

On the Succession of the Order of Elus-Cohen
Followed by the Filiation of the Elus-Cohen
(1943 Resurgence)
by AURIFER

Translated from the French
by Sâr Phosphoros

In a booklet published in 1948, entitled *Le Martinisme Contemporain et ses véritable origines*, we have attempted to demonstrate that the Martinist filiation attributed to L.C. de Saint-Martin was, historically, more than doubtful. We believe truly to have succeeded therein, and today, it is again without hesitation that we lay claim, in its great part, to the enlargement thereof. However, there is a point that the course of our studies and our historical research into matters of illuminism have permitted us to study more particularly, and which it is important to specify in its turn. It is that of the connections between *Rectified Masonry* and the *Elus-Cohen*, that of the similitudes between the "Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte" and the dignitaries of the second Order.

J.B. Willermoz, Réau-Croix in the *Cohen Order*, member of its Sovereign Tribunal, was eventually the true head of the *Strict Templar Observance* in France. He bore the titles thereof and transmitted them in its name. But one day, profiting from the National Convent of Lyon, in 1778, he saw to modify not only its principal elements, but also substituted for the "Knight of the Temple" of the Strict Observance, a new name: that of "Knight Beneficent of the Holy City."

Better yet, he constituted, within the bosom of the latter, within the bosom of the Inner Order, a complementary secret class, composed of two new grades: the "Chevalier Profès" [Professed Knight] and the "Chevalier Grand-Profès" [Grand Professed Knight].

Nobody is unaware that, in the Monastic Orders and in the Chivalric Orders, the Professed and Grand Professed are monastics who have pronounced order vows and thus left the noviciate. We could not better underscore that Willermoz had a plan well to himself, long matured, and we could not deny him a very clear hidden motive in this considerable modification. The history of the "Strict Templar Observance" may be fruitfully studied in the work of Alice Joly: "Un Mystique Lyonnais et les Secrets de la Franc-maçonnerie, 1730-1824."

Now, here is how J.B. Willermoz presents the plan that he had conceived, its *raisons d'être*, and its realization.

In a letter of October 12, 1781, addressed to the Prince de Hesse-Cassel, written thus seven years after the death of don Martinès de Pasqually, he expresses himself thus:

"In the beginning of the year 1767, I had the good fortune to acquire my first teachings in the Order of which I have made mention previously to Your Most Serene Highness. The one who gave them to me being favorably disposed to me by his information and examinations, I advanced rapidly and I obtained the first six degrees¹. A year later, I underwent another journey with this intent, and I obtained the seventh and last², which gives the title and the character of chief in this Order. The one from whom I have received it was said to be one of the seven Universal Sovereign Chiefs of the Order, and has often proved his knowledge by deeds.

"In following this latter, I have received at the same time the power to confer the lower degrees³, while conforming myself for this to what was prescribed to me.

"However, I made no use of it for some years, which I used to instruct and strengthen myself, as far as my civil occupations would permit it to me. It was only in 1772 that I began to receive my physician brother⁴ and shortly after the brothers Paganucci and Périsset du Luc, that Your Highness will have seen on the rolls of the Grand-Profès. And these three have become since then my confidants for all related things that I have had the liberty to confide in others.

"It is essential that I inform Your Most Serene Highness that the degrees of the said Order contain three parts.

"The first three degrees⁵ instruct on the divine, spiritual, human, and corporeal nature, and it is precisely this instruction which makes up the basis of that of the Grand-Profès. Your Most Serene Highness may recognize it by reading them.

"The following degrees⁶ teach the ceremonial theory preparatory to the practice, which is reserved exclusively to the seventh and last⁷.

"Those who have attained to this degree, whose number is very small, are subjected to the particular works or Operations which are done essentially in March and September. I have practiced them constantly and I am happy with them..."

