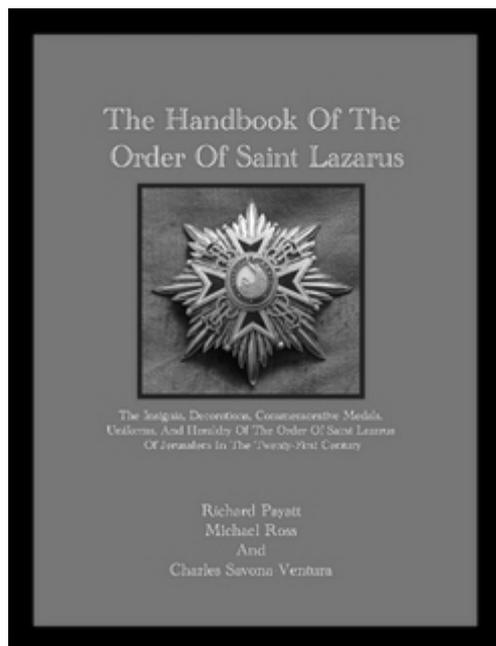


Book Review - a historical snapshot: *The Handbook of the Order of Saint Lazarus.*

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Introduction



History is not simply just a record of the past. It is alive, vibrant and, above all, ongoing. Though we may not always appreciate it, history is being made and written every day. The accurate recording of events today enables future historians to study and analyse today's world with hindsight. It generally requires a period of fifty years before any event can truly be considered worthy of historical research and discussion. The reasons for this are various: On one side, sensitive documents relevant to the study of

historical events are generally formally released for public reference after a period of fifty years. In addition, it requires at least two generations before events can be reviewed without bias or passion.

In the case of the Order of Saint Lazarus in the 21st Century, this fifty-year rule of the Court of History should also be made to apply, especially considering the turmoil the Order has experienced in the last few decades. However, today's events must be carefully recorded to help create a source for future researchers. We have the responsibility to leave sufficient information to allow future researchers to draw an

accurate picture of what we do today, how this done, and how we present ourselves to the world. This record takes the form of annual reports submitted by the central management and the various jurisdictions, the notes kept during meetings, and newsletters and circulars. These however are not enough. Alone these sources would paint a superficial picture of our Order. By augmenting this documentation with descriptive images showing how we present ourselves to the world and describing our uniforms, insignia and heraldry, we provide a frame of reference to the significance of the Order in today's world.

Such a pictorial record can help provide a dividing line between how uniforms looked before and after a given date. Future historian will therefore be able to identify when change in uniform design occurred. By cataloguing the insignia worn today, future historians will have a reliable tool to date insignia and relate this to seniority ranks within the Order and the contributions made by individuals to help the Order achieve its aims as reflected by the awards insignia. In documenting the rules pertaining to the Order's heraldry, the future historian will be provided with a window to the present and help him/her understand the Order in today's world better. In this sense, *The Handbook of the Order of Saint Lazarus: the Insignia, Decorations, Commemorative Medals, Uniforms, and Heraldry of the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem in the Twenty First Century* can be considered a document designed to be the handmaiden of history – a pictorial snapshot of the Order of Saint Lazarus today.

The Reason for the *Handbook*

In April of 2016, His Excellency the late Don Carlos Gereda y de Borbón, Marquis of Almazán, 49th Grand Master, and the Governance Working Group sent out instructions for a new Handbook of uniforms, medals, medallions and heraldry to be compiled for the Order of Saint Lazarus. The collective objective was to have a reference work that would illustrate and explain to our members how to be uniform in their dress.

This Handbook was to replace a book of medals and uniform drawings called *The Insignia and Decorations of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem*, written by Stuart G. Morris of Balgonie the Younger. This book, commonly known today as *The Green Book*, was written some thirty years ago, in 1986.¹ This publication is difficult to acquire and now very much out of date. The publication of the updated *Handbook of the Order of Saint Lazarus* was to coincide with the release of the new Statutes and Regulations for the Order, which had been under committee review for over five years.

Why was an update needed in the first place?

The Order of Saint Lazarus has over the last five decades undergone a series of schisms and misunderstandings that led to the development of two main branches of the Order – the Malta Obedience and the Paris Obedience. These have followed different roads in uniform and insignia development. In 2008, the two groups agreed to reunify under one leadership. This reunification process necessitated a review and re-compilation of the Statutes and Regulations of the Order, and a review of the official uniform and insignia to promote uniformity in the dress code. The need was felt to get the members to look like a uniform group, rather than a hodgepodge gathering of tribes.

Moreover, the old *Green Book* was not only thirty years out of date, but it also had a confusing layout and minimal uniform information. The layout of the book had several photographs, and their matching text descriptions laid out in a way that did not line up well. The photographs were also quite small, making it very difficult to see some of the finer points of the medals. The uniform area was only seven pages long, and was illustrated with line drawings that were also confusing, owing to their small size. The fault for this does not lie with its author. The fault is that the printing costs of the day made producing a book prohibitively expensive. Economies had to be made. Today the cost of creating and

¹ S.G. Morris. *The Insignia and Decorations of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem*. MHOSLJ, Scotland, 1986, +45pp. [ISBN 095114670X].

printing books has plummeted, which enabled the present authors to create a larger, more thorough presentation.

Another issue for the *Handbook* to solve was that there was no guidance in the *Green Book* on the awards of honour. Then, there was a confusing list of medals with no explanation of when they were worn, nor why. Lastly, it was deemed sensible for the new *Handbook* to add in handy references for the history, heraldry, and vexilology of the Order of Saint Lazarus.

