



The Military Order of the Collar of Saint Agatha of Paternò

Grand Chancellor's Bulletin

March 2021

Beware the Ides of March...

We are all familiar with the soothsayer's warning to Julius Caesar in the play bearing his name. I wonder if Shakespeare realised how widely this phrase would be known thanks to his play. Although a line in a play, for the Roman Empire the "Ides" were the anchor point of a month that usually corresponded with the full moon, making them a point of religious observance. The month of March derives its name from Mars the god of war, which meant that the "Ides of March" became synonymous as a time for settling debts as the weather was about to change and wars could break out. Throughout history many a household and kingdom has fallen over unpaid debts! So, "Beware the Ides of March".

As we continue our journey through the Holy Season of Lent, let us reflect upon the debt we owe, not to any kingdom, institution or man-made authority, but to the One who sits on the Eternal Throne in heaven. For in His great goodness, He bore our human nature to pay the debt of the first fall, opening the gates of heaven to all who would obey Him. Yet to this day, humanity has a divided heart, and we are called to atone for our faults through works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. By these works we purify the will, strengthen our resolve and grow in love for all that is true and noble.

My dear Knights and Dames of the Military Order of the Collar, you have chosen to witness to what is true and noble by taking the mantle of the Order; a mantle that is counter cultural. We live in a world that increasingly uses the words of Julius Caesar in response to the soothsayer: "He is a dreamer; let us leave him. Pass." One day the world will stand to account; let us not forget the fate of Caesar - two acts later he is assassinated on the steps of the Senate! Remember the call of Christ: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." (Mt 25:13) ... or to coin a phrase "Beware the Ides of March".

My prayer for you this March is that you may grow in your love and resolve of all that is true and noble; that you may come the celebration of Easter with minds and hearts made new.

May Almighty God continue to bless you and the work you undertake.



Fr Michael Doyle

stephenwm@outlook.com
www.mocinfo.info



The Grand Hospitaller

The Grand Master has been pleased to appoint as Grand Commander Rev'mo Don Guy Selvester Coll MOC Baron of Lucca Sicula, Titular Abbot of San Leone di Pannacchio and thus ex officio a member of the Government of the Order.

The unlucky along you may not yet know Father Guy so he is priest in charge of an extensive parish in the West of New Jersey as well as being the Director of the diocesan Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Affairs. Father Guy's passion is heraldry and he is the go-to man when a new bishop (or at least those with sense) needs a coat of arms. He has a blog specializing in ecclesiastical heraldry: www.exarandorum.com.



But why Sicily?

It is a complicated story but I shall try to make brief sense of it.

Sicily has always been ruled by outsiders, some better than others. In 1196 Sicily became part of the Holy Roman Empire under the Swabians from Germany. Their rule was relatively benign and under Frederick II Sicily was undoubtedly the cultural high point in the whole of Europe. Frederick had married Constance of Aragon, daughter of Alfonso II, who brought many Aragonese knights to settle on the island.



Frederick II



Crown of Constance



The Vespers

But in 1266 Charles of Anjou conquered Sicily and the repressive régime of the French began. On Easter Sunday 1282 at the pre-arranged signal of the Vespers' bell the Sicilians arose and threw off the Angevins.

This episode is known as the Sicilian Vespers and Verdi wrote an opera about it with that name. Lying in wait with his fleet offshore was Peter III of Aragon, married to the Swabian heiress (another Constance) and so Peter was a claimant to the throne by virtue of his wife.



Peter III



Q. Constance



The Aragonese continued to rule Sicily with their capital in Catania and their residence in the Castello Ursino until the so-called Compromise of Caspé when the Royal House of Aragon was usurped by the Castillians. By that time there was a considerable Aragonese presence resident on the island, including descendants of the James the Conqueror (father of Peter III), the last standing claimants to the throne of Aragon according to the specific provisions laid down in the Will of King James.



Castello Ursino



Palazzo Biscari

They descend from James I's third wife, all descendants in the male line from his previous marriages having died out. These descendants had taken the family name of Paternò after the town of that name which they held for a while. The Paternò accumulated lands and titles and held myriad high offices in Sicily. The Paternò Prince of Biscari we met in the January bulletin was one of Europe's leading intellectuals in his day. In his palace "on the coast" (as opposed to the one he had in Via Etnea) we have our annual dinner each year on the 3rd February, but he also had a renowned museum of artefacts which he had had excavated and also an extensive library in which his travel records including of his visit to the Balearic Islands were held.

