

# Debating the colour of the cap in the crown of the Order of Saint Lazarus: A modern detective story

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## Abstract

The exact origins of the green colour of the cap in the crown in the heraldic arms of the modern Order of Saint Lazarus has been a matter of debate. The decision to adopt of a green cap in recent years is based on the 1967 matriculation of arms by the Commissioner-General of the Order of Saint Lazarus Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Gayre of Gayre and Nigg in the Court of the Lord Lyon which regulates heraldry in Scotland and in those of Scots descent. The present paper looks at the adoption of the Eastern crown with different cap colours through history.

## Introduction

There has been considerable debate over the original color of the cap within the Eastern Crown of the Arms of the Order. The Marqués de la Floresta comments that at least by 1929, the color of the cap in the seven-pointed crown in Spain was recognized as *sable* or black. This is certified by the certification given by the Spanish Cronista Rey de Armas (Recording King of Arms) to the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Seville as Grand Baillie of the Order in Spain awarding the right to bear the arms of the Order.<sup>1</sup> Francisco de Borbón y de la Torre, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Seville, at that time of the certification serving as Grand Baillie of the Order in Spain. He was appointed Lieutenant-General of the Order in 1930 and Grand Master in 1935. Such a certification gives the individual the legal right to use the specified arms in sculpture, painting or engraving in the usual manner, and record them. De la Floresta cites the certification, dated 17 December 1929:

*Las armas que blasona la Orden son: En campo deplata, una cruz llana de sinople; acolada la cruzde ocho puntas de sinople, bordada de plata, y rodeado del Gran Collar; todo sobre un manto*

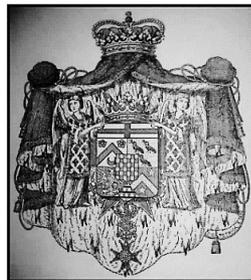
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<sup>1</sup> De la Floresta A. *Sobre las Grandes Armas de la Orden de San Lázaro*. Atavis et Armis, 2015, 35, 32-36.

*de sable, forrado de armiños, con borlas, cordones y vivos de oro; en la siniestra del manto, la cruz bordada de ocho puntas de la Orden; timbrado con corona a la antigua de siete puntas de oro, forradade sable. En lo bajo, el lema: ATAVIS ET ARMIS.*

This black cap is further attested to in depictions of the Arms of the Order used on letterheads and official forms of the Order during the late 1930s. At this point in time, the Order was managed by a Paris-based organization headed by the Spanish grand master Francisco de Borbón y de la Torre. The late 1930s forms for *Preuves à fournir pour l'Admission dans l'Ordre dans la Catégorie de Justice* present a black and white image depiction of the arms of the Order.<sup>2</sup> While the monochrome depiction cannot definitely settle the issue of the color of the cap, it does appear to resemble the depth of darkness shown also on the mantle known to have been *sable* and is very much darker than the depicted crosses known to have been *vert*. In contrast to the described seven-pointed Eastern crown mentioned in the 1929 certification by the Spanish Cronista Rey de Armas, the crown here is depicted as having nine spikes.

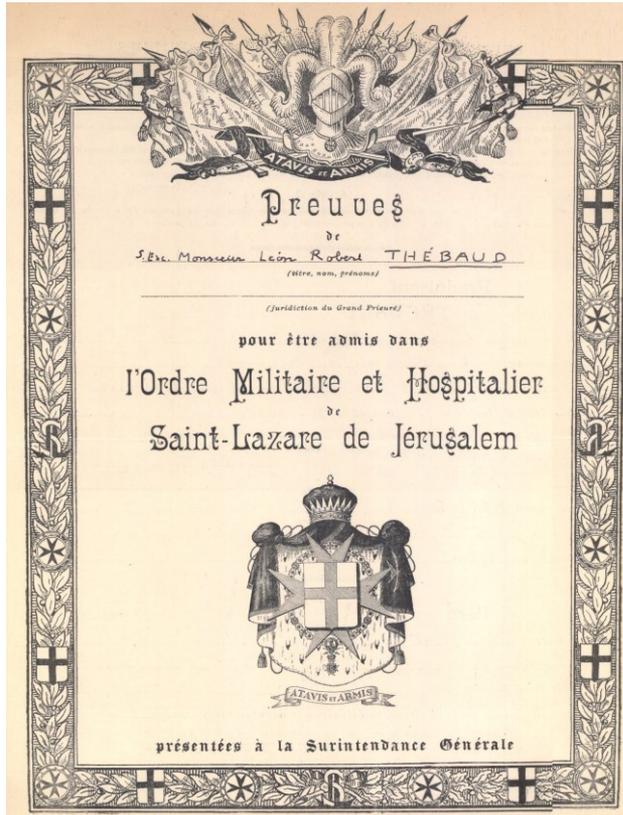
De la Floresta further provides an earlier black & white illustration of Order of Saint Lazarus arms (2015, p.33). However, because of the poor quality of the reproduction, it is difficult to make any judgmental study of the color of the cap depicted. Unless a black and white heraldic illustration is consistently crosshatched in the “Petra Sancta” system, judgments about color are usually difficult or impossible. This depiction however does show the crown with five spikes continuing into arches leading to the orb and cross. This suggests this to be a *ducal* or *royal* crown as