A little further, Willermoz tells us this yet again:

"As to the secret instructions (of the Grade-Profès), my aim, in drawing them up, was to awaken the Masons of our Régime (the Strict Templar Observance, or Rectified Scottish Masonry), from their fatal slumber. Bound on the one hand by my own oaths, and wary on the other for fear of furnishing aliments to a fivolous curiosity, or to exalt too much certain imaginations if we presented them the plans of a theory which would announce a practice, I aim to oblige myself to make no mention thereof, nor even to present a very abbreviated picture of the nature of the beings, of their respective relations, or of the universal divisions."

Now, a reading and a more attentive examination of this letter have allowed us to state that Willermoz, in order to dispel the too pressing curiosity of the Prince de Hesse-Cassel, has not told the exact truth. Is he to be blamed? We believe not, for his prudence has been useful and has protected the *Order of the Cohen* long after his death.

First of all, it is incorrect that Willermoz could transmit only the lower degrees of the Order. As a Réau-Croix...he had the power to make a Réau-Croix... obviously!

It is Bacon de la Chevalerie, Substitute of the Grand Sovereign of the Order, who ordained him on May 11, 12, and 13, 1768. The "Secret Statutes of the Réau-Croix," that we possess by the manuscript from the 18th century which is in our archives, tells us this indeed, in the chapter entitled "Extract of Preparation and Precaution for the reception of Réaux-Croix."

"If there are several Réaux-Croix together, the three operations shall be made by two among them and by the deputy for this adoption who shall perform the final one."

Thus, we see by these articles, the Ordination of Réau-Croix is repeated three times, either by the Ordaining Réau-Croix, or by three affiliates of the same grade, each in their turn. But it is false that Willermoz, as a Réau-Croix, could have only transmitted the lower degrees of the Order.

Moreover, Willermoz is not a simple Réau-Croix. In his letter of June 20, 1768, don Martinès de Pasqually gave him his titles in the Order of the Cohen: "Inspector General of the Order...Sovereign Judge...Conductor and Commander in Chief of the Columns of the East and West of our Grand Mother Lodge..."

As notes Gérard van Rijnberk in his book *Martinez de Pasqually*, page 99 of volume 1, it is certain that in 1774 Willermoz ordained as Réau-Croix his sister, Mme. Provensal! And yet, don Martinès de Pasqually was opposed to the presence of women in the Order; she was certainly the only female Réau-Croix.

We read indeed in the letter of October 12, 1773, addressed to Willermoz:

"I pray you to embrace him for me, as well as your dear sister, whose praise has been spoken to me of her desire to attain to the aim of la Chose. As I think that you have given her some instructions relative to la Chose, and that she has profited therefrom as I am assured, I exhort you to cultivate her while awaiting me to send you what is necessary for her reception, and for the Order to receive her, which is all ready for its subject."

Then in that same letter of October 12, 1781, addressed to the Prince Hesse-Cassel, Willermoz declares that he has not been able to communicate any theurgical instructions to the Profès and Grand-Profès, since he cannot, (supposedly, we have seen it!) communicate the Cohen grades beyond Master Cohen.

Now, this is in error, committed by all the historians of Martinism, (and by us likewise), that of maintaining that the Class of the Porch (Apprentice, Companion, and Master Cohen) was purely theoretical. The practice of the operations began already with the Master Cohen, for, in the manuscript of the 18th century already cited, we find a Chapter of the General Ritual entitled: "Invocation called of the Master Cohen."

And this Invocation included, at the end of a certain time, reserved to prayers addressed to God, a true evocation of the Planetary Spirits, followed by the invocation of the Celestial Spirits:

"O You all, Spirits who inhabit and traverse the Celestial and Terrestrial Regions, I conjure you all +++, by the Holy Name of the Eternal, to bring yourselves face to face with me, visibly and invisibly, into the Angles of this work, that I have consecrated to be your dwelling and that of Your Intellects... so that you have to mark by some Character, Hieroglyph, or other figure of Fire, the agreement that I have contracted with you... Such as it is traced in the circles..."

