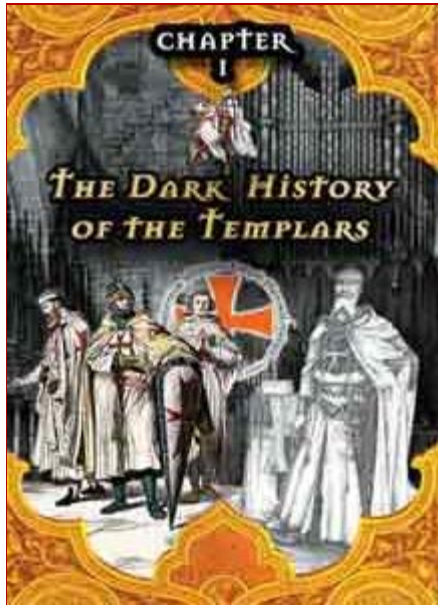


# THE DARK HISTORY OF THE TEMPLARS

## CHAPTER I



Although the crusaders are commonly thought to have been motivated by their deep Christian faith, crusades were actually wars inspired by avarice. At a time of utmost poverty and misery prevalent in the West, the attractions of the East-in particular, the *Muslim societies'* wealth and prosperity-played on the minds of Europeans, especially those in the Church.

These attractions, bolstered with Christian teachings, begot the crusaders' mindset, seemingly motivated by religion but actually motivated by worldly designs. This is the reason why *Christians*, who had followed more or less peaceful policies in the previous 1,000 years, suddenly began to display an appetite for war-specifically, the "liberation" of the holy city of



The crusades were a barbaric attack on the Middle Eastern Muslim population, living in peace.

Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole.

We can retrace the beginnings of the crusades to November 1095, when **Pope Urban II** gathered the Council of Clermont. Three hundred members of the clergy convened under his chairmanship. The pacifist doctrines that had dominated Christendom were abandoned, laying the foundations for the conquest. At the close of the Council, Urban II announced this state of affairs in his famous speech to a congregation that comprised all social classes, demanding that Christians stop the infighting and warring among themselves. The Pope called on them-whether rich or poor, aristocrat or peasant-to unite under one banner and to free the holy land from the Muslims. To him, this was "a holy war."

Historians describe Urban II as a good orator. He intended to incite the *Christians* against *Muslim Turks and Arabs*, and succeeded by alleging that the Muslim were assaulting pilgrims and that Christianity's sacred places were being desecrated.<sup>1</sup> Of course, none of this was true.

As historians have confirmed, the Muslims were very tolerant towards Christians and Jews, whom they permitted to pray and worship. All minorities co-existing in the Holy Land benefited equally from this atmosphere of tranquility, created by the moral code of Islam. But because means of communication at the time were terribly primitive compared to today's, medieval Europeans weren't aware of this. Owing allegiance to the Vatican in Rome and conducting services in Latin, they knew little about the Eastern Orthodox Church or the Greek-speaking Byzantium, and even less about Islam.

Since what the common people did know amounted to nothing more than hearsay, the Pope found it easy to excite their emotions. Urban II went on to proclaim as an encouragement that for those who participated in the crusade, all sins would be forgiven. The exuberant crowd was distributed fabric crosses to emblazon their garments, and they dispersed to spread the word of the "holy war."

The overwhelming response to this call made history. In a very short period of time, a massive "crusaders' army" was assembled, consisting of not only professional warriors, but also ten thousands of ordinary people.

Some historians suggest that the impoverished kings of Christendom, eager to exploit the fabled riches of the East, pressurized the Pope to call a "holy war." Others find an altogether different motive for Pope Urban II, suggesting that he wished to gain power and prestige for himself at the expense of a rival claiming to be pope. But in reality, all the various kings, princes, aristocrats and others who obliged this call did so for worldly purposes. As **Donald Queller** of the University of Illinois put it,

"the French knights wanted more land. Italian merchants hoped to expand trade in Middle Eastern ports. . . Large numbers of poor people joined the expeditions simply to escape the hardships of their normal lives."[2](#)

On the way, greedy hordes murdered countless Muslims and Jews in the hope of finding gold and jewels. Among crusaders, it was common practice to disembowel their victims in the hopes that they might have swallowed their gold and jewels to hide them. In the Fourth Crusade, their avarice reached the point where they looted Christian Constantinople, scratching gold leaf off the frescos in the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia.

## Barbarism of the Crusaders



A 16th-century crusader

In the summer of 1096, this mob of self-appointed crusaders set off in three separate groups, each taking a different route to Constantinople, where they met up with one another. The Byzantine Emperor, **Alexius I**, did what he could to aid this force, comprising 4,000 mounted knights and 25,000 infantry troops.[3](#)

Raymond IV of Saint-Gilles, Count of Toulouse; Bohemond, Duke of Taranto; Godfrey of Bouillon; Hugh, Count of Vermandois; and Robert, Duke of Normandy commanded this army. Bishop Adhemar of le Puy, the close friend of Urban II, was their spiritual leader.[4](#)

After ransacking and setting fire to many settlements and putting countless Muslims to the sword, eventually the crusaders reached Jerusalem in 1099. After a siege of approximately five weeks, the city fell. When the victors finally entered Jerusalem, according to one historian, "They killed all the Saracens and the Turks they found... whether male or female."[5](#)

Crusaders slaughtered everyone they met and looted everything they could get their hands on. They murdered indiscriminately those who had taken refuge in the mosques, whether young or old, and devastated the Muslim and Jewish holy sites and places of worship setting the city's synagogues aflame, burning alive Jews who had hidden inside. This slaughter continued until no longer could they find anyone to kill.[6](#)

### One of the crusaders, Raymond of Aguiles, boasts of this incredible cruelty:

Wonderful sights were to be seen. Some of our men (and this was more merciful) cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into flames. Piles of heads, hands and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the Temple of Solomon, a place where religious services are normally chanted . . . in the temple and the porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.[7](#)

An engraving depicting the crusaders' occupation of Jerusalem

A Medieval Age drawing of Templars in Jerusalem



In *The Monks of War*, researcher Desmond Seward narrates the events of these tragic days:

Jerusalem was stormed in July 1099. The rabid ferocity of its sack showed just how little the Church had succeeded in Christianizing atavistic instincts. The entire population of the Holy City was put to the sword, Jews as well as Moslems, 70,000 men, women and children perished in a holocaust, which raged for three days. In places men waded in blood up to their ankles and horsemen were splashed by it as they rode through the streets.<sup>8</sup>

According to another historical source, the number of Muslims pitilessly slaughtered was 40,000.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the actual number of the dead, what the crusaders committed in the Holy Land has gone down in history as an example of matchless barbarism.

The first crusade ended with the fall of Jerusalem in 1099. After 460 years of Muslim rule, the Holy Land came under Christian control. The crusaders established a Latin kingdom that stretched from Palestine to Antioch and made Jerusalem its capital city.

Thereafter, the crusaders began struggling to establish themselves in the Middle East. But to sustain the state they had founded, they needed to organize themselves-and to achieve this, they established unprecedented military orders. Members of these orders had emigrated from Europe and, in Palestine, lived a monastic life of sorts. At the same time, they trained for war against the Muslims. One of these orders went down a different route, undergoing a change that would significantly alter the course of history in Europe and-eventually-the world: the Knights Templar.

