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THE TEMPLARS

AN INTRODUCTORY FRAMEWORK



AGUSTÍN V. STARTARI



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The Templars: An Introductory Framework is part of the Work Papers series, a collection devoted to the critical analysis of power through its discursive, legal, religious, and military manifestations. In this volume, Agustín V. Startari approaches the Templar phenomenon not as a mere medieval episode, but as a specific form of symbolic organization in which language, violence, and legitimacy converge.

Drawing on a critical study of primary sources (the Rule, papal bulls, chronicles, and trial records) and on specialist historiography, the text analyses the configuration of the militia Christi as a hybrid institutional form: religious, military, patrimonial, and legally privileged. The aim is not to attribute a secret doctrine to the Temple, but to reconstruct the documentable mechanisms through which it acquired legitimacy, autonomy, and capacity for action within Latin Christendom.

The central thesis is that Templar power depended on an architecture of legitimation composed of religious discourse, papal privilege, patronage, military organization, and material resources; its suppression reveals the reverse process, as royal action, inquisitorial procedure, and papal jurisdiction recast the Order as a suspect body. Esoteric, neo-Templar, and conspiratorial traditions are examined separately as later reception, not as evidence for the medieval Order.

About the Work Papers series:

This collection brings together independent studies that explore the articulation of power, ideology, and legitimacy in different historical contexts, from Ancient Egypt to twentieth-century regimes. Each volume is self-contained, but all share a common thread: the technical study of how power is constructed, exercised, and reproduced through linguistic structures, institutions, and forms of representation.

Agustín V. Startari (Uruguay, 1982) is a linguist and historical researcher trained at the University of the Republic. His work combines philological analysis, institutional structure, and a critique of the languages of power. He has published studies on Ancient Egypt, National Socialism, colonial evangelization, and modern propaganda, including *Creation of an Empire*, *Propaganda Machinery*, *Evangelization in the Writings of Fray Bartolomé*, and *Ukraine and Russia: A Conflict in Progress*.

His cross-disciplinary approach and methodological rigor make **Work Papers** a solid reference point for the study of the discursive forms of command and legitimacy.

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INTRODUCTION

*For my brother
Santiago Startari*

The Order of the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, commonly known as the Order of the Temple, has generated an exceptionally extensive historiographical and cultural literature since the Middle Ages. Its earliest years are incompletely documented, and the formalisation of its rule at the Council of Troyes, held in January 1129 according to the chronology adopted in this volume, must be understood as part of an institutional process in which Bernard of Clairvaux acted as advocate and inspiration, not as the sole author of the entire body of Templar regulations. Organised in Jerusalem around 1119–1120 and initially associated with the protection of pilgrims travelling to the Holy Places, the Order progressively expanded its military, patrimonial, administrative, and diplomatic functions. The Templars maintained political and military contacts with Muslim powers in a frontier zone characterised by warfare, negotiation, and truces. This evidence permits the study of interaction and pragmatism, but does not in itself justify inferring doctrinal ecumenism or systematic spiritual relations with Sufis, Nizaris, or other groups. Interpretations that attribute the transmission of secret knowledge or esoteric currents to such contacts belong, in the absence of specific documentary evidence, to the later history of Templar reception. This distinction does not exclude the study of cultural exchanges in the Levant; it establishes the evidential level at which they should be interpreted. In less than a century, the Order developed an extensive network of commanderies, properties, rights, and resources in the Levant and across numerous European territories, including France, the Iberian kingdoms, Portugal, and England.

The volume is organised into three parts. The first establishes the conditions of the argument: the thesis, the hierarchy of evidential

levels, and the criteria of citation and dating that govern everything that follows. The second reconstructs the setting in which the Order formed—the fragmented twelfth-century Levant, the religious traditions that sacralised conflict, the textual genres that transmitted its memory, and the aristocratic society that supplied it with men—and then examines the institution itself: foundation, theological apologetics, papal privilege, regulation, economy, establishment in the Iberian Peninsula, and political action. The third considers its dismantling between 1307 and 1314 and the long history of its reception.

This order is argumentative rather than chronological, and reflects a choice that should be made explicit. A reader seeking a narrative of Templar events will first encounter the apparatus by which those events can be established. The reason is that, in the case of the Temple, the principal difficulty lies not in discovering what happened, but in distinguishing which of the many claims made about it can be sustained as having happened. Making that work explicit is the purpose of this book.

THESIS, SCOPE, AND CRITERIA OF EVIDENCE

This book argues that the historical singularity of the Order of the Temple does not require the postulation of a secret doctrine or clandestine continuity. Its specificity can be explained through a documentable combination of religious status, military function, papal privileges, aristocratic and royal patronage, a patrimonial network, and administrative and financial capacity. That combination made the Order a transregional actor with exceptional, though never absolute, autonomy within Latin Christendom.

The argument unfolds in two complementary movements. The first examines the production of legitimacy: the formulation of the militia Christi, the Rule and internal discipline, papal protection, donations, territorial establishment, and crusading function. The second examines delegitimation and suppression: the offensive of Philip IV, inquisitorial procedures, the evidential problem posed by confessions obtained under coercion, the intervention of Clement V, and the suppression of 1312. In both cases, power is studied as a relationship among normative language, institutions, and material capacity.

Methodologically, the volume adopts a historical-critical approach with philological and discourse-institutional attention. Sources are not treated as neutral repositories of facts: their date, authorship, purpose, genre, conditions of production, and distance from the events they describe are all considered. Chronicles are compared, where possible, with normative and trial documentation, while modern historiography is used to contextualise debates and formulate interpretations, not to replace primary evidence.