So then, for all these reasons, Willermoz *could* have transmitted something other, in this secret class of Profès and Grand-Profès, than the lower degrees of the Order of the Cohen. *He had the Power to do so.*

Has he done it? In a word, is it truly in the *Inner Order* and in its secret class that we may find the real and authentic filiation of the *true Martinism*? We respond yes, and we shall give our reasons.

First of all, it is certain that the *Inner Order*, the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, no longer constituted in reality a Masonic organization.

In the Ritual of 1778, as well as the one reproduced by Doinel (alias Jean Kostka) in "Lucifer démasqué" (Paris, 1895), as in the two manuscripts that we have had the occasion to see and to recopy, we state that the exact title is that of "Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte du Saint-Sépulcre de Jérusalem en Palestine, Chevalier du Parfait Silence, Silencieux Inconnu."

We find here the two fatidic letters of the Martinism of tradition: *S.I.*

In the course of the Ritual, we encounter this strange phrase:

"The Veil of the Symbols is going, therefore, to fall for you, and the Masonic shadows which surrounded you, they too, are going to disappear in their turn. You are finally going to come to know the Respectable Order which has perpetuated its secret existence within the *bosom of Freemasonry.*"

This phrase already existed in the Ritual of reception of "Knight of the Temple" of the *Strict Templar Observance*. Preserving this filiation, but modifying the name of this grade, Willermoz gave to this text an entirely other signification! The Ritual is the same, but it is no longer the *Order of the Temple* that perpetuates its existence within the bosom of Freemasonry, it is that of the *Elus-Cohen...*

This Order is not Masonic, since it perpetuates its existence therein, it is (in the *Strict Observance*) chivalric. With Willermoz, it is chivalric (by its origin), but *initiatic and occultist* by the teachings of its Secret Class, perpetuating the *Order of Elus-Cohen.*

In the same letter to Prince Hesse-Cassel already cited, Willermoz recognized that this milieu is not necessarily and specifically Masonic:

"Moreover, there has existed here⁹ for nine to ten years¹⁰ a small society, composed of those that I have received into various degrees in the Order that I profess, which is known only to those who form it, *Masons and others*, yet, some brothers who are today Grand-Profès..."

This mixed character (sometimes Masonic, sometimes non-Masonic) of the former "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," has been confirmed to us by two high dignitaries of the Rectified Scottish Rite, and one of them was the doctor Camille Savoie, Grand Prior of the Gauls.

It is no longer so now in these spheres. We have had the occasion to make a comparison of the Rituals, those of the 18th century and those of our era. There are considerable differences. And we would seek there vainly an echo of the old Martinism, save perhaps in the "Catechisms" of the blue and green grades.

There remains only the filiation, regular from the administrative and obediencial point of view, of the "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," but there is no longer any trace of the Profès and Grand Profès.

In the course of a conversation of June 28, 1946, the doctor Vibaux, who was Grand Chancellor of this Order, declared to us that he had carried out serious research in this domain, and that he had had to conclude:

- a) that no dignitary of the Rectified Rite possessed this grade in our day;
- b) that it disappeared some years after its creation;
- c) that they have never found the Ritual of its Transmission, if there ever was one.

This shows that the Secret Class was truly secret, and that the Rituals were carefully collected at the death of the depositories, and that furthermore, they were unaware of their names, for the most part.

It is likewise possible that the occultist, mystical and Christian character of this Class had incited the more rationalist elements of the ordinary Order to suppress it little by little.

Seeing that, according to Lagrèze, who affirmed it to us orally, it was tradition in certain chapters, to relieve (dixit the Prior) the new "Chevalier Bienfaisant" of his purely Masonic oaths... He was to remain subject only to his promise to the Order. And this fact was confirmed to us by Camille Savoie, Grand Prior of the Gauls.

Thus, we may already conclude:

- 1) By constituting, at the Convent of Lyon, 1778, the *Ordre Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte*, (still called the *Inner Order*), Willermoz has undertaken to perpetuate, with the Order of his Secret Class, the *Order of Elus-Cohen*, which he held so close to his heart that he remained his whole life faithful to its mysterious "Works."

