper right and lower left, respectively, of a shield that was divided into four equal quarters or quadrants. In the other two quarters the Moor's head was depicted when Cardinal Ratzinger was still an Archbishop in Germany. Combining personal symbols with the symbols of a diocese on the same shield is a way to express that in effect a bishop is "married" to his diocese. The Church adopted this practice from secular heraldry where the coat of arms of a husband and wife are similarly combined on the same shield. However, so as not to imply that he was still "married" to the archdiocese of Munich the Pope decided to make use of some of the symbols of his former diocese, namely the bear and the Moor's head, but to rearrange them in an entirely new fashion. In order to accomplish this it was decided to divide

the shield into three sections using a design known as “chape ploye”. This term, taken from French as is all the official descriptive terminology of heraldry (known to heraldic enthusiasts as the “blazon”) alludes to the top portion of the shield looking like a cape spread apart to reveal a third area below.

For the external ornaments to the arms the Pope uses the traditional sign of the Petrine Office: the keys crossed in an “X” behind the shield. These keys; one of which is gold and the other silver are mentioned in Matthew’s gospel when Jesus says to Simon, “You are Peter (rock) and upon this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you loosen on Earth shall be loosed in heaven and whatever you bind on Earth shall be held bound in heaven”. The keys represent this power to bind and to loose.

Pope Benedict also chose to include the pallium, depicted suspended below the shield in his arms. This band of wool worn by the Pope as a symbol of his office and granted by him to metropolitan archbishops throughout the world as a sign of sharing in his authority, has been used in Catholic heraldry before. However, its introduction into papal heraldry is a novelty. Some feel it is superfluous while others see it as a means to reflect heraldically a renewed emphasis on this vestment as one of the primary symbols of the papal office. While heraldry continues to maintain seemingly archaic customs and even outmoded language it cannot be closed to innovation as it is a constantly evolving art form.

Nevertheless, the other innovation in Pope Benedict's arms has not met with such widespread approval. He chose to ensign the arms not with the traditional papal triple tiara (or *triregno*) which remains the symbol of the Holy See and the Vatican City-State but a "papal mitre". This invented ornament has the basic shape of a bishop's mitre with three gold horizontal bands suggesting the three crowns on the tiara. The artist who designed the Pope's arms, Archbishop Andrea Montezemolo, says that it was the pope himself who wanted a mitre in his arms rather than the tiara. As a sort of compromise he devised this mitre/tiara which has raised a few eyebrows.

It is not necessary to replace the papal tiara as it has been retained as a heraldic symbol despite the fact that it is no longer actually worn by popes. What is actually used in life and what is used as a heraldic symbol are two very different things. The keys mentioned above don't even exist yet they are retained in heraldry. But this is more than just an argument about style or preference. The mitre is not used by Catholic bishops to ensign the shield. In fact, its use by bishops was specifically forbidden in 1969 by Pope Paul VI. Rather, Anglican bishops ensign the shield with the mitre in their arms. So, in an attempt to make the papal arms look less regal and more pastoral the Pope has created an unprecedented achievement which actually bears more resemblance to very ancient rather than modern Catholic heraldry!

It remains to be seen if the mitre-tiara creation of Abp. Montezemolo will have staying power or if the tiara will simply be used interchangeably with it. For example, it has long been the custom to depict the coat of arms of the

current pope as a kind of mosaic in flowers arranged in the flower bed behind St. Peter's basilica. In years past only the design inside the shield was changed, the tiara and keys having been planted long ago and retained each time. Once again, the arms of Pope Benedict XVI were cleverly depicted florally by the Vatican gardeners but under the usual papal crown instead of the newer mitre. Furthermore, we could see another attempt at a compromise by using a sort of stylized form of the original headgear of the popes called a camelaucum. This ancient hat, unique to the Popes, has its origin in around the 5th Century. Its shape was that of a folded cap of white linen and it was part of Byzantine court dress. Later, perhaps in or after the 10th Century, the camelaucum began to be ornamented first with one, then two and eventually three crowns. It is the piece of headgear that is also the forerunner of the bishop's mitre but its top always remained closed like a cone whereas the mitre eventually developed into a split hat that has the two distinctive "horns" that we know today. Only time will tell if this most ancient papal symbol will see a revival. In the mean time the official symbol of the Catholic Church, the Holy See and the Vatican remains the triple tiara and crossed keys and the "official" version of Pope Benedict's arms for the moment depicts the mitre/tiara hybrid. It is difficult to foresee if this will establish a new heraldic custom or if it will simply be a flash in the pan. It will also be interesting to discover if the use of the mitre for any bishop will be re-introduced to Catholic heraldic custom as an option instead of the broad-brimmed pilgrim's hat, called a galero, that we now see in the coats of arms of bishops, archbishops and cardinals.

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