To prevent materials of different kinds from being assigned the same evidential weight, the book distinguishes five levels of evidence: (1) medieval primary sources, which form the basis for establishing facts, norms, practices, and contemporary representations; (2) modern academic historiography, used to compare interpretations and situate debates; (3) interpretative hypotheses, admissible when explicitly presented as such and with their limits stated; (4) esoteric and occultist

tradition, studied as a later construction rather than as direct documentation of the medieval Temple; and (5) modern reception and popular culture, relevant to explaining the persistence of the Templar myth, but insufficient on their own to reconstruct the history of the Order. This hierarchy excludes none of these materials; it determines what kind of conclusion may be drawn from each.

Accordingly, references to doctrinal contacts with Sufis or Nizaris, synarchy, the Holy Grail, secret knowledge, Masonic continuity, or clandestine survivals can be presented as facts only where sufficient medieval documentation exists. In its absence, they must be treated as hypotheses or as part of the history of reception. Likewise, the documented existence of diplomatic, military, or economic contacts with Muslim powers does not automatically constitute evidence of spiritual or doctrinal exchange.

The scope of this volume is introductory and analytical rather than exhaustive. Its purpose is to provide a framework for reading the Order of the Temple as a historically verifiable medieval institution while also explaining how that institution generated a later field of myths, appropriations, and reinterpretations. The separation between the history of the Order and the history of its reception is therefore a condition of the argument, not an exclusion of the latter.

NOTE ON SOURCES, CITATION, AND DATING

A book that ranks levels of evidence is obliged to state explicitly how it cites. The requirement is not merely formal. If the central argument holds that certain claims about the Temple can be made only when verifiable medieval documentation exists, the reader must be able to determine, in each case, which document supports which proposition and with what degree of mediation. This note therefore sets out the criteria of reference, dating, and transliteration used throughout the volume and serves as the control mechanism accompanying the five-level hierarchy established in the previous chapter.

The first criterion is citation by canonical division rather than by page. Editions of medieval sources proliferate, are reprinted, and are translated; the pagination of one particular edition does not allow a passage to be located in another. A text's internal divisions, by contrast, are stable. Chronicles are cited by book and chapter; Templar regulations by article number; papal bulls by incipit and date; and trial records by deposition, place, and interrogation. When a translation is used, the translated edition is also identified so that the reader can distinguish between the original text and the intermediary version through which it is accessed. This procedure has a direct methodological consequence: it requires the author to state when a claim rests on the original and when it rests on a translation or a modern paraphrase.

The second criterion concerns papal bulls, which in this book form the documentary backbone of the argument about legitimation. They are always cited by incipit, pope, and date, rather than through the generic formula "the pope granted privileges to the Order". The distinction is not stylistic. *Omne datum optimum*, *Milites Templi*, and *Militia Dei* granted different immunities, at different times, and in relation to different interlocutors; grouping them under a single notion of "autonomy" would obscure precisely the cumulative process that this volume seeks to demonstrate. The same requirement applies to the

documents of suppression, whose technical wording is decisive in determining what was—and was not—decided in 1312.

The third criterion concerns dating and resolves an ambiguity that runs through the entire Templar bibliography. In much of France and Latin Christendom, the year did not begin on 1 January but on 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation. An event occurring in January was therefore recorded under the year preceding the one we would assign to it today. The Council of Troyes is the most consequential case: contemporary documentation dates it to January 1128, whereas modern chronology, which begins the year on 1 January, places it in January 1129. Both dates refer to the same council. This volume systematically adopts the modern reckoning and writes January 1129, while retaining the old-style date when directly quoting a document. The discrepancy between authors who date Troyes to 1128 and those who date it to 1129 is therefore not a historical disagreement but a difference in calendrical reckoning, and should not be read as uncertainty about the event itself.

The fourth criterion governs the transliteration of Arabic names. A simplified form without diacritics is adopted, privileging readability over phonological precision: al-Andalus, al-Haram al-Sharif, al-Aqsa, Ibn Khaldun, Salah al-Din. For figures with an established English form in historiographical usage—Saladin, Averroes, Avicenna—that form is retained, with the transliteration given in parentheses at first mention. Titles of works are cited in transliteration with an English translation in parentheses on first appearance. This is a working convention rather than a philological position, and it is stated here so that the reader does not mistake an explicit rule for inconsistency.

The fifth criterion distinguishes three operations that historiographical prose tends to conflate: quotation, paraphrase, and synthesis. A quotation reproduces verbatim an identifiable text and specifies its edition. A paraphrase reformulates the content of a particular passage and refers to it. A synthesis condenses the state of a discussion and cites the scholarship supporting it, without attributing to any author a formulation that author did not write. In the pages that

follow, no sentence appears in quotation marks unless it derives from a verifiable edition; and when an idea circulates in the literature without an attributable canonical formulation, it is presented as a synthesis and the relevant discussion is identified. This distinction avoids the most common rhetorical effect in Templar literature: conferring on a modern reconstruction the authority of a medieval voice.

The abbreviations used in the notes are as follows:

- ASV — Archivio Segreto Vaticano (now Archivio Apostolico Vaticano), Rome.
 CCCM — Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols.
 PL — Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1844–1864.
 RHC Occ. — Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux. Paris, 1844–1895.
 WT — William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, CCCM 63–63A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1986. Cited by book and chapter (e.g. WT XII, 7).
 Rule — *La Règle du Temple*. Cited by article number, following the edition and English translation by Upton-Ward (1997).

The adoption of these criteria serves an argumentative, not merely editorial, purpose. For centuries, the history of the Temple has been written through the reverse procedure: quotations without editions, dates without systems of reckoning, paraphrases presented as testimony, and attributions transmitted from book to book without ever returning to the document. That regime of reference is, to a considerable extent, the technical condition that made the Templar myth possible. Establishing citation criteria is therefore not a formal preamble to the analysis; it is already part of the analysis, because it sets the threshold below which a claim about the Order cannot be sustained as fact.