- 2) If the present Rectified Scottish Masonry is in possession, in a regular Masonic obediencial way, of the first and second degree of this *Inner Order* (Squire, Novice, and Knight Beneficent of the Holy City), it has preserved neither the spirit (which was that of Martinism) nor the letter (which consisted in the Works). Moreover, its Rituals, although affirmed to conform to those of 1778, are no longer that in reality. For this reason it would be possible to contest a *true regularity...*

- 3) As an initiatic Order, of Martinist spirit, we do not have before us a uniquely and specifically Masonic organization, at the origin of the *Inner Order*.

- 4) Concluding from what precedes, *Rectified Masonry* cannot take umbrage that there exists, outside of it, not only filiations of the "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," but even filiations of the latter which claim uniquely a return to the Martinism of Tradition, that is to say an Operative Martinism.

- 5) Cut off from the two grades of its Secret Class, those of Profès and Grand-Profès, *Rectified Masonry* no longer possesses but one degree of three in its *Inner Order*. And the character of neutrality that it has given it permits it more power to re-establish them, for:

- 6) A Profès and a Grand-Profès is necessarily the affiliate who has pronounced vows in some religion. And at its origin, the *Inner Order* was open exclusively to candidates belonging to one of the various branches of Christianity. The doctrine

which was taught there was that of Origen, in fact. Now, in our era, *Rectified Masonry* retains, from Christianity, only its humanitarian and social aspect, outside of any mysticism, and all the more of occultism.

7) It is therefore the *Gnostic Church* which may, as incontestable and uncontested holder of the "apostolic succession," give to the "Knights Beneficent" the possibility to re-establish that *Profession* of our days gone by.

We do not think, indeed, that the Latin Church, or any such other of the Eastern Churches, would consent to transmit the powers of orders (Exorcistate, Acolytate), necessary to the members of an operative Martinist organization... And even less the *power to transmit them*...

Now, in the work of Probst-Biraben (D. Litt., honorary professor of the University, himself "Knight Beneficent of the Holy City"), entitled "Les Mystère des Templiers," we read this on page 12:

"Neither among the Christians, nor among the Muslims, can an Order be founded without a "consecration" on the part of a...qualified personage, himself consecrated by transmission of powers from the Apostles or the Prophets. Hugues de Payens and Geoffery de Saint-Omer, received it from the Patriarch Theocletes, issuing (through apostolic succession) from Saint John the Evangelist. Which explains in part their cult for Saint John and the doctrine of Johannism that they have the reputation to have professed..."

"They pronounced the vows of Obedience, or Poverty, and of Chastity then, before the Catholic prelate of the holy city, Garimond, and took at the same time an oath to guard the routes followed by the pilgrims, to defend those in the faith against the Infidels and against the pillages, numerous in the Palestine of the 12th century..."

We think, then, that if *administrative Masonic* regularity is lacking (and this one may easily admit) in the modern operative Martinist organization, re-created in 1943, possessing a legal existence since 1945 under the name of ORDRE DES ELUS-COHEN, it possesses at least a *regular and incontestable initiatic filiation*, which it can prove, from J.B. Willermoz, behind him Martinès de Pasqually, through the channel of the "Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cité Saint"; and it possesses, moreover, through the *power of orders* conferred to certain of its high dignitaries by the *Gnostic Church*, the *possibility to create new Profès and Grand-Profès*. That is to say to ordain by virtue of the *apostolic succession*, carefully chosen members, just as those who were in the 18th century, and to make Theurgists of them, for, let us not forget, indeed, that this succession unites at once the *Priesthood according to Melchizedek and the Priesthood according to Aaron*.

And if, in the 18th century, the change of denomination to which the Convent of Lyon of 1778 saw to submit the "Knights of the Temple" of the *Strict Observance* by transforming them into the "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," by imposing upon them a mysterious secret, foreign to ordinary Masonry, did not make them lose their *regularity*, we may then admit that it is the same for those of today.

They see, then, only to carry out a true return to the primitive form, a true "pilgrimage to the sources..."