## Founding of the Knights Templar

About 20 years after the conquest of Jerusalem and the creation of a Latin Empire, the Templars first appeared on the scene of history. Otherwise known as Templars or Knights Templar, the order's full and proper name was *Pauperes commilitones Christi Templique Salomonis*, or "Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon."

(A major part of the information we have today on the Templars was recorded by the 12th century historian Guillaume of Tyre.)

The order was founded in 1118 by nine knights: Hugues de Payens, Geoffrey de St. Omer, Rossal, Gondamer, Geoffrey Bisol, Payen de



Montdidier, Archambaud de St. Agnat, Andre de Montbard, and the Hugh Conte de Champagne.

Thus was quietly born one of the most talked-about, effective and powerful organizations of Medieval Europe. These nine knights presented themselves to Baldwin II, the Emperor of Jerusalem, asking him to assign them the responsibility of protecting the lives and property of the many Christian pilgrims now flocking to Jerusalem from all over Europe.



14th-century drawing of the Temple of Solomon

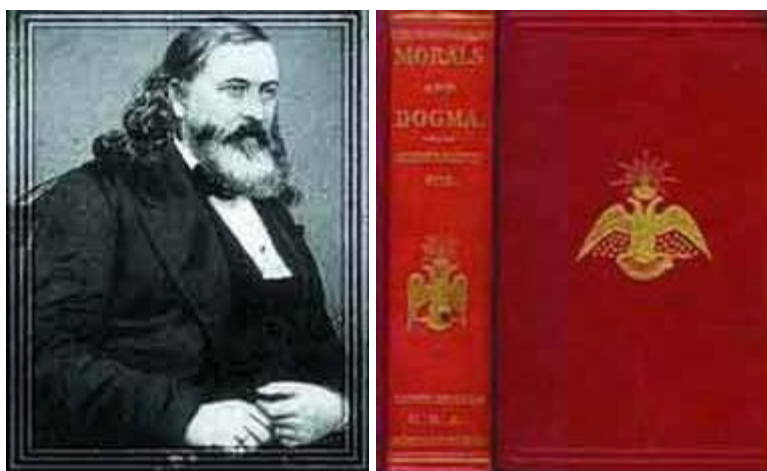
The Emperor knew **Hugues de Payens**, the first Grand Master of the order, well enough to grant the nine their request. Accordingly, the district where Solomon's Temple once stood (and by then, included the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque, which survives to this day), was allocated to the order of the Templars, giving the order its name.

The Temple Mount thus remained the order's headquarters for the next 70 years until, following the battle of Hattin, the great Islamic commander Saladin reconquered Jerusalem for the Muslims.

The Templars had established themselves there by choice, because the site of the Temple represented the earthly power of Prophet Solomon; and the remnants of the temple contained big secrets. Protecting the Holy Land and the Christian pilgrims was the official reason the nine founders gave for joining forces and for creating the order in the first place. But the true reason behind it all was altogether different.

## The Order's Mission

At the time, there were a number of other orders of warrior monks in Jerusalem, but all acting according to their charters. Besides training as soldiers, the Knights of St. John - a large organization also known as the *Knights Hospitalers* - took care of the sick and the poor and were performing other good deeds in the Holy Land. The **Templars**, however, had taken it upon themselves to protect the lands between Haifa and Jerusalem-a physical impossibility for the nine knights to shoulder all by themselves. Even then, it was now obvious that they sought political as well as economic gains, quite aside from performing works of charity.



The famous Grand Master Albert Pike, with his book titled [Morals and Dogma](#)

In *Morals And Dogma*, one of Freemasonry's most popular books, Grand Master Albert Pike (1809-1891) reveals the Templars' true purpose:

In 1118, nine Knights Crusaders in the East, among whom were [Geoffroi de Saint-Omer](#) and [Hughes de Payens](#), consecrated themselves to religion, and took an oath between the hands of the Patriarch of Constantinople, a See always secretly or openly hostile to that of Rome from the time of Photius. The avowed object of the Templars was to protect the Christians who came to visit the Holy Places: their secret object was the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon on the model prophesied by Ezekiel...[10](#)

The **Knights Templar**, he continued, were from the very beginning "devoted to . . . opposition to the tiara of Rome and the crown of its Chiefs. . ." The object of the Templars, he said, was to acquire influence and wealth, then to "intrigue and at need fight to establish the Johannite or Gnostic and Kabbalistic dogma. . ."

Adding to the information that [Pike](#) provides, the English authors of *The Hiram Key*, **Christopher Knight** and **Robert Lomas** - both Masons - write about the Templars' origin and purpose. According to them, the Templars discovered "a secret" in the ruins of the temple. This then changed their worldview; and from then on, they adopted un-Christian teachings. Their "protection for pilgrims" became a front behind which they hid their real intent and activities.

There is no evidence that these founding Templars ever gave protection to pilgrims, but on the other hand, we were soon to find that there is conclusive proof that they did conduct extensive excavations under the ruins of Herod's Temple [as Solomon's temple was called after Herod rebuilt it].[11](#)

The authors of *The Hiram Key* are not the only researchers finding evidence for this. Writes the French historian, **Gaetan Delaforge**:

The real task of the nine knights was to carry out research in the area, in order to obtain certain relics and manuscripts which contain the essence of the secret traditions of Judaism and ancient Egypt...[12](#)

In *The Hiram Key*, [Knight](#) and [Lomas](#) conclude that the Templars excavated items of such importance at the site that they adopted a wholly new world view. Many other historians draw similar conclusions. The order's founders and their successors were all of Christian upbringing, yet their philosophy of life was not a Christian one.



Some seals and maps from the era of the crusades: From left to right: A sketch showing the centers of religious importance in Jerusalem; Seal of Frederick III; another map of Jerusalem; front and back of the crusader king Baldwin's seal; front and back of the Cesaree Archbishop's seal.

At the end of the 19th century, **Charles Wilson** of the Royal Engineers, began conducting archeological research in Jerusalem. He concluded that the Templars had gone to Jerusalem to study the temple's ruins and, from the evidence Wilson obtained there, that the Templars had set themselves up in the vicinity of the

temple to facilitate excavation and research. The tools that the Templars left behind form part of the evidence Wilson gathered, and are now in the private collection of the Scottish **Robert Brydon**.[13](#)

According to the authors of *The Hiram Key*, the Templars' search was not in vain. They made a discovery that altered their perception of and outlook on the world entirely. Despite being born and raised in a Christian society, they adopted wholly un-Christian practices. Black magic rituals and rites and sermons of perverse content were common practice. There is a general consensus among historians that these practices were derived from on the Cabala.



