



Good day Worthy Knights, in this part 50, the Twelve Grand Points of the Cross : 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

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#### **4. Her discovery of the three crosses and her perplexity to know which was that of the Christ.**

As Saint Helena beheld the place where the Saviour suffered, hidden under a Temple of Venus, she immediately ordered this idolatrous temple, to be destroyed, and the very earth on which it stood to be removed. When thus she had the Sepulchre uncovered, three crosses and the titulus from Jesus's crucifixion were uncovered as well.

Historians Gelasius of Caesarea and Rufinus claimed that thus she discovered the hiding place of three crosses that were believed to be used at the crucifixion of Jesus and of two thieves, St. Dismas and Gestas, executed with him.

#### **5. The direction of Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, which enabled her to distinguish the true Cross from those of the two thieves**

Theodoret (died c. 457) in his Ecclesiastical History Chapter XVII gives what had become the standard version of the finding of the True Cross:

When the tomb, which had been so long concealed, was discovered, three crosses were seen buried near the Lord's sepulchre. All held it as certain that one of these crosses was that of our Lord Jesus Christ and that the other two were those of the thieves who were crucified with Him.

Yet they could not discern to which of the three the Body of the Lord had been brought nigh, and which had received the outpouring of His precious Blood. But the wise and holy Macarius, the Patriarch of the city, resolved this question in the following manner:

He caused a lady of rank, who had been long suffering from disease, to be touched by each of the crosses, with earnest prayer, and thus discerned the virtue residing in that of the Saviour. For the instant this cross was brought near the lady, it expelled the sore disease, and made her whole.

Helena had part of the cross of our Saviour conveyed to the palace. The rest was enclosed in a covering of silver, and committed to the care of the bishop of Jerusalem, whom she exhorted to preserve it carefully, in order that it might be transmitted uninjured to posterity.

Alas, that was not to be. With the Cross were also found the Holy Nails, which Helena took with her back to Constantinople, where they were incorporated into the Emperor's helmet and the bridle of his horse.

Another nail has a fascinating history because it became part of a famous spearhead. The inauguration rite of a Lombard king consisted of his grasping of a sacred lance. The Lombard royal line bore the name of the Gungingi after the name of Odin's lance, Gungnir, thus claiming descent from Odin.

In 585 the Merovingian King Guntram designated his nephew Childebert II his heir by handing him his lance, this royal lance was a symbol of kingship among the Merovingian Kings. The

capital of the Lombard Kings was Milan, which had been the capital of the Western Roman Empire in the time of Constantine. The Lombard Kings became Catholic Christians in the 7th century.

The iron point of the Lombardic royal lance was recast then to enshrine one of the nails that St. Helena had found at Calvary and brought to Milan, thus giving a new Christian sacred aura to the old pagan royal lance.

Charlemagne's inauguration as the King of the Lombards in 774 has likewise included his grasping of this now-Christianized royal lance. In 1084 Henry IV had a silver band with the inscription 'Nail of Our Lord' added to it. This was based on the belief that this was the lance of Constantine the Great which enshrined a nail used for the Crucifixion.

In 1273 it was first used in the coronation ceremony. Around 1350 Charles IV had a golden sleeve put over the silver one, inscribed 'Lancea et clavus Domini' (Lance and nail of the Lord).

In 1424 Sigismund had a collection of relics, including the lance, moved to his birthplace, Nuremberg, and decreed them to be kept there forever. This collection was called the Reichskleinodien or Imperial Regalia.

When the French Revolutionary army approached Nuremberg in the spring of 1796 the city councilors decided to remove the Reichskleinodien to Vienna for safe keeping. However, the Holy Roman Empire was disbanded in 1806 and the Reichskleinodien remained in the keeping of the Habsburgs.

When the city councilors asked for the Reichskleinodien back, they were refused. As part of the imperial regalia it was kept in the Imperial Treasury Schatzkammer (Vienna).

During the Anschluss, when Austria was annexed to Germany, the Reichskleinodien were returned to Nuremberg and afterwards hidden. They were found by invading U.S. troops and returned to Austria by American General George S. Patton after World War II.

Note:

In 286 Diocletian moved the capital of the Western Roman Empire from Rome to Mediolanum. He chose to reside at Nicomedia in the Eastern Empire, leaving his colleague Maximian at Milan. It was from Milan that the Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, granting tolerance to all religions within the Empire,

