

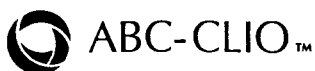
WAR AND RELIGION

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with at least the appearance of the Christian warrior ideal, added appropriate court manners, such as courtesy, affability, humility, eloquence, and musical skill, to his personal accomplishments.

The development of gunpowder weapons and the rise of strong centralized monarchies ended the military dominance of the knighthood after the 16th century. Thereafter, the knighthood was transformed into a largely ceremonial and honorary social institution. The institution retains this form where it continues to exist in modern times, and entry into its ranks usually is awarded as a token of respect, in recognition of accomplishment, or as a reward for loyal service. Mounted fighting skill is no longer required.

LARRY A. GRANT

See also

Christianity and War; Crusades (Overview); Knights Templar; Peace of God; Religious Military Orders; Truce of God

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Christians in making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the era of the crusades. Known popularly as the Knights Templar, this initially involved providing armed escorts to pilgrims. As the order rapidly grew in numbers, fame, and wealth, this eventually led to maintaining fortifications throughout the Levant and in Iberia and their participation in numerous battles.

Very little is known of Hugh de Payns, a knight from Champagne and the founder of the religious order. After the successful conquest of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, a community of nine knights resolved to stay in Jerusalem to assist pilgrims in making pilgrimage, as this could be a dangerous activity, especially for those who wished to visit the holy sites near the river Jordan. So in 1120, during the reign of Baldwin II, Hugh and his companions made a vow to defend the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Baldwin II accepted their pledge of aid and provided for them a portion of Al Aqsa mosque, which was then erroneously supposed to be part of the Temple of Solomon, hence the popular title of Knights Templar. At this humble initial stage they begged for alms and provided guarded escorts for pilgrims, and were indeed poor knights.

The innovative marriage of two of the great ideals of Christendom—chivalry and holiness—was compelling and attractive to many. Hugh traveled to Europe to seek official ecclesiastical recognition and new recruits, and was successful on both counts. He attended the Council of Troyes (January 1129) where he met the enormously influential and dynamic St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153). Bernard was a key promoter of the crusades and would pen a letter praising the Knights Templar, *De Laude Novae Militiae*. Up to that point the Templars had no specific habit, but at Troyes the Rule of Benedict was adopted and the three evangelical vows were accepted, beside the original vow to protect the Holy Land and its pilgrims. After this the white habit of Cistercian monks with an embroidered red cross became the typical dress of the knights. Pope Innocent II recognized the Templars as a military order of the church in 1139.

The Templars were taken under the direct protection of the pope, making them exempt from any other secular or ecclesiastical jurisdiction. While secular clergy in the Holy Land (that is, clergy not attached to a religious order) were not always pleased with the power of the Templars and

Knights Templar

The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon were a military religious order whose charism was assisting

other military orders, the popes of Rome affirmed the Templar privileges. They also received numerous gifts from royal patrons and established commanderies throughout France, Britain, Italy, the Low Countries, and Spain, where they aided in the *Reconquista*. Eventually, to these would be added properties in Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Ireland. They also established or fortified positions in the Holy Land. Famous among them are Safed, built in 1140, and the coastal Castle Pilgrim, built in 1217. Ruins of Templar fortifications remain visible throughout the Levant to this day. These constructions were simultaneously military fortifications and convents.

The majority of Templars were laymen who were divided into knights and sergeants, which were heavy and light cavalry, respectively. There was also a rank of non-militant chaplains. The chaplains alone among the three ranks were ordained priests, and their concern was to minister to the spiritual and sacramental needs of the other ranks. In terms of power, it was generally the knights who held the top positions, including the highest position of grand master of the Temple. But Templar convents/fortifications would usually have other people residing in or near them—servants, Muslim and Christian mercenaries, and visiting pilgrims. In spite of their fame and wealth, the Templars could not summon more than a few hundred knights in the Holy Land at any given time. They were generally considered to be excellent warriors and often did fight to the death because they were rarely allowed to be ransomed if captured during battle. Few of the Templars were from royal or noble families.

An example of the ferocity of the Templars is the pivotal Battle of Hattin, which took place on July 4, 1187. This battle was between the collected armies of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the superior army of Saladin. The Templars who did not fall in battle were captured and beheaded. The overall Templar casualties numbered around 230. The exception was the grand master, who was released after a ransom was paid.

In keeping with their original and perpetual vocation of assisting Christians to make a pilgrimage, the Templars became instrumental in the development of international banking: pilgrims would deposit funds at a Templar treasury in Europe, and then be able to withdraw funds in the Holy Land. In practice, this system was a precursor to the

modern traveler's check. They also became involved in money lending, including to European royalty. After the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187, the grand master operated from Acre, and after the fall of that city in 1291, from Cyprus.