Muslims and Christians during one of their clashes



Map of Palestine showing the crusades

*Cabala* literally means "oral tradition." An esoteric branch of mystical Judaism, the Cabala is also a school that researches the secret, hidden and meanings of the *Torah* (or first five *Books of Moses*) and other Jewish writings. There's more to it, however. A close examination of the Cabala reveals that it actually precedes the Torah. A pagan teaching, it continued to exist after the revelation of the Torah and lived on to spread amongst the followers of Judaism. (For further reading on the subject, see Harun Yahya's *Global Freemasonry*, Global Publishing, 2002)

For thousands of years, the Cabala has been a resource for sorcery and practitioners of black magic and now enjoys a strong following all around the world, not only in the Jewish community. The Templars were one such group, engaged in research into the Cabala with the goal of acquiring supernatural powers. As the following chapters will examine in detail, they were keen on establishing ongoing relationships with Cabalists in Jerusalem as well as in Europe-a view widely accepted by researchers working on the subject.[14](#)

## The Development of the Order

With new members joining their order, the Templars soon entered a phase of rapid growth. In 1120, **Foulques d'Angers** became a Knight Templar and so did **Hugo, Count of Champagne**, in 1125. The enigma surrounding the order and its mystic teachings drew the attention of many European aristocrats. At the *Council of Troyes* in 1128, the Papacy officially recognized the order of the Templars, which further aided their growth.[15](#)

Rome's recognition of the Templars is related in the Turkish Masonic journal, *Mimar Sinan*:

To obtain the Papacy's approval of the order, Grand Master Hugues de Payens, accompanied by five knights, paid a visit to Pope Honorius II. The Grand Master submitted two letters-one from the patriarch of Jerusalem, the other from King Baudoin II-setting forth the order's honorable mission, its services to Christianity, and many another good deed.





A ship carrying the symbols of the Templars

On the 13th of January, 1128, the Council of Troyes convened. Present were many high-ranking officials of the Church, including the Abbot of Citeaux, Etienne Harding, and Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux. The Grand Master presented his case once more. It was agreed that the Church would officially recognize the order under the name of Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ. Bernard was commissioned to prepare a Rule for the Templars. So, the order was officially founded.[16](#)

In the order's development and progress, the single most important person is undoubtedly St. Bernard (1090-1153). Becoming the Abbot of Clairvaux at the tender age of 25, he had risen in the Catholic Church's hierarchy to become a respectable spokesman for the Church, influential with the Pope as well as the French King. It must be added that he was a cousin of Andre de Montbard, one of the founders of the order. The Templars' Rule was written according the principles of the *Cistercian Order* to which St. Bernard belonged-or short, the Templars adopted the rules and organization of this monastic order. But most of their rule never went any further than being written down and recognized: The Templars continued in their un-Christian practices that the Church had strictly forbidden.

It's entirely possible that St. Bernard was duped, and that he never knew the truth about the Templars who, taking advantage of his trustworthiness and status in the Church and throughout Christian Europe, used him for their own ends. He wrote a favorable appraisal of the order, "*De Laude Novae Militae*" (In Praise of the New Knighthood) following Grand Master Hugues de Payens's persistent requests for him to do so.[17](#) Around that time, St. Bernard had become the second most influential person in Christendom, after the Pope.



The famous explorer Vasco de Gama was a Templar who set sail to discover new ocean trading routes.  
Above: Vasco de Gama's ship with the Templars Cross on its sails.

### One source illustrates the importance of Bernard's support of the Templars:

Bernard's document, "*De Laude Novae Militae*", swept through Christendom like a tornado, and in no time the number of Templar recruits increased. At the same time donations, gifts and bequests, from Monarchs and Barons throughout Europe, were arriving regularly on the Templar doorstep. With a staggering rapidity, the fledgling little band of nine knights grew into what we refer to as Templar, Inc.[18](#)



The Cabala is a mystic synthesis between pagan teachings preceding the Torah and Judaism. For centuries, the Cabala has been associated with sorcery and was a source of inspiration for the Templars' perverse beliefs.

With this document, the Templars obtained unprecedented privileges not granted to other orders and-according to **Alan Butler** and **Stephen Dafoe**, known for their research in this field-became the most successful military, commercial and financial organization in Medieval Europe. As their legend and renown spread from mouth to mouth, they became a multinational company with seemingly unlimited capital and financial resources and ten of thousands of trained employees:

Recruits, and offers of money and land came flowing in from far and wide. Soon, numerous presbyteries, castles, farms and churches, were built and occupied by the Templar Knights and their servants. The Templars fitted out ships, creating both a merchant and fighting navy. In time, they became the most famous warriors, travellers, bankers and financiers of their day.<sup>19</sup>

In short, the Templars were an autonomous entity answerable only to the Pope, with no obligation to pay dues to any king, ruler or diocese. Their wealth increased day by day. In the Holy Lands, the order's power was legendary and continued until the fall of Acre (1291). They controlled the shipping routes from Europe to Palestine used by pilgrims, but all these constituted just a fraction of the Templars' overall activities.

They had entered the scene as "Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ," but no description could have been less accurate. Amongst their ranks were to be found the wealthiest people of Europe: leading bankers from London and Paris, among whose customers were Blanche of Castile, Alphonso de Poitiers, and Robert of Artois. The finance ministers of James I of Aragon, and Charles I of Naples and the chief advisor of Louis VII of France were all Templars.<sup>20</sup>

By the year 1147, 700 knights and 2,400 servants of the order were stationed in Jerusalem. Across the known world, 3,468 castles had become the Templars' property. They had established trading posts and routes on both land and sea, had won war booty and spoils from the wars they participated in. Among Europe's states, they were a political power to be reckoned with, often called in to arbitrate between rulers during times of conflict.

It is estimated that in the 13th century, the Templars numbered 160,000, of whom 20,000 were knights-in those times, constituting an undoubted superpower.

In *The Temple and the Lodge*, authors **Michael Baigent** and **Richard Leigh** document the Templars' incredibly widespread influence throughout Christian Europe. They were simply everywhere, even playing a role in the signing of England's *Magna Carta*. Having amassed huge wealth, they were the most powerful bankers of their time and also the largest fighting force in the West. The Templars commissioned and financed cathedrals, mediated in international transactions, and even supplied court chamberlains to the



ruling houses of Europe.

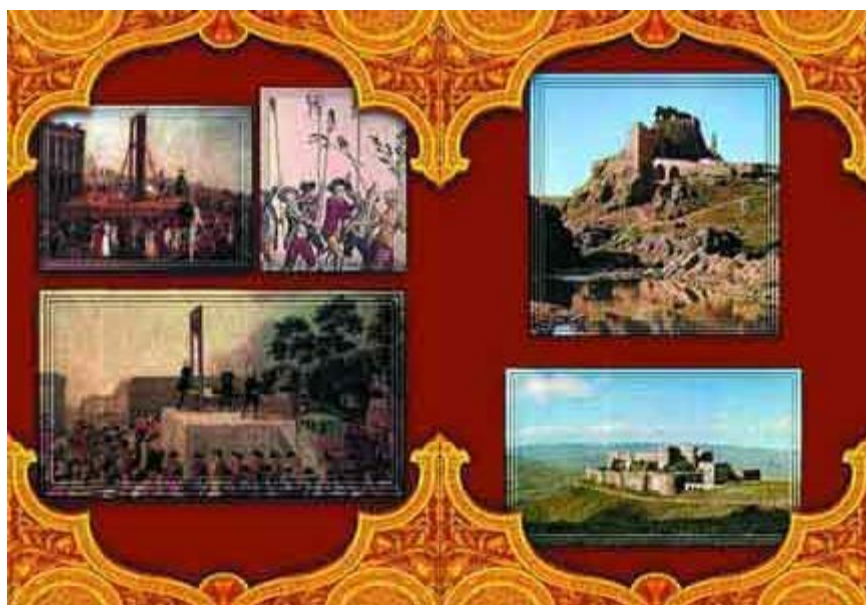
## The Structure of the Order

One of the most interesting aspects of the Templars was their emphasis on discretion. In the two hundred years between the order's founding and its liquidation, they never compromised on secrecy. This, however, is inexplicable by any standard of reason, logic, or common sense. If they were truly devoted to the Catholic Church, there was no need for this secrecy: All of Europe was under the sovereignty of the Papacy.