ORIGINS OF A MISSION

"It is no coincidence that the greatest order of chivalry in history is the Golden Fleece. This makes clear what the expression Castle conceals. It is the Hyperborean castle where the Templars guard the Grail, probably the Monsalvat of legend."

(Umberto Eco, Foucault's Pendulum).

This chapter argues that the origins of the Temple can be explained entirely by the documentable conditions of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem—the insecurity of pilgrimage routes, the scarcity of permanent forces, and the need to legitimise knightly violence in religious terms—and that the paucity of sources for its first decade, far from authorising the hypothesis of secrecy, is precisely what made that hypothesis possible. The argument proceeds in three stages: the kingdom's military circumstances, the role of ecclesiastical and royal patronage, and the legal construction of autonomy through papal privilege.

The motivations that led to the formation of the Order of the Temple of Solomon must be reconstructed from documentation that is incomplete and, in several cases, later than its earliest years. This documentary limitation helped make the origins of the Temple particularly fertile ground for retrospective interpretations. The institution combined religious profession and military function in a form that became highly visible during the twelfth century. From its organisation in Jerusalem around 1119–1120 and recognition at Troyes in January 1129, it developed from a small fraternity associated with the protection of pilgrims into a military-religious order established in the Levant and supported by extensive patrimonial networks in Europe. Its rapid expansion is historically significant, but should be explained through patronage, privileges, donations, military utility, and institutional organisation rather than through arguments based on mystery or essential exceptionalism.

The formation of the Order responded to a set of religious, military, and political conditions specific to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The security of pilgrimage routes, the defence of Christian positions, and the need for permanent forces in the Levant provide a more precise framework than the notion of a supposed general “balance” between Christianity and Islam. Templar consolidation also depended on the support of ecclesiastical and secular authorities, donations, and privileges. Religious fervour and temporal interests could coexist in the same actors, but they should not be presented as uniform motives or as a single explanation for the institution’s growth.

The consolidation and expansion of the Order depended on changing relationships with ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Bernard of Clairvaux was one of its most influential advocates: his intervention helped legitimise the new militia and locate it within the reform movement and crusading theology. Recognition at Troyes in January 1129 and the formation of the Templar normative corpus must be understood as institutional processes, not as the exclusive work of a single author. Bernard’s motives likewise cannot be neatly divided between “fervour” and “geopolitics”: in the twelfth century, the defence of the Holy Places, religious reform, and the crusading project formed part of a single conceptual horizon (Barber 1994; Upton-Ward 1997). The Order’s legal position was subsequently strengthened by papal privileges, particularly *Omne datum optimum* of Innocent II (1139), *Milites Templi* of Celestine II (1144), and *Militia Dei* of Eugene III (1145).¹ These documents extended immunities and consolidated direct dependence on the Apostolic See, although they did not

¹ *Omne datum optimum*, Innocent II, 29 March 1139; *Milites Templi*, Celestine II, 1144; *Militia Dei*, Eugene III, 7 April 1145. All three privileges are edited and translated in Barber and Bate (2002). Their cumulative effect—exemption from tithes, their own chaplains, their own cemeteries, annual collection even in territory under interdict, and direct subjection to the Apostolic See—should not be attributed to a single document: each bull extends a different sphere of immunity and responds to a different jurisdictional conflict.

eliminate conflicts with bishops, nobles, or monarchies. The pontificate of Innocent III belongs to a later phase in the expansion of the military orders and crusading policy and should not be confused with the moment of the Order's initial recognition. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the problem had assumed a different character. Philip IV of France ordered the arrests of 1307 and promoted accusations of heresy, idolatry, and illicit sexual conduct. The monarchy's financial position and its economic ties with the Temple formed part of the context, but do not suffice to explain the offensive. Clement V initially sought to recover papal jurisdiction over the Templars and ultimately suppressed the Order by apostolic provision in 1312 under intense political pressure (Barber 2006). Suppression was not equivalent to a conciliar sentence proving collective guilt. Jacques de Molay was executed by secular authority in 1314 after retracting earlier confessions. The rise and fall of the Temple should therefore not be narrated as a sequence of support, enrichment, corruption, and punishment, but as a transformation in the relations among religious legitimacy, legal privilege, institutional capacity, and political conflict.

Among the Order's enemies were figures such as Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, who openly challenged Templar influence in imperial territories, as well as various Muslim powers of the Levant and Egypt, for whom the Templars represented an opposing military force within the political system of the Crusader States. Yet the Templars were not confronted only by enemies: actors who were adversaries at particular moments also took part in truces, negotiations, and pragmatic exchanges with the Latin states and their military orders. The kings of Jerusalem, although initially allies of the Order, were at times drawn into internal disputes that reflected tensions between Templar influence and local political interests.

The rulers of the Crown of Aragon and various nobles of the Provençal region played an important role in the Temple's western establishment. In the Catalan-Aragonese territories, donations and grants of castles, rights, and revenues enabled the Order to become

integrated into the political and military expansion of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The documentation studied by Forey (1973) shows substantial cooperation with the monarchy, but also a negotiated relationship within royal and seigneurial jurisdictions. The Order could provide military, logistical, and administrative capacity, while rulers gained support in frontier zones and consolidated recently incorporated territories. This cooperation should not be taken to imply general Templar “control” of trade routes or continuous territorial dominions. In Provence and southern France, establishment followed its own patterns based on aristocratic patronage, properties, houses, and local rights. Relations with the aristocracy were important, but varied by place and circumstance and did not constitute a uniform regional alliance. Ramon Berenguer IV, in particular, was Count of Barcelona and Prince of Aragon, not Count of Provence. The economic dimension of these networks was inseparable from their religious and military function: western lands, revenues, production, and donations could be converted into resources to support men, horses, weapons, and operations in the Levant. The Templars developed highly sophisticated procedures for administration, deposit, credit, and the transfer of funds; describing them as a modern bank or as owners of politically sovereign territories would introduce later categories unsupported by the documentation.