Now, there are certain facts which, from the origin of the resurgence of 1943, have come to confirm the grounds and the value (if not the regularity) of this "Willermozist" filiation in the bosom of the *Elus-Cohen* thus reconstituted.

1) It was the brother Georges Lagrèze who was at the origin of this rebirth of the Order. Now, he was:

- a) Knight Beneficent of the Holy City, member of the Grand Priory of the Gauls, (photograph of his card exists in our archives);
- b) Knight of the Temple (Swedish Primeval Rite), member of the Grand Lodge of Denmark;
- c) Réau-Croix of the filiation asserted by Bricaud, and which is unfortunately doubtful, as we have explained in our aforementioned booklet;

d) Rose-Croix d'Orient, that Order which would have been the genesis of the *Elus-Cohen* of the 18th century, and of the Company of Unknown Philosophers of this same era.

2) Doctor Camille Savoire, Grand Prior of the Gauls, Prior of the "Chevaliers de la Cité Saint" for France, accepted, in 1943, at the resurgence of the *Ordre des Elus-Cohen*, the charge of Honorary Grand Master of this Order. At his death, the diploma affirming this quality was, with his other Masonic Charters and Patents, deposited with the archives of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite, at the Grand Lodge of France.

3) The same doctor Savoire, from the time that he learned from Lagrèze of the awakening of the *Cohen* and the utilization (notably) of the filiation of the "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," asked us not to make any indiscretions (we were then under German occupation and the Vichy Government), adding: "After the war, I will regularize you..." He thus approved of our "armament" by Lagrèze.

4) The proof of this last point is easily established if we remember that he agreed to appear in the official declaration of the *Order of Elus-Cohen*, made at the Paris Police Prefecture, Bureau of Associations, at the end of 1944, as Honorary Grand Master, and that he countersigned our nomination of Lagrèze as Substitute Grand Master of the Order.

5) He came to eventually constitute, himself, assisted by two other "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City," in February, 1945, a Rectified Scottish Lodge called "L'Arch d'Alliance" [The Ark of the Covenant], a St. John's Lodge which would serve as basis for the - Blue - grades of the *Order of Elus-Cohen*. He named its officers "ad vitam" and designated us thus as *Venerable for Life* of the said Lodge.

6) He accepted the charge of Honorary Venerable of this same Lodge, and assisted in all the meetings of 1945 in this quality. His collar of Honorary Venerable (pale blue, silver-edged) was offered to him by the lodge, and is to be found presently, with the other mementos of this illustrious Mason, in the archives of the Grand Lodge of France.

All these things, certificates, manuscripts, official and incontestable documents, remain; not to mention the word of mouth from the survivors of this era, which likewise have their value.

For all these reasons, the *Ordre des Elus-Cohen* thus reawakened, considers itself authorized to claim, and certainly without denying it among the other branches of a different spirit, the mysterious filiation that Jean Baptiste Willermoz had wished and had succeeded in including in the *Inner Order* of the "Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Saint."

It is the same qualification as that attributed to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, and analyzed in our work, *le Martinisme*.

Text drafted on October 2, 1958,
two hundredth anniversary of the
foundation of the *Order of Elus-Cohen*
by don Martinès de Pasqually and
twelfth day after that of his death
at San Domingo.

In Memoriam.
Requiem æternam dona ei Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat ei.