In common with other medieval religious orders, the Templars became objects of criticism. First, for a community of "poor knights of Christ," they had become very wealthy. Second, despite their courage and military skill, they had not been able to withstand the advance of militant Islam led by the Mamluk sultans of Egypt. Third, there was destructive rivalry between the Templars and other military orders, most notably the Hospitallers. In response to this third complaint, the amalgamation of the military orders was discussed at the Second Council of Lyons (1274), but this was not implemented. Furthermore, after the loss of their final fortification in the Levant—Tortosa—it was not clear what the precise purpose of the Templars was anymore.

The confluence of these factors allowed King Philip IV of France (r. 1285–1314) to initiate an inquiry into the order, probably with the aim of obtaining the Templars' wealth to relieve his government's financial difficulties. Secret orders were sent out to arrest all Templars in his lands on Friday, October 13, 1307, on charges of sexual and blasphemous crimes committed during secret rituals. As no material evidence of these crimes existed, the arrested were subjected to torture, and some of the brothers confessed to the alleged crimes. Even the grand master of the order, Jacques de Molay, confessed.

The entire inquest had been conducted illegally, though. The Knights Templar were under the jurisdiction of the pope alone, and Philip did not have the authority to investigate such matters, much less to arrest and torture the Templars in his lands. Because of this, Pope Clement V declared the whole inquisition null and void. But crimes had been confessed, and further investigation was required, this time sponsored by the pope himself. Furthermore, the papal inquiry extended to all lands, and not just France. The Templars were found innocent in many regions, like Cyprus, Germany, and Spain. It seemed clear that some Templars had committed crimes, but the main question was at a higher level: did there exist a secret doctrine or ritual for the entire order that condemned the order as a whole?

The Council of Vienne (1311–1312) was called in land outside of the dominion of King Phillip. The location may have been chosen to give the appearance of impartiality. While the council addressed other issues, the question of what to do with the Templars was the presenting issue. Unfortunately, the official acts of the council no longer exist. We do know that after depositions were read for several days, the majority voted that the order should continue to function, and that the evidence gathered by Philip was found to be insufficient. But Philip would not be stopped, and in February 1312 he appeared outside the city gates, reiterating his demand that the Poor Knights of Christ be suppressed. On March 22, 1312, Clement V issued the bull *Vox in excelso* (not *Vox clamantis*, as some sources report), whereby the order was suppressed. In it, the pope cited allegations of idol worship and explained that as the vicar of Christ he was forced by public scandal and notoriety to issue the bull. Furthermore, since the order no longer could continue in its principal mission of securing the Holy Land, the properties of the order must be distributed to other orders and persons for the good of the church.

One of the most famous stories related to the Templars is that of the immolation of the last grand master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay. De Molay had confessed to sins and was to be reconciled to the church upon public confession of these sins. This was to be carried out in front of the cathedral church of Paris, Notre Dame. But at the last minute he recanted his confession and proclaimed his own innocence, the innocence of his order, and the falsity of the allegations made against it. For his failure in falsely confessing under torture he announced he would atone by sacrificing his own life. King Philip arrested him as a relapsed heretic and instructed him to be burned alive, which sentence was carried out in March 1314. Some of the people of Paris had been deeply affected by de Molay's courage and zeal, and the story spread that the grand master had called for King Philip and Pope Clement V to meet him before the judgment throne of God within the year to account for their treachery against the Templars. It is impossible to either verify or disprove the historicity of this tale. However, both Clement and Philip were indeed dead within a year of the grand master's execution, with the pope dying on April 20, 1314, and the king dying on November 29, 1314.

The Knights Templar ceased to exist. The properties and knights in Portugal and Aragon were designated to two new orders: the Order of Christ and the Order of Montesa, respectively. Some of the knights went back to ordinary lay life, and many were sent to monasteries to do penance for the alleged but unsubstantiated crimes of their order. There is no historical evidence connecting the Knights Templar to the Freemasons. As to the original purpose of assisting Christians in making pilgrimages, it would be the Franciscans and, after 1847, the revived Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem that would be the main sodalities that would carry out this ministry.

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See also

First Crusade; Hattin, Battle of; Montesa, Order of

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Knox, John (1514–1572)

John Knox, a leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, was a colorful figure, serving in his early years as the bodyguard of the preacher George Wishart (1513–1546), and bearing a two-handed sword to defend him. Later, in his reform program for the Church of Scotland, Knox presented himself not only as a pastor, but also as a prophet of God. His political thought in several senses stood in continuity with elements of medieval teaching and with perspectives articulated by Lutheran and Reformed theologians of his time. However, he embraced radical views in his commitment to private war and tyrannicide on the part of the common person.

Knox presented his reforming agenda for the Scottish church in his *Letter to the Commonalty* (1558), written to