Templar establishment in the Crown of Aragon, Provence, and other western regions took the form of castles, commanderies, churches, rural estates, rights, and revenues. These units did not all perform the same function. In frontier zones, certain fortresses had direct military value; in areas far from conflict, many houses functioned chiefly as centres of estate administration, production, storage, and revenue collection. Specialist historiography shows that the Order managed dispersed lordships and competencies within diverse political frameworks (Barber 1994; Forey 1973). This organisational capacity made it possible to mobilise resources on a supraregional scale and sustain activity in the East. Templar establishment is more accurately described as a mosaic of rights than as a continuous territory under the

Order's rule: the Templars held property and rights embedded within royal, aristocratic, municipal, and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. A fortress could serve as a defensive point, an administrative centre, a depot, or a productive hub depending on the context. In the territories of the Crown of Aragon, the relationship among castles, frontier, and Christian expansion was particularly important; in Provence, patrimonial establishment and relations with noble houses followed different configurations. Commanderies could also participate in local markets, provide services, and act as transfer nodes. Their historical significance lay less in any supposed territorial hegemony than in the capacity to integrate dispersed resources under a common corporate discipline. This combination of western property, administration, and military obligations explains the Temple's material continuity better than the image of an autonomous Templar "empire".

It follows that Templar expansion was rapid because it responded to a pre-existing demand, not because the Order possessed some extraordinary resource. Two questions remain open and are not resolved by this chapter: the exact composition of the founding group during the 1120s, which the documentation does not permit us to reconstruct, and the degree of initiative that should be attributed to Baldwin II as opposed to the fraternity itself. The next chapter locates that foundation within the political space in which it occurred.

THE HOLY LAND AND THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

The thesis of this chapter is that the twelfth-century Levant was not a frontier between two religious blocs but a system of fragmented powers, and that this fragmentation—not tolerance or fanaticism—explains how Latin actors could fight one Muslim power while negotiating with another. From this follows an evidential consequence that governs the rest of the volume: coexistence within the same space does not in itself constitute evidence of doctrinal transfer.

The Mediterranean basin is a historical zone of connection among Europe, Africa, and Asia in which trade, migration, warfare, diplomacy, and intellectual circulation produced changing political configurations. For the period relevant to the Temple, the decisive development was the transformation initiated by the Arab-Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries. Syria, Egypt, and North Africa were incorporated into new Muslim polities, and the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula opened a lasting western front. These processes cannot be explained by a single cause: the condition of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires, military, fiscal, and political dynamics, and the capacity of the new conquering elites to organise extensive territories all played a role².

The expansion produced profound changes, but “Islam” did not constitute a single political actor throughout the Middle Ages. Caliphates, emirates, and regional dynasties competed with one another, and their relations with Byzantium and the Latin powers ranged across war, truce, trade, and negotiation. The written culture, architecture, sciences, and philosophy developed in Islamic societies formed part of broader Mediterranean circuits and contributed to intellectual transfers into Latin and other languages.³ Al-Andalus provides a particularly visible example in the Iberian Peninsula, where the Great Mosque of Córdoba and philosophical, medical, and literary

² Kennedy (2007).

³ Hodgson (1974).

production reveal the density of these traditions. Sufi currents developed across very different regions of the Islamic world, including areas well beyond the Mediterranean proper; their existence is relevant to the religious history of Islam, but does not constitute evidence of doctrinal contact with the Temple⁴.

To understand the twelfth century, it is more useful to abandon an excessively broad geography and concentrate on the powers with which the Latin states and military orders interacted directly. In Egypt, the Fatimids ruled until 1171 and the Ayyubids thereafter; in Syria, different dynasties coexisted and competed; Anatolia was contested among Byzantines, Seljuks, and other Turkish powers. The Abbasid caliphate retained symbolic authority in Baghdad, but did not politically control the entire Islamic Mediterranean. This fragmentation explains why Latin actors could fight one Muslim power while negotiating with another. It also prevents us from projecting onto the Templar period a constant binary opposition between two homogeneous religious blocs.

The relevance of this framework to the history of the Temple is specific: the Order operated on a plural frontier where religion and warfare were central, but where political practice also included treaties, embassies, ransoms, trade, and contingent alliances. Intercultural contact is historically demonstrable; the transfer of secret doctrines, by contrast, requires specific evidence and cannot be inferred from the mere fact of coexistence within the same Mediterranean space.

Al-Andalus is one of the most important examples of the cultural complexity of the medieval Mediterranean. For centuries, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian societies coexisted under changing political regimes, with periods of exchange, relative integration, segregation, coercion, and violence. The notion of a “coexistence of the three cultures” is therefore useful only if it is not transformed into an idealised image of permanent harmony. Córdoba, Seville, Toledo, and, in a later period, Granada were significant centres of cultural

⁴ Schimmel (1975).

production. Jewish and Muslim authors participated in networks of philosophy, medicine, poetry, and administration, while translations produced in different Iberian centres contributed to the Latin circulation of Arabic and Greek works. Avicenna and al-Farabi belonged to eastern regions of the Islamic world, whereas Averroes was born in Córdoba; their European reception demonstrates intellectual circulation, not a simple unilateral “introduction” of knowledge by a homogeneous group called “the Arabs”. Sephardic communities developed traditions of their own in dialogue with surrounding languages and cultures and occupied very different social positions according to period and territory. This picture is relevant to the Temple because the Iberian Peninsula was one of the settings in which military orders became embedded in shifting political and religious frontiers. Cultural exchange and conflict are not mutually exclusive categories: they could coexist within the same societies and periods.