If they were merely following Christian teachings, then they had nothing to hide and there was no need for secrecy. Why adopt secrecy as a fundamental principle if you are in compliance with Church doctrine and your mission is to uphold and defend Christianity-unless you are engaged in activities incompatible with the Church?

Discipline was so very strictly observed within the order's hierarchy that it can only be described as a chain of command. According to the Templar rule, obedience to the Grand Master and Masters of the order was paramount:

... if anything be commanded by the Master or by one to whom he has given his power, it should be done without demur as if it were a command from God.<sup>21</sup>



Ruins of castles and fortresses built by the Templars in Europe and Palestine

The Templars were not allowed any personal possessions; everything remained the property of their order. They also had their own unique dress code. Over their armor, they wore a long white mantle emblazoned with a red cross, so that they were recognized as Templars wherever they went. The Red Cross symbol was assigned to the order by **Pope Eugene III**, who, incidentally, had been tutored by St. Bernard.

There were three classes of Templars: Knights and warriors of various ranks, men of religion, and finally servants. Other rules specific to the order prohibited marriage, correspondence with relatives or a private life.<sup>22</sup> Meals were taken together en masse. As portrayed on their seal-which depicted two knights on one single horse-they were required to go about their business in pairs, share everything, and eat from the same bowl. They addressed each other as "my brother," and each Templar had the right to three horses and one servant. Breach or disrespect of any of these rules was harshly punished.

Grooming and cleansing were considered an embarrassment, so Templars rarely washed and went around filthy and stinking of sweat, from the heat of wearing their armor. But according to history, the Templars were good seafarers. From the surviving Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land, they had acquired various maps

and learned the sciences of geometry and mathematics, enabling them to navigate not only along the shores of Europe and along the African coast, but to explore lands and seas lying farther away.

## Admission to the Order

Before one could be considered for admission into the order, he had to meet a number of preconditions. Among them, a man had to be in good health, not married or indebted, without any obligations and not bound by any other order, and willing to accept becoming a slave and servant of the order.

The initiation ceremony was held in a domed chamber resembling the *Church of The Holy Sepulchre* and was to be conducted in absolute secrecy.<sup>23</sup> Just as in Freemasonry centuries later, esoteric rituals had to be performed during this ceremony.

In his article titled "*Tampliyeler ve Hurmasonlar*" (Templars and Freemasons) mason **Teoman Biyikoglu** refers to the order's rule of 1128 about the initiation ceremony:

The Master addresses the congregated brothers of the order: "Dear brothers, some of you have proposed that Mr. X may be admitted to the order. If any of you know of any reason to oppose his initiation, say so now."

If no word of opposition is spoken, the candidate will be led to the adjoining chamber of the temple. In this chamber, the candidate is visited by three of the most senior brothers, told of the difficulties and hardship awaiting him if he is admitted to the order, and then asked whether he still wishes to be admitted. If his answer is affirmative, he is asked whether he is married or engaged to be married, has links to other orders, is indebted to anyone, is of good health, and whether or not he is a slave.

If his answers to these questions comply with the requirements of the order, the senior brothers will return to the temple and say,

"We told the candidate of all the hardships awaiting him and our conditions of admission, but he is insistent on becoming a slave of the order."

Before being readmitted into the temple, the candidate is again asked whether he still insists on being admitted. If he still answers yes, the Grand Master addresses the candidate:

"Brother, you are asking much of us. You have seen only the façade of the order, and you hope to acquire pureblood horses, honorable neighbors, good food and nice garments. But are you aware of how hard our conditions really are?"

Proceeding to list the difficulties awaiting the candidate, he continues:

"You must not seek admittance for wealth, nor for status."

If the candidate agrees, he is again led out of the temple. The Grand Master then asks the brothers whether they have anything to say about the candidate. If there is nothing said against him, he is brought back, made to kneel down, and given the Bible. He is asked if he is married. If he answers no, the oldest or most senior in the congregation is asked,

"Have any questions that need to be asked been forgotten?"

If the answer is no, the candidate is asked to swear an oath that he will remain loyal to the order and his brothers until the day he dies, and that he will not reveal to the outside world a word that is spoken in the



Money and medallions issued by the Templars, who invented the first banking system.

temple. After he has sworn the oath, the Grand Master kisses the new brother on the lips [according to another source he is kissed on the belly and neck]. He then is given a Templar mantle and a woven belt, which is never to be taken off.[24](#)



Mystic teachings like the Cabala are not the only things the Knights Templars borrowed from Judaism. Although not sanctioned by the true faith, vices like amassing wealth and usury, practiced by some unobservant Jews have been adopted likewise by the Templars. In the Qur'an, God speaks of people who amass gold and silver: Jewish religious ornaments

## "Christian Usurers"

According to **Alan Butler** and **Stephen Dafoe**,

"The Templars were expert financiers, using trading techniques quite unknown in the Europe of their day. They had clearly learned many of these skills from Jewish sources, but would have much more freedom to extend their financial empire, in a way that any Jewish financier of the period would have envied greatly."[25](#)

Even though usury was strictly forbidden, they weren't afraid to lend money on interest. The Templars had acquired such wealth-and the power that came with it-that nobody dared speak out against them or do anything about it.[26](#) This so went to their heads that they went out of control. They were disobedient to kings and the Pope and in some cases, even challenged their authority. In 1303, for example, few years before their order was liquidated, they refused a request for assistance from the French **King Philip IV**, as well as his later request in 1306 for the Templars' order to merge with the Hospitalers.[27](#)

Travel could be a hazardous enterprise in the 12th century. En route, wayfarers could be robbed by bandits anywhere and at anytime. Transporting money, as well as other precious commodities essential for trade, was particularly risky. Out of this situation, the Templars made a fortune by means of a fairly simple system of banking. For example, if a tradesman wanted to go from London to Paris, first he would go to the Templars' office in London and hand over his money. In return, he was given a paper with an encoded message written on it. On his arrival in Paris, he could hand in this note in exchange for the money he'd paid in London, minus a fee and interest. Thus the transaction was completed.

Along with traders, wealthy pilgrims too made use of this system. "Checks" issued by Templars in Europe could be cashed in on arrival in Palestine, minus a hefty interest charge for this service. In *The Temple and the Lodge*, co-authors Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh explain the Templars' economic dimension, recording that the beginnings of modern banking can be traced back to them, and that no other organization contributed as much as the Templars to the rise of capitalism.[28](#)

History records Florentine bankers as having invented "checking accounts," yet the Templars were using this method of money transfer long before. It is generally accepted that capitalism first arose in the Jewish community of Amsterdam, but long before them, the Templars had established their own medieval capitalism, including banking based on interest. They lent money on interest rates of up to 60% and controlled a major proportion of capital flow and liquidity in the economy of Europe.

Using methods much like those of a modern private bank, they derived profits from both trade and banking,



as well as from donations and armed conflict. They became as rich as the multinational company that, in effect, they were. At one time, the finances of the English and French monarchies were controlled and run by the Templars' respective offices in Paris and London, and both the French and English royal families owed the Templars huge amounts of money.<sup>29</sup> The kings of Europe were literally at their mercy, hoping to borrow money, and most royal households had come to depend on the order. This let them manipulate the kings and their national policies for their own purposes

## The Enigma of the Templars and Gothic Architecture



St. Bernard, spiritual leader of the Templars

After **Innocent II** was elected Pope with St. Bernard's backing, he granted the Templars the right to build and run their own churches. This was a first in the history of the Church, which ruled as an absolute power at the time. This privilege meant that from now on, the Templars were answerable only to the Pope and beyond the reach of other authorities, including kings and lesser rulers. It also reduced their responsibilities to the Papacy, letting them hold court, impose their own taxes and collect them. Thus they could realize their worldly ambitions free of any pressure from the Church.