<sup>2</sup> *Preuves à fournir pour l'Admission dans l'Ordre dans la Catégorie de Justice.*

Malta: MHOSLJ Archives, Torri ta' Lanzun, 1937.

appropriate for a royal duke or member of the royal family, and not the Eastern crown of the Order.



***Preuves pour être admis***  
made out for Leon Robere Thébaud

If the crown truly represents a ducal or royal crown, then the cap would have been red in the Spanish tradition (considering the origins of the reigning grand master) or blue in the French *ancien régime* tradition (considering the historical French links tradition). A similarly shaped crown was adopted by the Marquis Frederic Guigue de Champvaux when depicting his personal coat-of-arms within the mantle and insignia of the

Order.<sup>3</sup> The Eastern or Antique Crown is a gold heraldic crown with a variable number of sharp spikes which originated in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Eastern crown, without a cap, appears above the arms of the Order and on the black cape in an illustration in the Order's armorial of 1753 in France.<sup>4</sup> A jetton of the Grand Magistracy of the duc de Berry (later Louis XVI) dated 1757 displays the Order's arms surmounted by the Eastern crown of seven spikes (and no cap). Earlier jettons dated to 1700-01 depicting the arms of the Order show no crown or cap. Other 18<sup>th</sup> century jettons depict the royal arms of the respective grand masters with the royal coronet of a *filz de France*.<sup>5</sup> These illustrations suggest that the Eastern crown on the Order's arms but without the cap dates from the 1750s.



**Heraldic crowns**

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<sup>3</sup> Personal arms of Marquis Frederic Guigue de Champvaux described as *Armes : écartelé : 1) d'argent au chevron de gueules, accompagné en chef de 2 roses du même, et en pointe d'un croissant d'azur - 2) d'or à 3 colombes d'azur, tenant chacune dans leur bec un rameau d'olivier de sinople - 3) de gueules à l'aigle d'argent - 4) de gueules au chevron d'or, accompagné de 3 étoiles du même ; enté en pointe d'argent semé de fleurs de lys, à trois fascés de sable - Sur le tout) échiqueté d'azur et d'or. - Tenants : 2 anges vêtus d'une tunique fleurdelysée.*

<sup>4</sup> J. Algrant & J. de Beaugordon. *Armorial of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem*. Delft: HA van den Akker, 1983.

<sup>5</sup> See subsequent paper in this publication: Elizabeth Cassar. *A catalogue of 17-18th century Commemorative Medallions of the Ordre de S. Lazare*.



Personal arms of  
Count Fouché



Prince or  
Duke



Count



Baron



Knight

### Napoleonic heraldry

[cap - *sable*]

### The origins of the black cap

The Marqués de la Floresta suggests that the black cap in the arms may have evolved from the black hat illustrated in a portrait by Antoine-Jean Gros of a previous Grand Master, King Louis XVIII in his coronation robes. However, the black cap with white feathers was so much a common feature of high status in 18<sup>th</sup> century France that it replaced the helmet in Napoleonic heraldry, with the *toque's* number of ostrich feathers denoting rank (from one for a knight to seven for a duke). This can be exemplified by the depiction of the arms of Count Fouché, Napoleon's Minister of Police. Also, David's famous painting of the coronation of Napoleon shows the courtiers wearing the same black cap with white feathers as in the portraits of the Bourbon Grand Masters. The black cap with feathers signified simply high rank and nothing more.



The cap is also illustrated in the Eastern crown in the Otzenberger-Detaille medallion dated to 1929. There is however here no way that color can be determined as the cross-hatching on the medallion is inconsistent or in places non-existent. The crown in this instance is the Eastern crown. The medallion describes Otzenberger-Detaille as aged 49 (he was born in 1881), but the date of minting was

1939, on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his appointment as Superintendent-General.<sup>6</sup>

The Herald of the Order from 1926 was the French marquis Fernand de l'Église de Ferrier de Félix, who became President of the Order in 1930. Since almost all the international officers of the Order at that time were French, it seems likely that they were simply unaware of the certification with the black cap to the Duke of Seville in Spain before his taking international office. All the generally available depictions of the arms of the Order at that time were printed in black and white (due to the high expense of color printing) and the actual color of the cap was clear only in individual colored letters patent. This lack of clarity was exacerbated by the fact that the official blazon of the Order's arms in the Order's Ordinances in 1933 simply refers to the achievement of arms being surmounted by the Order's crown (no cap or color mentioned).<sup>7</sup> Given the envelopment of the duke of Seville in the political crises leading up to the abdication of his second cousin King Alfonso XIII of Spain in 1931 (the duke was a Member of the Cortes Generales, the Spanish parliament) and the subsequent civil war (in which he served as a Captain-General), it is unlikely that the issue of the cap color was noticed.