By the twelfth century, Islamic societies had formed part of the political and cultural history of the Mediterranean basin for several centuries. In the Iberian Peninsula, the Caliphate of Córdoba had disappeared in 1031 and al-Andalus passed through phases of fragmentation and Almoravid and Almohad intervention. In the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt was ruled by the Fatimids until 1171 and thereafter by the Ayyubids; Anatolia was divided among Byzantium, Seljuk powers, and other political formations. This plural context is more relevant to Templar history than the developments of 1492 or the Ottoman Empire, which belong to periods after the Order’s disappearance. Around 1119–1129, the Latin states of the East coexisted with Byzantium, eastern Christian communities, and diverse Muslim powers. The Kingdom of Jerusalem occupied a central position within that system, but depended on maritime networks, western patronage, and regional negotiation. Jerusalem held different religious meanings for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. For Judaism, the Temple site was associated with biblical traditions and the memory of the ancient Temples; for Christianity, the city was associated with

the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus; for Islam, with the Night Journey and Ascension connected with al-Aqsa and al-Haram al-Sharif. The first Templars were lodged in parts of the al-Haram al-Sharif complex, identified by the Latins with the ancient Temple of Solomon. This identification was decisive for the Order's name and imagery, but it does not prove the preservation of recognisable "ruins of Solomon's Temple" or a secret excavation mission. The responsibility assumed by the Templars for the defence of Jerusalem and other Latin territories must be situated within crusading policy and the kingdom's military needs, rather than treated as an automatic consequence of the site's Templar symbolism.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the western Mediterranean basin was marked by the expansion of the Almoravids and Almohads, North African Berber dynasties that successively intervened in al-Andalus, while the eastern Mediterranean remained politically fragmented among Muslim, Byzantine, and Latin powers.⁵ In this context, around 1119–1120, the community that would become the Order of the Temple was formed in Jerusalem and received formal recognition at Troyes in January 1129; its early mission was associated with the protection of pilgrims and, later, with warfare and the defence of the Latin states.⁶ The first Templars established themselves in parts of the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount complex, which the Latins identified with the ancient Temple of Solomon; it should not be claimed that recognisable ruins of Solomon's Temple survived there⁷

It is thus established that Mediterranean cultural interaction is documentable whereas the transmission of secret doctrines to the Temple is not, and that both statements rest on the same principle: every transfer requires its own documentary chain. What remains to be determined, and continues to be debated in scholarship, is the actual scale of such transfers in technical, military, and material terms. The

⁵ Kennedy (1996).

⁶ Barber (1994).

⁷ Prawer (1972).

next chapter examines the religious traditions that shaped the languages of this conflict.

THE THREE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS

This chapter does not propose a theological comparison but analyses an operation: the process by which a territorial conflict assumes the form of a religious duty. Its thesis is that the three traditions supplied distinct normative repertoires, and that the historical interest lies in observing how those repertoires were articulated with dynastic, fiscal, and strategic interests rather than in determining which of them was intrinsically more bellicose.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share Abrahamic genealogies and a monotheistic affirmation, but differ substantially in their conceptions of revelation, law, covenant, prophecy, salvation, and religious authority. Each tradition organises the relationship among law, grace, and works in its own way, and their divergences result from historical theological developments rather than from an inherently exclusionary nature inscribed at their origins. At different times, political and religious authorities within all three traditions formulated very different regimes of belonging, tolerance, subordination, or persecution. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities could coexist, trade, and produce a shared culture while also being subject to legal inequalities and episodes of violence. The expulsions of Jews from France in 1306 and from the Crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1492 each responded to a particular fiscal, political, and religious conjuncture, and it is precisely there that their explanatory value lies. Likewise, the Latin *bellum iustum*, the crusade, and the various legal and religious meanings of jihad constitute three distinct normative constructions, each with its own doctrinal genealogy and regime of authority. For this book, the central question is discursive: conflicts could be sacralised through languages that transformed territory, obedience, and violence into religious duty. Those languages interacted with dynastic, fiscal, commercial, and strategic interests. The formation of the Temple must be located within this intersection between religious norm and military action, without turning entire communities into homogeneous subjects of a permanent confrontation.

The chapter establishes that the sacralisation of conflict was a discursive operation with identifiable instruments, and that none of the three traditions produced it automatically. The Temple stands precisely at this intersection: it is the institution in which the Latin normative repertoire of holy war ceases to be an argument and becomes a way of life. The following chapters examine the textual and institutional conditions that made this conversion possible.

SOURCES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE MEDIEVAL FRAMEWORK

This is the longest chapter in the volume and the one that technically underpins all the others. Its thesis is that information about the Temple reaches us mediated through genres—chronicle, annal, hagiography, universal chronology, judicial dossier—whose conventions determine what can and cannot be established from them. Ignoring that mediation is the error that has allowed a tradition of reception to be read for centuries as though it were documentation.

Before using chronicles, hagiographies, and later narratives to reconstruct the Templar trajectory, it is necessary to specify what kind of information each textual tradition provides. This section serves as a historiographical framework: it examines the conditions under which medieval accounts were produced, transmitted, and legitimised before later being used to interpret the Order. Attention to genre, textual purpose, and temporal distance from the events helps prevent a chronicle, a saint's life, and a legal formulation from being assigned the same evidential value.