In the process of planning their churches, they developed their own style of architecture, later to be known as "Gothic." In *The Sign and the Seal*, **Graham Hancock** states that Gothic architecture was born in 1134 with the construction of the north tower of Chartres Cathedral. The person behind this work of architecture was St. Bernard, the Templars' mentor and spiritual leader. He felt it important that this construction symbolize in stone the cabalistic approach and the esotericism that the Templars esteemed so

highly.

As Graham Hancock wrote, St. Bernard, the patron of the Templars,

"played a formative role in the evolution and dissemination of the Gothic architectural formula in its early days (he had been at the height of his powers in 1134 when the soaring north tower of Chartres cathedral had been built, and he had constantly stressed the principles of sacred geometry that had been put into practice in that tower and throughout the whole wonderful building.)"



A medieval engraving showing Jerusalem at the time of the Templars

Elsewhere in the same book, the author writes:

The entire edifice had been carefully and explicitly designed as a key to the deeper religious mysteries. Thus, for example, the architects and masons had made use of *gematria* (an ancient Hebrew cipher that substitutes numbers for the letters of the alphabet) to "spell out" obscure liturgical phrases in many of the key dimensions of the great building. Similarly the sculptors and glaziers-working usually to the instructions of the higher clergy-had carefully concealed complex messages about human nature, about the past, and about the prophetic meaning of the Scriptures in the thousands of different devices and designs that they had created.



Characteristic examples of Gothic architecture in some of Europe's cities

(For example, a tableau in the north porch depicts the removal, to some unstated destination, of the Ark of the Covenant-which is shown loaded upon an ox-cart. The damaged and eroded inscription, "HIC AMICITUR ARCHA CEDERIS," which could be "Here is hidden the Ark of the Covenant."

Clearly he had regarded the Templars' architectural skills as almost supernaturally advanced and had been particularly impressed by the soaring roofs and arches that they had built. . . Soaring roofs and arches had also been the distinguishing features of the Gothic architectural formula as expressed at Chartres and other French cathedrals in the twelfth century-cathedrals that . . . were regarded by some observers as "scientifically... far beyond what can be allowed for in the knowledge of the epoch."[30](#)

## The Battle of Hattin

Following the death of the Latin **King Baldwin I** in 1186, Guy de Lusignan - who was known to be close to the Templars - succeeded to the throne in Palestine. Reynald de Chatillon, Prince of Antioch, became the new king's closest aide. After fighting in the Second Crusade, Reynald had stayed behind in Palestine, where he became good friends with the Templars.



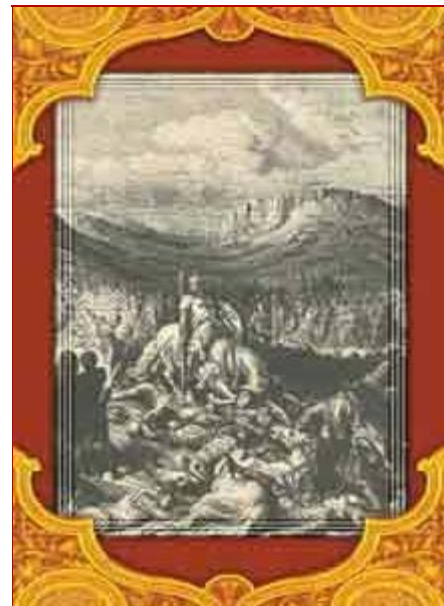
Gold and silver swords belonging to Templars

Reynald's cruelty was well known in the Holy Land. On the 4th of July, 1187 the crusader armies fought their bloodiest battle at Hattin. The army numbered 20,000 infantry and a thousand mounted knights. Assembling this army stretched to the limit the resources of towns along the border, leaving the others unprotected and vulnerable. The battle ended with the virtual annihilation of the crusaders. Most lost their lives, and every survivor was captured. Among the prisoners of war were King Guy himself and the leading commanders of the Christian army

According to the Templars' own records, Saladin, the great commander of the Muslim forces, was fair. Despite all the cruelty inflicted on Palestine's Muslim population over the previous 100 years of Christian rule, the defeated forces were not ill-treated.

While most Christians were pardoned, the Templars had been responsible for the savage attacks carried out on the Muslim population, and for this reason, **Saladin** had the Templars executed, along with the Grand Master of the order and Reynald de Chatillon, both known for their inhumane cruelty. King Guy was freed after only one year in captivity in the town of Nablus.

After Saladin's victory at Hattin, he advanced with his army and proceeded to free Jerusalem. Despite serious losses, the Templars survived their defeat in Palestine and along with other Christians, withdrew to Europe. Most headed for France where, thanks to their privileged status, they continued to increase their power and wealth. In time, they became the "state within the state" in many European countries.



Drawing depicting the Templars' defeat at the Battle of Hattin

Acre, the crusaders' last stronghold in Palestine, was captured by the Muslim army in 1291. With this, the original justification for the Templars' existence-the protection of pilgrims in the Holy Land-disappeared as well.

Now the Templars could concentrate all their efforts on Europe, but needed a little time to adapt to this new situation. During this transitional period, they relied on the help of their friends in the royal houses of Europe, of whom the best-known was Richard the Lion-Hearted. His relationship with the *Templars* was such that he was regarded as an Honorary Knight Templar.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, Richard had sold to the Templars the Island of Cyprus, which was to become the temporary base of their order, while they strengthened their position in Europe to counteract their losses in Palestine.



## Cyprus: A Temporary Base

In order to understand the links between Cyprus and the order, we need to examine the events that culminated in the 3rd Crusade. By July 4, 1187, Jerusalem was conquered. Guy de Lusignan was taken prisoner the same day to be freed a year later, after swearing an oath never to attack the Muslims again.

Germany, France, and England made the joint decision to launch the 3rd Crusade in order to retake Jerusalem. But before proceeding to attack the Holy City, they considered it essential for their success to first capture a harbor, where they could land troops and supplies. Acre was selected; and King Philip of France and England's King Richard began their sea journey

After King Richard's naval forces took **Cyprus**, Templar Master Robert de Sable entered the scene with a proposal to purchase Cyprus from Richard the Lion-Hearted. A price was fixed at 100,000 bezants (then gold currency of Byzantium), and de Sable made a down payment of 40,000 bezants. This sum, available so soon after the defeat at Hattin, is enough to illustrate the order's financial strength.

In 1291, Acre fell to the Muslim army. As the Christian presence in Palestine came to an end, the Templars moved on. Some settled in Cyprus, later to serve as their temporary base in the Mediterranean. The Templars had been hoping to acquire a kingdom, such as the Teutonic Knights had won for themselves in northern Europe, except they wanted theirs in center of Europe-preferably in France.