The Constitution of the Order of 1949 did not specify a color for the cap in the blazon, despite being drawn up by the Spanish jurisdiction of the Order. The original copy is in Spanish and is labeled "*Orderanzas Generales de la Orden Militar y Hospitalaria de San Lazaro de*

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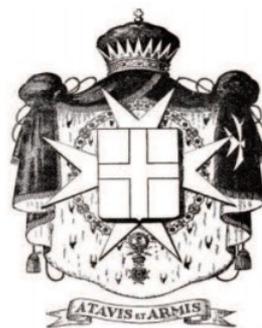
<sup>6</sup> The dating for the Otzenberger-Detaille Medallion comes from *La Vie Chevaleresque* of October 1939 No 24/25: p.169. The short note includes a photo of the two faces and states: *Une Médaille - La Manufacture Royale appartenant a S. Exe. Le Balli Beeger a édité, a l'occasion du dixième anniversaire de l'élévation de S. Exv. le comte Otzenberger-Detaille a la charge de Surintendant général de l'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem, une fort médaille. Nos sommes heureux de pouvoir les deux faces de cette médaille et nos en félicitons les éditeurs.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ordre Militaire et Hospitalier de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem - Armoires et Blasons*. Madrid: MHOSLJ, 1933

*Jerusalem*" over the signature of Don Francesco de Borbón Duque de Sevilla, dated 26 May 1949.<sup>8</sup> With regards to the Arms, these Spanish statutes in the Archives of the Order in Malta state the following:

*VI ARMAS DE LA ORDEN. Las armas de la Orden son: Cruz sinople plane en campo de plata con la cruz sinople octógona (insignia de la Orden) acoplada al escudo circundado por el Gran Collar. Como fondo, el pabellon formando por manto negro forrado de arminos, abullonado en sus eostados con cordones y borlas de oro, y en el izquierdom una cruz octógona sinople. Como remate, la corona de la Orden, con gorro superado por cruz de oro sobre un mundo. Al pie, como divisa, <<ATAVIS ET ARMIS>>. Podrá igualmente considerarse como armas, el escudo ciartelado en la siguiente forma: 1 y 4 la cruz plana sinople y 2 y 3 las armas personales del Grand Maestre.*

The description simply refers to the “crown of the Order with a cap surmounted by a golden cross on a world”. This is completely consistent with the depiction of the arms in 1933 in France, where the illustrated arms (in black and white) show the Eastern crown with a cap, where the blazon only refers to the arms being surmounted by the “crown of the Order”.<sup>9</sup> Based on this evidence, it appears that the black cap described in the 1929 certification by the Spanish Cronista Rey de Armas had been adopted for regular use in Spain and probably also by the French administration, even though the cap colour was not formally defined by the statutes.



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<sup>8</sup> *Orderanzas Generales de la Orden Militar y Hospitalaria de San Lazaro de Jerusalem*. Madrid: MHOSLJ, 1949.

<sup>9</sup> This depiction first appeared in *La Vie Chevaleresque*

## The Lyon Court grant of 1967

A green cap was however adopted by Heralds of the Order in the 1930s through to the 1960s. The certificates documenting personal arms of members of the Order issued by the Order's Heralds in the 1930s depict simply an Eastern crown with nine spikes without a cap surmounting the mantle. However, the same certificates do depict a separate 7-spiked Eastern crown with a green cap.



**Heraldic certificate made up for Comte Jean Zamoycki dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 1936**  
with detail showing 9-pointed Eastern crown without cap on arms and separate 7-  
pointed crown with cap *vert*

In 1967, the Court of the Lord Lyon which regulates heraldry in Scotland and in those of Scots descent was petitioned for a matriculation of arms by the Commissioner-General of the Order of Saint Lazarus Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Gayre of Gayre and Nigg in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland. Gayre was himself a respected herald and the author of several books on heraldry and heraldic flags. He cannot be accused of ignorance in heraldic matters or in matters regarding the Order. Similarly, the granting Lord Lyon, Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight, was a Knight of Saint Lazarus and cannot be accused of ignorance. The Lyon Court matriculation represented the cap as green, and presumably reflected what the heraldic experts of the Order at the time believed to be consistent with previous practice.