A substantial Arabic historiographical tradition survives from the medieval Iberian world, although its transmission is uneven. The so-called Chronicle of the Moor Rasis derives from the work of Ahmad al-Razi, whose Arabic original does not survive in full and is known through later traditions and versions. Its use therefore requires close attention to textual history.⁸ For the eleventh century, Ibn Hayyan of Córdoba is a central reference. His *al-Muqtabis* brought together earlier materials and political information of great value for the history of al-Andalus, although, like any compilation, it must be read with attention to its sources and historiographical project.⁹ Other texts that are not strictly historiographical provide access to social practices and cultural representations. Ibn Hazm's *Tawq al-hamama* (The Ring of

⁸ Ahmad al-Razi (al-Razi), tradition of the *Crónica del moro Rasis*, tenth century; the lost Arabic text must be distinguished from its later Romance versions.

⁹ Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, eleventh century.

the Dove) offers literary testimony concerning love, conduct, and sociability in the eleventh century, but its genre prevents it from being treated as a transparent description of Andalusī society as a whole.¹⁰ The memoirs of Abd Allah ibn Buluggin, the last Zirid king of Granada, written after his deposition by the Almoravids, likewise constitute an exceptional source for political conflict, legitimacy, and dynastic memory. Their value increases when they are compared with other traditions and when the retrospective and justificatory character of political autobiography is recognised¹¹.

Ibn Khaldun, born in Tunis in the fourteenth century and associated more closely with the Maghribi sphere than with “Hispano-Muslim historiography” in a strict sense, occupies a singular place in medieval reflection on society and power. The *Muqaddimah* analyses the formation and dissolution of dynasties, group cohesion, taxation, urban life, and problems in the transmission of reports. His work should not be described anachronistically as modern sociology or as an absolute rupture with all earlier historiography; its originality lies in the systematic elaboration of critical criteria and explanatory models within its own intellectual horizon¹².

The historiography of the western Early Middle Ages is better understood as a repertoire of shared resources than as a succession of rigid currents. Authors combined, in varying degrees, classical inheritances, ecclesiastical history, chronography, genealogy, and political memory. In the Visigothic sphere, works such as those of Isidore of Seville, John of Biclaro, and later chronicles show continuity with late antique forms while also incorporating Christian categories and problems specific to monarchy and Church.¹³ Such continuity does not mean that the “Roman model” remained intact or that Visigothic political organisation can be deduced directly from the

¹⁰ Ibn Hazm, *Tawq al-hamama* (The Ring of the Dove), eleventh century.

¹¹ Abd Allah b. Buluggin, memoirs of the last Zirid king of Granada, written in exile after 1090.

¹² Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah*, fourteenth century.

¹³ Collins (2004), on Visigothic historiography and the Visigothic kingdom.

literary form of its chronicles.¹⁴ For Templar analysis, this discussion matters because it reminds us that medieval institutions were narrated through inherited and transformed genres and that no source, by itself, offers a neutral description of political order.

A second current is characterised by more concise forms and, in many cases, annalistic organisation, represented by chronicles and *chronica* that continued into the mid-fourteenth century. Although these chronicles played an important role in preserving historical memory, they were generally more fragmentary and focused on localised events, and their concision cannot be explained solely by political and social fragmentation. Within this development,¹⁵ however, new types of chronicle emerged that incorporated or reworked procedures derived from classical historiographical traditions. The chronicles produced by Christian kingdoms during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provide an example: they incorporated elements of classical historiography and began to organise events more systematically, encompassing a broader range of political, social, and cultural aspects. In this respect,¹⁶ it is of little use for the historiography of the Early Middle Ages to seek to understand the origins of the Order by moving still further back in time, beyond its beginnings, without a documentary chain to justify doing so. Rather than searching for origins extending to periods prior to the Order's foundation in the twelfth century, it is more appropriate to contextualise it within the development of the historical currents of its own age, which in many cases accompanied the emergence of new institutions with clearly defined political and social structures¹⁷.

Hagiographic production occupies an important place in medieval written culture and requires specific critical treatment. Among its Latin antecedents are Possidius's *Life of Saint Augustine* and Sulpicius

¹⁴ Collins (2004), on continuity and rupture in late-antique political forms within the Visigothic monarchy.

¹⁵ Guenée (1980), on the genres and forms of historical writing in the medieval West.

¹⁶ Guenée (1980), on the development of the chronicle and its procedures for organising narrative.

¹⁷ Barber (1994).

Severus's Life of Saint Martin. During the Early Middle Ages and the Carolingian period, the circulation of relics, the mobility of monastic communities, and the consolidation of local cults encouraged the copying and reworking of saints' lives and miracle narratives. Their abundance does not render these texts useless as sources; it requires us to distinguish among biographical information, literary models, edifying purpose, and institutional uses of memory.

Saints' lives frequently performed devotional and legitimising functions. Their criterion of truth therefore differs from that of modern biography: they seek to edify and authorise before they seek to reconstruct, which makes them demanding but no less historical sources. The accumulation of miracles, *topoi*, and models of sanctity reflects generic conventions and strategies of authority. Repetition of motifs across texts may reveal literary dependence, the circulation of models, or reworking, but requires textual demonstration before it can be described as plagiarism in the modern sense.

Hagiographical criticism has shown that certain lives were composed or reworked long after the period attributed to their protagonists and that they sometimes served to sustain specific ecclesiastical claims. The *Vie de Saint Samson de Dol* is a debated example in relation to Breton episcopal memory and the metropolitan claims of Dol against Tours. Its similarities to earlier models, including the Martinian tradition, should be analysed as intertextuality and hagiographic strategy. Even when the narrative does not permit a literal reconstruction of the saint's life, it can provide information about social practices, hierarchies, values, conflicts, and representations of the environment in which it was written or transmitted. Its historical usefulness therefore depends on asking questions appropriate to the genre and its context.