AURIFER

FILIATION OF THE ORDER OF ELUS-COHEN
RESURGENCE OF 1943

1. Joachim MARTINES DE PASQUALLY - Grand Sovereign of the Order of Elus-Cohen (1710-1774).
2. Jean-Jacques BACON DE LA CHEVALERIE - Colonel of the infantry - Réau-Croix - Sovereign Judge - Universal Substitute of the Order (1731-1821).
3. Jean-Baptiste WILLERMOZ - Merchant - Réau-Croix - Sovereign Judge - Member of the Sovereign Tribunal - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques ab Erema) - Grand-Profès - (1730-1824).
4. Diethelm LAVATER - Medical Doctor - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Aesculape) - Grand-Profès - (1740-1826).
5. Pierre BURCKARDT - Landamann of Switzerland - Burgomaster of Bâle - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a serpente Curvato) - Grand-Provès - (1742-1817).
6. Gaspard Ott Im ZELTWEG - Burgess of Zurich - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Trifolio) - (....-1820).
7. Félix SARASIN - Burgess of Bâle - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques Tabernacula) - (....-1828).
8. Jean-Jacques ESCHER - Burgess of Zurich - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Marte) - (....-1844).
9. Henri d'ORELLI - Burgess of Zurich - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques ab aurelio) - (....-1865).
10. Henri GYSI - Burgess of Zurich - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques ab activitate) - (....-1874).
11. Eugène RICHARD - Doctor of Law - Counsellor to the States - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Justitia) - (....-1899).
12. Joseph LECLERC - Chancellor of the Canton of Geneva - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Labore) - Honorary Grand Prior of Helvetia - (....-1905).
13. Aimé BOUVIER - Director of Professional Teaching at Geneva - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Voluntate) - (....-1909).
14. Charles MONTCHAL - Professor at Geneva - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques de Monte-Calvo) - Honorary Grand Prior of Helvetia in 1919 - (....-....).
15. Ernest ROCHAT - Doctor of Theology - Professor at the University of Geneva - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a Studio) - (....-....).
16. Camille SAVOIRE - Doctor of Medicine - Ex-Grand Commander of the Grand Orient of France - Honorary 33° of the A.°. & A.°. Scottish Rite - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City - (Eques a fortitudine) - Grand Prior of the Gauls - Supérieur Inconnu - Honorary Grand Master of the Order of Elus-Cohen (1943) - Honorary Venerable of his Blue L.°. "l'Arche d'Alliance" - (1879-19..).
17. Georges LAGREZE - Production Manager of the Strasbourg Theatre - Supérieur Inconnu, initiated by Téder on 6/30/1906 - Named by Papus member of the Supreme Council of the Ordre Martiniste and Inspector Principal of the Order on 8/10/1908 - Dignity confirmed by Téder at the death of Papus (1916) - Ordained Réau-Croix by Téder - Member of the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix (Charter signed by Téder) - Knight of the Temple and Prefect (Strict Templar Observance and Swedish Primeval Rite) - 33° of the Grand Orient of France - 33° of the A°.A.°. Scottish Rite - Honorary Member of the Grand Lodge of Denmark - 33°-95° of the Rite of Memphis-Misraim (Charter signed by John Yarker, Grand Hierophant of the Order, on 9/9/1909, dignity confirmed by Jean Bricaud, Grand Master for France - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City (Eques rosae caritatis) - Grand Master of the Elus-Cohen (1943) - Rose+Croix d'Orient - (1879-1947).

18. Robert AMBELAIN - Substitute Grand Master (33°-95°) of the Rite of Memphis-Misraim - 33° of the A. Scottish Rite - Knight Beneficent of the Holy City, Grand-Profès (Eques Aurifer) - Réau-Croix - Possessor of the Cathar Episcopate - Commander of the Order of the Dove of the Paraclete - Bishop of Samaria - Patriarch of the Eglise Gnostique Apostolique - Named Substitute Grand Master of the Order of E.C. in 1943 by the two previous dignitaries - Grand Master of the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose+Croix, Rose+Croix d'Orient...

ENDNOTES

1. Apprentice Cohen, Companion Cohen, Master Cohen, Grand Architect, Knight of the Orient, Commander of the Orient.
2. Réau-Croix.
3. Apprentice Cohen, Companion Cohen, Master Cohen.
4. Pierre-Jacques Willermoz, physician and Alchemist.
5. Apprentice Cohen, Companion Cohen, Master Cohen (Class of the Porch).
6. Grand Architect, Knight of the Orient, Commander of the Orient.
7. Réau-Croix.
8. In the *Order of the Cohen*, and in regards to don Martinès de Pasqually.
9. At Lyon.
10. Since 1771.