In Europe, under the guidance of their Master based in France, the rest of the Templars carried on their usual activities, with an unequalled degree of freedom. The Grand Master enjoyed a status on a par with kings; the Templars owned land in most countries of Christendom, from Denmark to Italy. A massive warrior army formed the basis of their political power. Because all the ruling houses of Europe were indebted to the Templars, they feared that their future was threatened.

The throne of England was seriously indebted to the order. King John had emptied the coffers of the treasury between 1260 and 1266 in order to finance his military operations; and Henry III, likewise, borrowed heavily from the Knights Templar.[32](#)

The situation in France was such that the Templars offices in Paris housed their own treasury as well as the state's and the treasurer of the order was also the treasurer of the King. The Royal household's finances were thus under the control of the Templars and dependent on them.[33](#)

## Decadence and Its Unmasking

After Christian presence in the Holy Land ended on June 16th, 1291, the Templars returned to Europe. Even though their original purpose-protecting European pilgrims-had ceased to exist, they kept on strengthening their power base, increasing their number of soldiers and amassing ever greater fortunes. But from this date onward, events began to turn against the Templars.

While their numbers and their wealth were on the rise, their greed, arrogance and tyranny increased accordingly. By now, the Knights Templar had grown apart from the Catholic Church's teachings, beliefs, and practices. In general, no longer did any European have anything to say in their favor. In France, expressions like "to drink like a Templar" were common and widespread. In Germany, "*Tempelhaus*" meant *whorehouse*, and if anyone acted in an unacceptably arrogant way, he was said "to be proud as a Templar."[34](#)



#### THE BARBARITY OF RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED

Richard the Lion-Hearted had a close relationship with the Templars. Despite his glorious title of "Lionheart," he was a cruel and merciless ruler.

When he and his crusader army reached Palestine, they came to Acre, which had then been besieged for two years by the last remaining Christian army in Palestine. Facing the crusaders was Saladin's army which, despite many attempts, hadn't managed to break the siege and relieve the 3,000 Muslims inside the Acre castle. With the arrival of Richard the Lion-Hearted, Acre's already weakened resistance was weakened further. In the end, on July 12th, 1192, Acre fell. This was the crusaders' first victory after their defeat at the Battle of Hattin.

3,000 Muslims lived in the town, more than half of them women and children. Richard demanded a huge sum as ransom for the lives of his 3,000 captives. Saladin agreed, but could not raise the requested sum at once, so installments were agreed upon. Some had already been paid when one was delayed. On August 20th Richard, who had grown tired of sitting and waiting, decided to slaughter all 3,000 Muslim prisoners. His soldiers placed the block on the front walls of the castle and, one by one, beheaded all of the 3,000. It took them three whole days. On the right, this act of barbarism is depicted from a Christian perspective.

The kingdoms of Europe, especially France, were angered by the Templars' political intrigues and shadowy designs. After having plenty of opportunity to get acquainted with them, people started to realize that their order was not comprised of genuinely religious knights. Finally in 1307, Philip the Fair, King of France, and **Pope Clement V** realized that the Templars were seeking to change not only Europe's religious landscape, but its political balance as well. In October 1307, they moved in on the Templars, with the view of liquidating this decadent, treacherous order.[35](#)

## The Templars' True Face

Modest missionaries, fighting for Christianity-this was how the Templars presented themselves to the ordinary people. Undeservedly, they were perceived to be saints of great virtue, mentors of Christianity, devoted to aiding the poor and the needy. It's amazing that they managed to create such a positive image while leading lives contrary to Christian teachings and, on the way acquiring status and wealth through donations, trade, banking and even looting. The few who discovered their true identity did not dare to speak out against this powerful order. Philip, King of France, feared the dangers their financial strength could create for him.

It was high time to unmask the Templars. As a Masonic writer of the 18th century explains:

The war, which for the greater number of warriors of good faith proved the source of weariness, of losses and misfortunes, became for them [the Templars] only the



opportunity for booty and aggrandizement, and if they distinguished themselves by a few brilliant actions, their motive soon ceased to be a matter of doubt when they were seen to enrich themselves even with the spoils of the confederates, to increase their credit by the extent of the new possessions they had acquired, to carry arrogance to the point of rivalling crowned princes in pomp and grandeur, to refuse their aid against the enemies of the faith... and finally to ally

themselves with that horrible and sanguinary prince named *the Old Man of the Mountain* Prince of the Assassins.<sup>36</sup>

The **Templars** became increasingly confident and impertinent in their practices and in disseminating their teachings, trusting in the unjustifiably positive image they had managed to create throughout society. This in turn led to an increase in the numbers who witnessed their perversion and began to whisper about it.

Whatever might the Templars be doing behind the closed doors of their palaces? The knights' avarice, inhumanity, greed and zeal, already well known, awakened the curiosity of the locals, the clergy, and the monarchy. The Papacy was almost certain that this group, which it could no longer control, was living an irreligious life and abusing the privileges it had granted them.

Rumors and complaints circulated about the Templars. There were increasingly credible accusations that they engaged in forbidden practices and other wrongdoing and that was why they operated under strict secrecy. People had begun to whisper of secret rites performed in their palaces, *rituals of Satanist worship*, and various immoral relationships.

All these rumors were combined with actual fact-what servants in Templar palaces and the people living in the vicinity of them witnessed and reported. The Papacy found itself in a predicament, not knowing what to do. **Clement V**, elected Pope in 1305, was trying to calculate the damage to Christianity - and therefore, to the Vatican - and how to minimize its effects. At the same time, he had to put an end to constant pressure from regional dioceses and the King of France. Meanwhile, in Cyprus, **Jacques de Molay**, leader of the Templars, was making preparations for war, as the order had not given up hope to go back in the Middle East. He was recalled to France and ordered by the Pope to investigate these allegations.

All this, however, was unacceptable to the French King. He quickly passed a new law, under which he had the Templars arrested. On October 13, 1309, they were accused in the courts with the following charges:

1. That during the reception ceremony, new brothers were required to deny *Christ, God, The Virgin* or the Saints on the command of those receiving them.
2. That the brothers committed various sacrilegious acts either on the cross or on an image of *Christ*.
3. That the receptors practiced obscene kisses on new entrants, on the mouth, navel or buttocks.
4. That the priests of the Order did not consecrate the host, and that the brothers did not believe in the sacraments.
5. That the brothers practiced idol worship of a cat or a head.
6. That the brothers encouraged and permitted the practice of sodomy.
7. That the Grand Master, or other officials, absolved fellow Templars from their sins.
8. That the Templars held their reception ceremonies and chapter meetings in secret and at



night.

9. That the Templars abused the duties of charity and hospitality and used illegal means to acquire property and increase their wealth.[37](#)

## Perversion in the Templars' Faith and Practice

The documents at hand, together with the allegation made against the Templars, demonstrated that this was no ordinary order of knights. It was a darker organization altogether: one of perverted faith, frightening methods, and cunning strategies. It was well organized and well prepared, always scheming, always ready and dangerous, and-unlike anything seen before-forward thinking, with comprehensive plans for the future.

During their time in the Middle East, the Templars had established and maintained contact with mystic sects belonging to different religions and denominations, including sorcerers. They were known to have close links to *the hashashis* ([assassins](#)) who, while influential, were regarded as a perverted sect by the Muslim population. From them, the Templars had learned some mystic teachings and barbaric strategies, as well as how to organize a sect.