From Late Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages, much Christian historiography integrated events into providential frameworks. Human action does not disappear from these accounts, but may be subordinated to moral, theological, and eschatological categories. Events are selected and organised as arguments capable of

demonstrating punishment, intercession, reform, or the fulfilment of a divine order. Kings, bishops, and saints consequently acquire a narrative role disproportionate to that of other social groups. This characteristic should not be universalised to all medieval historical writing; rather, it serves as a key for critically reading particular genres and understanding why theological causality can coexist with verifiable political, military, or social information.

The relationship among punishment, providence, and intercession recurs across many medieval traditions. Annals and chronicles developed alongside them. Annals generally organise information by year and record political, military, religious, or local events with varying degrees of detail. Their frequent production in monastic environments conditions the selection of events but does not automatically determine either their content or their reliability. The institutional provenance of a text must therefore be incorporated into the analysis of its silences, priorities, and vocabulary.

In many monasteries, calendars and Easter tables provided surfaces on which information of local, dynastic, or political significance could be added. These practices gave rise to, or fed into, annalistic traditions characterised by chronological organisation and, in many cases, concision. Not all monasteries produced the same type of record, nor did all annalistic series have the same scope; the form and density of entries varied according to centre, period, and purpose of compilation.

Medieval chronicles display greater diversity than any single definition can accommodate. Some adopt universal ambitions and belong to traditions initiated by Christian authors of Late Antiquity. Bede, for example, worked within a chronographic tradition associated with Eusebius and Jerome and also composed the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, a central work for the study of early medieval England. His production combines universal chronology, ecclesiastical history, exegesis, and observation of near-contemporary events. The value of such texts lies precisely in this combination: they can transmit information of great importance while simultaneously organising it through theological, political, and literary categories specific to their

context. Historical criticism must reconstruct these mediations rather than judge chronicles exclusively by their resemblance to, or distance from, contemporary historiography.

Medieval Christian historiography responded to questions different from those posed by modern research. Its silences should therefore not be interpreted simply as deficiencies, but as the product of specific intellectual and political priorities. In authors such as Gregory of Tours or Paul the Deacon, elements of the classical tradition persist alongside Christian interpretative frameworks. Formal continuity with ancient models does not prevent a transformation of perspective: providence, the cult of saints, the history of churches, and the legitimacy of rulers acquire a weight that alters the selection and explanation of events.

Gregory of Tours provides a particularly useful example. His narrative is situated within a universal Christian history that looks back to Eusebius and Orosius, but it also contains detailed observations on political conflicts, aristocratic relations, episcopal life, and social practices in the sixth century. Miracles and religious causality form part of his understanding of the world and must be analysed as elements of the text rather than dismissed as mere deviations from a supposedly secular model. His work therefore permits the simultaneous study of events and systems of representation.

Continuity with ancient models also appears in biographies, autobiographies, and accounts of rulers. Augustine's *Confessions*, Abelard's *Historia calamitatum*, Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, and Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* belong to different contexts and genres, so their formal similarities do not imply identity of purpose. In universal chronologies, history could begin with Creation and order the past within a providential sequence. This temporal architecture explains the presence of God, sin, salvation, and spiritual conflict as narrative categories. For the modern historian, these categories are both part of the content and evidence for the medieval construction of historical authority.

Medieval Christian historiography frequently articulated events within providential frameworks or a “theology of history”; for its historiographical analysis, see Carbonell (1986) and Guenée (1980). Universal chronologies, ecclesiastical histories, saints’ lives, and narratives of political deeds do not constitute absolutely separate compartments. They share sources, models, and procedures, although each genre privileges different problems. Rather than presenting political and military works as the point at which secular progress linearly “reappears”, it is more precise to examine how the objects, scales, and types of causality mobilised by each author change. This variation is relevant to the study of the Temple because it allows us to assess what may be established from narratives written for different purposes.

W. J. Brandt proposed interpreting certain forms of medieval thought in terms of a discontinuous perception of nature and history. This kind of historiographical generalisation is useful as a problem of interpretation, but should not be transformed into a homogeneous description of “medieval people”. Providential explanation, material causality, and legal or political reasoning could coexist. Analysis must identify which of these logics predominates in a particular source and what effects it has on the selection of facts.

In many chronicles, victories, defeats, epidemics, or dynastic changes are linked to divine will, merit, sin, the cult of saints, or the efficacy of intercession. Patron saints could be presented as protectors of cities, armies, or communities, and the observance of religious practices could be incorporated into explanations of the outcome of battle. Such accounts do not demonstrate a medieval inability to recognise political or military causes; they show that providential causality was a legitimate language for giving meaning to events. Poems, chronicles, and hagiographies must therefore be read with attention both to the information they transmit and to the moral architecture through which that information became intelligible to their authors and audiences.

Carbonell (1986) emphasises the tendency of Christian historiography to integrate events into a universal history endowed with providential meaning. The formulation is useful if understood as a characteristic of particular traditions rather than as an absolute rupture with earlier historiography. Christian writing inherited classical procedures, transformed them, and combined them with new eschatological, ecclesiological, and political expectations.

Within this framework, history could be conceived as the arena of providence and sin, and its study found legitimacy in the relationship between human events and revelation. Scripture provided a temporal and moral matrix, but chroniclers also incorporated genealogies, dynastic conflicts, wars, institutions, and local memories. There is no need to assume the mechanical subordination of every event to a single “Divine Plan”; it is more useful to observe how each work articulates religious and human causality.