The Approach for the *Handbook*

The chief aim of the *Handbook* was to put all of the basic information under one cover. We wanted to make it easy for a member to see what medal they should have, and how they should wear it on their uniform. Then we wanted to show how to dress and wear these medals in white tie, black tie, military uniforms, Scottish national dress, and ecclesiastical vestments. A complete illustrated guide of all possible clothing variations was impossible, but a good representative sampling was possible. We wanted to spell out what the specifications for the uniforms were, and illustrate the parts of the uniforms as well. And lastly, we wanted to show how to correctly display rank in the Order. This creates a fair amount of repetition of information, but we kept almost all the information for a given rank in a single place. This avoids the need to read an entire chapter just to discover one single fact.

The Book Itself

The *Handbook* begins with a brief ten-page introduction on the history of the Order of Saint Lazarus. In its elegance, it is intended to answer basic questions, yet still leave room for further reading, which will be found in the books of the introduction's author, Charles Savona-Ventura.

In Part One, the first Chapter describes the insignia of the Order and the grades of rank within the Order. For the six grades of rank in Saint Lazarus, we show the various medals that are worn by gentlemen,

ladies, and clergy. The *Handbook* also goes into a great deal of technical detail about each grade of rank. This information includes: images of the badges and trophies of rank, details about the neck ribbons and sashes, the wearing of stars and Justice crosses of the Order, and how to wear miniatures and buttonhole rosettes. This is followed by notes on post-nominal letters and forms of address among members. The information is broken down by which medal is worn by gentlemen, ladies, and clergy. Again, there is much repetition of information in this section, but that is to facilitate ease of use. Chapter Two concerns itself with the Companionship of Merit, and contains the same information profiles as Chapter One. Chapter Three goes on to describe and show the Crosses of Merit and the Medals of Merit. This is followed by a chapter on the Awards of Special Merit, the Donat Crosses, Meritorious Service Award, and the Crusader's Medal. Chapters Five and Six cover collars and chains of office, and the swords and batons of office.

In Chapters Seven through Eleven we describe the circumstances of wearing our medals when in various orders of dress. Here there is a lengthy discussion of the levels of dress: civilian, military, and in our Saint Lazarus dress occasions. This is paired with instructions on the precedence of wearing medals, wearing neck badges, and wearing breast stars. All of this is heavily illustrated with images of men and women in our membership wearing our medals. Owing to the new Regulations, in some cases a member's illustrated rank in the book might be different from their actual current rank in the Order. This is because in some Priors the wearing of breast stars and sashes was restricted. No disrespect was intended to those members who cheerfully and willingly allowed themselves to be photographed for this *Handbook*. Chapter Ten is dedicated to Scottish Dress as worn for the Order of Saint Lazarus. There is also a technical description of the Saint Lazarus tartan. Chapter Twelve concerns the display of rank on the cuffs, and epaulettes. Chapter Thirteen explains the mantle and the mozzetta. Chapter Fourteen is an overview of the wearing of Ecclesiastical dress. It is not complete, but it is very representative. Again, owing to the new Regulations, in some cases a member's illustrated rank in the book

might be different from their current actual rank in the Order. This chapter concludes Part One of the *Handbook*.

Part Two of the *Handbook* is by Charles Savona-Ventura. It is an illustrated guide to all known Malta and Paris Obedience commemorative medallions. Thoroughly illustrated and carefully measured, we see the parallel history of the two Obediences come together with the reunification.

Part Three of the *Handbook* is a reprint of a paper by Charles Savona-Ventura and Michael Ross about the heraldry and development of the Order of Saint Lazarus. Previously published in *The Journal of the Heraldry Society of Scotland*, it discusses the history and development of our heraldic past. Then the changes in our use of the green cross of the Order are explored, and examples of modern display of our heraldry round out this section of the book. Likewise, it is also a parallel view of our history in general.

Part Four of the *Handbook* by Michael Ross concerns the recording, use and display of the heraldry of the Order. Here a beginner can learn how their personal arms can reflect their place in the Order. Display of arms on the flags and banners of the Order are discussed, as are the additaments of office. Again, this is carefully illustrated to give a full and thorough sense of what each variation should look like, and why.

Finally, we come to the Appendices. These nine appendices begin with a section about the sorts of standard questions and answers that people ask about the Order. This is intended to help our membership explain the Order and its works to a potential new member. The other eight appendices are lists of Grades within the Order, forms of address within the Order, medal precedence, display of rank, and more. These form a handy reference guide to further minimize the amount of time needed to locate basic information about the Order. Lastly, there is an appendix that reviews old and outdated medals of rank and award. This section shows medals that might be seen by our membership, but which

are technically 'out of date.' These medals are still allowed to be worn, but only if they were awarded before the publication date of the new Regulations and Statutes. As such, we felt it best to include this chapter to help avoid confusion. This appendix is also a goldmine for the future historian because it lays out the presentation problems that arose from the merging of the two Obediences. These are the very confusing issues that new Regulations and Statutes were intended to fix.

And so, as one turns the last page of the *Handbook*, we have accomplished the task of defining and displaying what we wear, and how we wear it today. This forms a line that stretches across our Pories and around the world. It sets the style and becomes its own explanation. In this, we have created a historical document. This document will fade with time. Changes in the Regulations and Statutes will make parts of the book inaccurate, and in time, make it completely outmoded in a few decades. But the sunset of its authority is ultimately far less important than the fact that it exists today as a firm and stable document for how we present ourselves right now. This is because who we are and what we do today is history, if we document it properly.

The book is available from the printers at <http://www.lulu.com/shop/richard-payatt-and-michael-ross-and-charles-savona-ventura/the-handbook-of-the-order-of-saint-lazarus/hardcover/product-23140598.html>