As will be seen in the coming chapters, the order's higher echelons in particular had also acquainted themselves with-and incorporated into their practice-beliefs based on the mystic teachings of the Cabala, the influence of the Bogomils, and Luciferians, thus leaving Christianity behind. According to the Templars, *Jesus* was a god ruling in another world, with little or no power in our present one. Satan was the lord of this material world of ours.



The Templars worshipped the idol Baphomet, thought to symbolize Satan.

Now the rumors were confirmed: Candidates for the order were indeed required to deny *God*, *Christ* and the Saints, committed sacrilegious acts, spit and urinate onto the holy Cross, be kissed square on the mouth with the "*Osculum Infame*" or "*The Kiss of Shame*" on the navel and buttocks by the more senior Knights Templars, during the initiation ceremony.

That they freely practiced homosexuality and other sexual perversions, that the Grand Master wielded total authority over everything, that they practiced rituals of sorcery and used Cabalistic symbolism was clear evidence that the order had become a sect blasphemous to Christianity. Their questioning revealed yet another of their unorthodox practices: Without being specific, they had admitted to idolatry, but during their ongoing interrogation, it gradually emerged that without any doubt, they were *worshipping Satan*.

The Templars revered an idol of [Baphomet](#); a demon with the head of a goat, whose image was later to become the symbol of [The Church of Satan](#). From **Peter Underwood's** *Dictionary of the Occult and Supernatural*:

[Baphomet](#) was the deity worshipped by the Knights Templar, and in Black Magic was the source and creator of evil; the Satanic goat of the witches' Sabbath...[38](#)

During their trial, almost all Templars mentioned having worshipped Baphomet. This idol they described as having a scary human head, a long beard and frightening, shining eyes. They also mentioned human skulls and idols of cats. The consensus among historians is that all these figures are objects of Satanic worship.

The demon Baphomet has ever since been an object of Satanic veneration. Details about Baphomet were later conveyed by **Eliphas Levi**; a 19th-century Cabalist and occultist, whose drawings illustrate Baphomet as having a goat's head with two faces, and a winged human body that is female above the waist and whose lower half is male.



Among the European monarchs indebted to the Templars was the England's King Henry

A historic document describing the abolition of the Knights Templar s

Most Templars confessed that they didn't believe in Jesus because they held him to be "a false prophet"; that they had committed acts of homosexuality during the admission ceremony as well as afterwards, that they worshipped idols and practiced Satanism. All these admissions entered the court records, and following their trial, most of the Templars were imprisoned.

Much has been said about the Templars' homosexual practices, and it has been suggested that their insignia-of two riders on the back of one horse-represented this custom. In his novel *Foucault's Pendulum*, **Umberto Eco** extensively touches upon this aspect of the Templars.[39](#)

After their confessions in the courts of the French King, the Pope himself interrogated 72 of the Templars. They were asked to swear an oath to tell the truth and then, proceed to confirm that their previous confessions were truthful: that they rejected belief in Jesus, that they spat on the holy cross and committed all the other acts of perversion they'd admitted to. They then knelt down and asked for forgiveness.

The interrogation of the Templars culminated in the dissolution of their order. In 1314, Grand Master Jacques de Molay was burned at the stake. Templars who had managed to escape arrest by fleeing to other countries were pursued throughout the whole of Christendom. Other countries including Italy and Germany followed suit, arresting and interrogating the Templars they could apprehend. But for various reasons, some countries offered the Templars refuge.

On November 10, 1307, England's **Edward II** wrote the Pope that he would not persecute the Templars and that in his country, they would remain safe. But two years later, after interrogating the Templars, the Pope issued a Papal Bull declaring that the Templars' "unspeakable wickednesses and abominable crimes of notorious heresy" had now "come to the knowledge of almost everyone." Upon reading it, King Edward agreed to prosecute the Templars.

Finally, at the Council of Vienne in France in 1312, the Order of the Knights Templar was officially declared illegal in all of Europe, and captured Templars were punished. On March 22nd, **Clement V** issued a Papal Bull under the name of *Vox in Excelso* (A Voice from on High), in which the order was declared to be dissolved and-on paper, at least-its existence erased from the official records:

... Hark, a voice of the people from the city! a voice from the temple! the voice of the Lord rendering recompense to his enemies. The prophet is compelled to exclaim: Give them, Lord, a barren womb and dry breasts. Their worthlessness has been revealed because of their



The Templars' confessions made references to perverted sexual practices. Homosexuality was rife between the Knights.

It is said that the Templars' official seal symbolizes this kind of relationship.

malice. Throw them out of your house, and let their roots dry up; let them not bear fruit, and let not this house be any more a stumbling block of bitterness or a thorn to hurt.

. . . Indeed a little while ago, about the time of our election as supreme pontiff before we came to Lyons for our coronation, and afterwards, both there and elsewhere, we received secret intimations against the master, preceptors and other brothers of the order of Knights Templar of Jerusalem and also against the order itself.

. . . [T]he holy Roman church honoured these brothers and the order with her special support, armed them with the sign of the cross against Christ's enemies, paid them the highest tributes of her respect, and strengthened them with various exemptions and privileges; and they experienced in many and various ways her help and that of all faithful Christians with repeated gifts of property. Therefore it was against the lord Jesus Christ himself that they fell into the sin of impious apostasy, the abominable vice of idolatry, the deadly crime of the Sodomites, and various heresies.[40](#)

## The Templars Go Underground

Liquidating the order of the Templars proved harder than anticipated. Even though Grand Master de Molay and many of his brothers had been eliminated, the order survived, albeit by going underground. In France alone, there were more than 9,000 representatives to be found and across the countries of Europe, thousands of castles and other strongholds were still in their possession.

According to historical sources of the time, the Inquisition had captured and punished only 620 out of a total of 2,000 knights. It has since been estimated that the knights' actual grand total was in the vicinity of 20,000, each of whom had a team of seven or eight Templars of other professions at his service. A simple calculation based on eight Templars per knight gives us a total number of 160,000 organizing and carrying out the order's activities, including shipping and commerce. The Pope and the French King couldn't possibly locate and confiscate all of their property.

This network of active members across Europe and along the Mediterranean coast, 160,000 strong, was the largest logistical force of their time. In terms of property, they could measure up to any king and this wealth assured their protection and safety. Despite the Papacy's claim that the Templars had been annihilated, not only did they survive the Inquisition by going underground, but they kept on being active, especially in England and in Northern Europe:



The Templars' world view and philosophy were greatly influenced by the Jewish mystic teachings of the Cabala. Above, a medieval Cabalistic text.

A piece of 16th-century Cabalist writing

[!]n the years following the loss of the Holy Land, the Templars had shown a continuing desire



to create a 'state' of their own. . . [W]e are now left in no doubt that the Templars indeed manage, against all odds, to carve out their own nation. It wasn't some Eldorado in the New World, nor a hidden kingdom of the Prester John variety in darkest Africa.



In fact the Templars remained absolutely central to everything that was happening in Europe, and what is more they were partly instrumental in the formation of the Western World as we know it today. The Templar State was, and is, Switzerland.[41](#)

In order to carry on their activities in safety, Templars escaping persecution and arrest in France and some other countries of Europe needed to regroup somewhere. They chose the confederation of cantons now known as Switzerland.