The Lyon Court grant of 1967 was made specifically to the Order and formally confirms the link of the ancient arms of the Order of Saint Lazarus to the existing legitimate Order. From a legal perspective, a grant of matriculation of the ancient arms of the Order of Saint Lazarus by the Chief Officer of State and King of Arms of a country trumps a document from a similar source certifying and giving an individual permission to use arms. The Lyon matriculation also formally recognizes the present legitimate Order as the continuation of the old Order and the legitimate bearer of the old arms. Because of this legal precedent, the Order in 2008 adopted the green cap within the Eastern crown in its official arms. Schismatic branches of the Order continue to use the black cap.

The heralds of the 1930s to the 1960s used the green cap (a logical choice with *vert* or green being the livery color of the Order), given that these Statutes did not specify a cap color, or even a cap in the crown at all. Since these Statutes were originally written in Spanish by the Spanish jurisdiction, we cannot blame translation for this omission. Further, the Order of Saint Lazarus has a long and continuing history of argumentative heralds and of open debate and has always had a significant number of

members with extensive knowledge of heraldry. It is hard to believe that in the nearly 20 years between the 1949 Statutes and Lyon's 1967 grant, no-one noticed, or those with heraldic expertise did not discuss, the green cap, if there was prior awareness of a black cap being certified.

The green cap in the crown remained in regular use in the Order in uniform accessories. The black cap form in the U.S. Hans von Leden collection depicts the Eastern crown with green cap over the green eight-pointed cross. A similar design was used on the white cap belonging to the Malta Obedience cap.



**Cap of the Order**

In 1974, a purported English translation of the 1949 Statutes made by Chev. Richard Flores Martin added the word "*sable*" to the description of the cap (even though that word did not appear in the original). Subsequently all colour depictions of the Arms of the Order, such as the grand magistral decree certificates, showed a black cap within the Eastern crown surmounting the mantle. This is exemplified by the heraldic shields commissioned in 1971 for Torri ta' Lanzun in Malta and St Vincent's Chapel in Edinburgh. There is also an interesting wall hanging in the Madrid Office showing the arms of the Order with a black cap in the crown. This was purchased by a member from an antique shop in Spain in the 2000s. However, it has no provenance and is undatable. Given that it is illustrated encircled by the Grand Collar of the Order, which first appeared illustrated in *La Vie Chevaleresque* and is first mentioned in

regards to its award to the Dominican dictator General Rafael Trujillo in 1933, its date is unlikely to precede the early 1930s.



**Arms of the Order – Torri ta' Lanzun, Malta**

### **Conclusions**

The evidence therefore suggests that the Eastern crown surmounting the Arms of the Order was adopted in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. This adoption might have been a recognition of the eastern origins of the Order and the long-standing legal relationship with the Latin Patriarchate. The cap within the crown appears to have been introduced in the 1920s being first formally referred to in the 1929 certification given by the Spanish Cronista Rey de Armas. This was defined as being black in colour. This format was maintained right through the subsequent decades, though the heralds of the Order adopted the green cap depiction when granting personal arms to the members. In 1967, the formal certification of the Arms of the Order by the Court of the Lord Lyon defined the cap to be coloured green, though this distinction was ignored in 1974 when the

1949 statutes were translated into English and when the cap's colour was defined as black. Depictions in the subsequent decades showed the cap as being coloured black; this being changed to green in 2008 to reflect the description registered in the formal Court of the Lord Lyon registration.

The color of the cap in the Eastern crown surmounting the Order's arms has been a matter of great interest with regard to the modern heraldry of the Order and no doubt additional discoveries will further clarify its history. These speculations are based on present available evidence, which may change if additional evidence comes to light. It makes for an interesting detective tale of heraldic use within the re-organized Order of Saint Lazarus.

### **Addendum**

During the discussion of the paper, mention was made of a 1774 published illustration illustrating a crown with a bonnet.<sup>10</sup>



**1774 illustration of crown with bonnet<sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>10</sup> The illustration was brought to the attention of the author by the Chev. Le Comte d'Évora.

<sup>11</sup> *Liste de Messieurs Les Chevaliers Commandeurs et Officiers des Ordres Royaux Militaires et Hospitaliers de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel et de Saint Lazare de Jérusalem*. Paris: P.Fr.Gueffier, 1774

The Count d' Évora comments that: "It is worthy of note that the bonnet is surmounted by a ball, like the ancient coronet of a Spanish count. This is found again in an in-blanc diploma of 1932. The substitution of an orb with a cross and the ermine lining of the manteau are, in my opinion, without precedence and, simply, an expression of folie de grandeur! As for the correct tincture of the 1774 bonnet, your guesses are as good as mine, although I would still opt for sinople [vert]".<sup>12</sup> I concur, as the tincture certainly does not look like *sable*.

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<sup>12</sup> Count d'Évora to Michael Ross, email dated November 4, 2019.