To be continued...

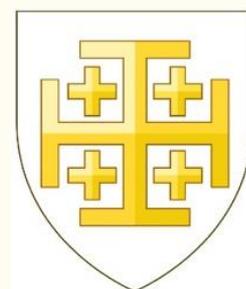
What is a Coat of Arms and why?

Coat of arms were, at an early age, used as a way to know where your commander or king was on the battlefield and to identify a person in an easy way away from the battlefield.

Metals	
	Or
	Argent
Colours	
	Azure
	Gules
	Purpure
	Sable
	Vert
Furs	
	Ermine
	Ermines
	Erminois
	Pean
	Vair
	Counter-vair
	Potent
	Counter-potent

When someone is awarded a coat of arms it is the description of the coat of arms (not the image) that is awarded (called the "blazon") and most often with reference to an attached picture. The picture is to be regarded only as an example of how to interpret the blazon. The language used in a blazon of a coat of arms can be very complicated, with words that are not easily understood by a modern reader. To explain that language could fill many books!

Old coat of arms were simple with few components so they could quickly be recognised by a distant observer. To make it easier some rules about the use of colours developed. The basic colours are blue, red, violet, black and green ("azure, gules, purpure, sable and vert" in heraldic language). There are also two metals: gold and silver ("or and argent"). One of the basic rules are that two metals or two colours should not share a border. There are of course many exceptions from this rule and one of the most well-known are the coat of arms for the kingdom of Jerusalem with the two metals (as shown).



Before the computer age it was very expensive to use colours so when depicting a coat of arms in a printed book, very often different dots and lines were used to represent the colours (as in the right-hand column). Besides the colours and metals there are "furs" that are used. There are also some other uncommon colours that could be used. A list of some of the oldest coat of arms can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3r05tbB>.

In the next edition, I will talk about helmets that are placed on top of the shield of a coat of arms

Anders Bager



The Arms of Regan

Ireland was one of the first countries in Europe to adopt a continuous surname used by every generation. Regan was the name of the Kings of Thomond (west Ireland), and has been used by every generation since the year 978 AD, but the names of six generations are recorded before that, so from about 800 AD. The Irish kings were wont to elect a leader or High King in times of national crisis. And so it was that Brian Boru was elected as High King to confront and defeat the Vikings, who had established themselves at Dublin, as well as other strongholds such as Cork, Waterford, Wexford etc. King Brian Boru defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 AD. At his side was his nephew Regan. It was Good Friday and after the battle the pious king returned to his tent to pray when escaping Vikings entered and killed him, but Regan survived.



Maurice O'Regan was Secretary of State to King Desmond Macmorrow and chronicled the arrival of Strongbow and the Norman Knights in 1170 AD.

Colonel Sir Teigue O'Regan, knighted by James II in Dublin Castle after the Battle of the Boyne, was the victor of the Siege of the Green Fort, leading a Jacobite regiment for King James II, whom he accompanied into exile in France. At that time, he used the Arms: Or, three bendlets Gules. To this, James II added 'a Canton also Gules' as a mark of honour. In exile in France, Col. Sir Teigue O'Regan led a regiment at the service of the Dauphin of France. Discovering that the surname Regan means 'the little king', the Dauphin conferred new Arms based on his own, and these are usually referred to as 'the Regan Arms': Or, a chevron ermine, three dolphins naiant Azure.

The genealogy of the Regan family is recorded and kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, but I have been unable to prove a direct personal link with Col. Sir Teigue. DNA tests prove Regan lineage, but we are numerous. Accordingly, I sought a new Grant of Arms. The College of Arms proposed using elements from unofficial Arms adopted by some, but never registered. Then, bearing in mind that I am a catholic Priest and Benedictine, I adapted these elements in a religious way. So, a garland became a Crown of Thorns, and a heart became a wounded heart, for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The five roundels or Golps, purple in colour, signify wounds: the Five Wounds of Christ.

Per Chevron Argent & Purpure. In chief, five golps in chevron, and in base within a Crown of Thorns Or, a heart Or vulned of the field.

Motto: 'Regis Regum Servus' I SERVE THE KING OF KINGS. The Motto alludes to the meaning of my surname: REGAN = LITTLE KING

Dom Thomas Regan OSB

Saint Agatha over Mount Etna



Guisepina Campisi Paternò Castello

stephenwm@outlook.com
www.mocinfo.info