The Templars' influence in Switzerland's formation and traditional makeup can still be easily recognized today. **Alan Butler**, a Mason and co-author of *The Warriors and the Bankers* is an expert on the subject of Templars. In a discussion forum held in 1999, of he said:

There are a few important reasons why this [that the Knights Templar went to Switzerland after their liquidation] is likely to have been the case. For example:

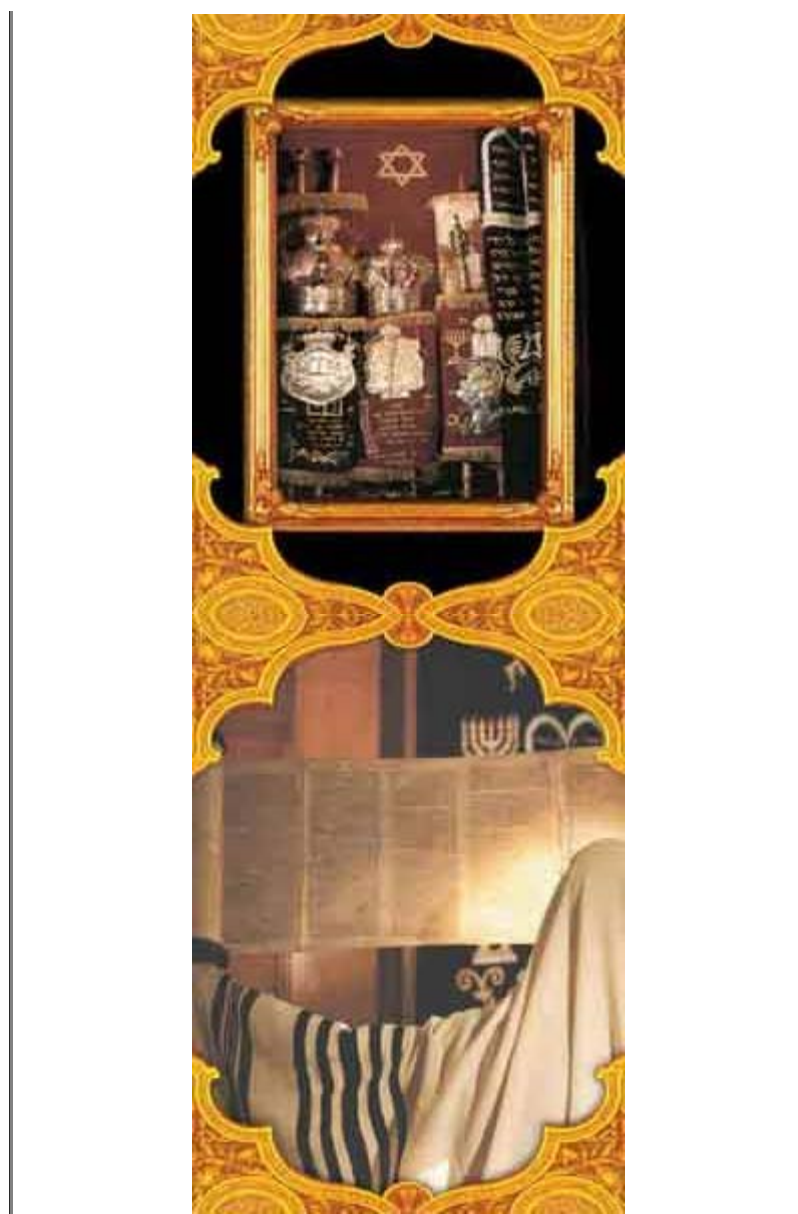
1. The founding of the embryonic Switzerland conforms exactly to the period when the Templars were being persecuted in France.
2. Switzerland is just to the east of France and would have been particularly easy for fleeing Templar brothers from the whole region of France to get to.
3. In the history of the first Swiss Cantons, there are tales of white-coated knights mysteriously appearing and helping the locals to gain their independence against foreign domination.
4. The Templars were big in banking, farming and engineering (of an early type). These same aspects can be seen as inimical to the commencement and gradual evolution of the separate states that would eventually be Switzerland.
5. The famous Templar Cross is incorporated into the flags of many of the Swiss Cantons. As are other emblems, such as keys and lambs, that were particularly important to the Knights Templar.[42](#)

A significant number of **Templars** found refuge in Scotland, the only monarchy in 14th century Europe that didn't recognize the authority of the Catholic Church. Reorganizing under the protection of **King Robert the Bruce**, they soon found the perfect camouflage to hide their existence in the British Isles. Outside of the state and local governments, the Masons' Lodges were the most powerful organizations of the time, and the Templars first infiltrated them, then brought them under control. Lodges that had been professional bodies were turned into ideological and political organizations, which are now the *Freemason Lodges of today*. (This is what Masons call "progress from operational to *speculative Masonry*")

Another Masonic source estimates that between 30,000 and 40,000 Templars escaped the Inquisition by wearing Masons' cloth and mingling with them. So as to flee abroad, others obtained and used the "Laissez passer" (free passage) given to Masons.

Some Templars escaped to Spain and entered orders like the Caltrava, Alcantra, and Santiago de la Espada, while others moved on to Portugal and they renamed themselves the *Order of Christ*. Still others fled to the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation and joined the *Teuton knights*, while another large group of Templars is known to have joined the *Hospitalers*. In England, the Templars were arrested and interrogated, but quickly released again. In still other countries, the Templars remained unmolested.





The Templars seemed to have disappeared from the history until 1804; when **Bernard-Raymond Fabré Palaprat** became Grand Master. Truly interesting is an accidental discovery he made in 1814... In one of the bookstalls along the river Seine in Paris, he came upon a handwritten Bible of the Yuhanna translation in the Greek language. The Bible's last two chapters were missing; and in their place were notes divided by - and containing - numerous triangles.

Examining these notes a bit closer, he realized that this was a document listing the Grand Masters of the Templars, beginning with the fifth Grand Master, Bertrand de Blanchefort ( 1154), through the 22nd, Jacques de Molay, the 23rd Larmenius of Jerusalem (1314) and then on to Grand Master **Claudio Mateo Radix de Chevillon** (1792). This document suggested that Jacques de Molay passed the title of Grand Master on to Larmenius of Jerusalem. It could be concluded that the Templars never ceased to exist. They live on today in the lodges of **Freemasonry**.

In *Foucault's Pendulum*, **Umberto Eco** writes:

After Beaujeu, the order has never ceased to exist, not for a moment, and after Aumont we find an uninterrupted sequence of Grand Masters of the Order down to our own time, and if the name and seat of the true Grand Master and the true Seneschals who rule the Order and guide its sublime labors remain a mystery today, an impenetrable secret known only to the truly enlightened, it is because the hour of the Order has not struck and the time is not ripe...[43](#)

Many sources suggest that after the death of Jacques de Molay, survivors of the order planned a conspiracy. Supposedly, the Templars sought to bring down not only the Papacy, but the kingdoms that had declared them illegal and executed their Grand Master. This secret mission was handed down through generations of members, preserved and maintained by later organizations like the Illuminati and Freemasons.

It's widely accepted that **the Masons** played a major role in the downfall of the French monarchy and the ensuing Revolution. When Louis XVI was guillotined in a public square in Paris, one of the onlookers shouted,

"Jacques de Molay, you have been avenged!"

We'll examine these events in greater detail in the coming chapters.

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- 43 Manuscript of 1760, in G. A. Schiffmann, Die Entstehung der Rittergrade in der Freimauerei um die Mitte des XVIII Jahrhunderts, Leipzig, Zechel, 1882, pp. 178-190; Umberto Eco, Foucault's Pendulum, p. 132.