The Augustinian opposition between *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena* provided one of the most influential frameworks for thinking about Christian history. Its use, however, admitted widely varying degrees and forms, and the ecclesiastical historiography that drew upon it was capable of recording conflicts, contradictions, and contingencies that no dogmatic scheme could have accommodated. The global characterisation of this tradition as “dogmatic”, by contrast, belongs to later historiographical debates. For the present study, it is more useful to identify how oppositions between virtue and sin, orthodoxy and deviation, obedience and rebellion could organise the representation of actors and institutions.

In certain ecclesiastical texts, fidelity to the faith and service to the Church function as the principal criteria of moral evaluation. This predominance does not eliminate other values—lineage, honour, political loyalty, prudence, military ability, or justice—which also appear in medieval documentation. The doctrinal consolidation of Christianity established relatively stable categories of orthodoxy, but their historical application was the subject of debate, negotiation, and conflict. This tension is precisely what makes them relevant to

understanding the later construction of accusations of deviation against religious institutions such as the Temple.

Older historiography tended to associate certain medieval texts with asceticism, credulity, and limited critical capacity. These categories now require more precise formulation. Authors such as Augustine, Orosius, or Otto of Freising wrote from explicitly theological horizons, but this does not allow the same attitude to be extended to all chroniclers or their procedures to be reduced to a lack of discernment. Limited access to manuscripts, the difficulty of comparing versions, and the authority attributed to particular testimonies conditioned source criticism. The modern historian must reconstruct these material and intellectual conditions without turning them into a global judgement on medieval rationality.

Christian asceticism may have shifted attention towards spiritual ends, but it does not by itself explain the preservation or loss of documents or the acceptance of marvellous narratives. Textual transmission depended on wars, fires, institutional resources, copying practices, archival selection, and political change. Likewise, the presence of prodigies in a work does not imply an absence of empirical observation in other domains. It is more productive to examine which authorities were regarded as reliable, how information circulated, and what criteria of plausibility operated within each textual community.

Medieval writing frequently uses moral types, representational anachronisms, and exemplary schemes. It also produced documentary forgeries, interpolations, and genealogical reconstructions intended to sustain rights or memories. These phenomena, however, do not necessarily derive from asceticism, nor do they prevent the individualisation of actors. Annalistic and chronicle forms respond to multiple traditions of writing. Some works combine a universal history beginning with Creation with increasingly detailed records as they approach the author's own time and place. This transition can be especially valuable: the increase in contemporary information permits the study of specific events, while the universal framework reveals how the community located those events within a broader temporality.

The opposition between the heavenly and earthly cities, together with doctrines of the Fall, redemption, judgement, and final destiny, provided resources for organising historical time. These categories derive from biblical and Christian traditions that also interacted with Jewish messianic expectations. They are better described as theological structures of interpretation than as “mythology” in a dismissive sense. Their historiographical importance lies in allowing us to understand why certain events could be read as signs within a spiritual sequence while still being narrated as political events.

Various medieval authors organised history into ages or spiritual phases. Periodisations could connect the succession of empires with the history of the Church, the Antichrist, and the Last Judgement. Among the most influential proposals was that of Joachim of Fiore, who interpreted historical development through a sequence associated with the three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These periodisations were neither uniformly accepted nor part of a single medieval chronology; they demonstrate the plurality of models through which attempts were made to give meaning to historical change.

Allegorical interpretation was another central instrument for relating Scripture, history, and nature. Sacred and profane figures and events could receive typological and moral readings, while encyclopaedias and “mirrors” assembled diverse forms of knowledge within frameworks of correspondence. Manuscripts, codices, miniatures, and artistic objects are therefore important sources for reconstructing the production of medieval knowledge. Monasteries and abbeys were centres of teaching, copying, and preservation, although they were not the only ones. Their libraries and scriptoria enabled the transmission of texts, and the work of scribes, rubricators, and illuminators shows that book production was a collective, specialised material process.

Copying spaces could contain lecterns, tables, inks, quills, pumice stone, and pigments used in the preparation, writing, and illumination of parchment. Their precise organisation varied across centres and periods, so a single model of the scriptorium should not be projected

everywhere. Monastic and urban workshops both participated in the reproduction and decoration of codices. The study of these procedures is relevant because the material form of transmission conditioned which texts survived, how they were corrected, and how they could circulate among religious and political communities.

Christian historiography did not wholly replace narratives of a political, dynastic, or military nature. From Late Antiquity onwards, ecclesiastical histories, universal chronicles, memories of peoples, and accounts of wars coexisted. This coexistence requires us to avoid an excessively rigid opposition between “sacred history” and “secular history”: the same author could employ providential categories while also recording territorial, economic, and political interests.

Throughout the Middle Ages there remained a body of writing devoted to conquests, conflicts among peoples, genealogies, and aristocratic struggles, frequently combined with religious interpretations. Gregory of Tours wrote about the Franks, Paul the Deacon about the Lombards, Bede about the English, and Widukind of Corvey about the Saxons. These examples show that an author’s clerical status did not eliminate interest in the political history of his community. For critical analysis, the central question is how institutional belonging, narrative purpose, available sources, and the selection of events are articulated.

Miracle and providential intervention occupied an important place in many medieval Christian narratives, and their presence reflects a particular regime of causality, not a superior stage of historical writing in relation to ancient tradition. Ecclesiastical history differed in its objects—the Church, its conflicts, saints, doctrines, and relations with power—and in the theological criteria by which events were evaluated. For its authors, religious truth could provide a principle of historical intelligibility. For present-day research, that claim is itself part of the object of study: the question is how a discourse of truth legitimises institutions, condemns adversaries, and turns particular events into evidence of a moral order.

Providence could be presented as a principle capable of ordering victories, defeats, rises, and catastrophes within a history directed towards an end. This conception contributed to the development of linear and eschatological temporalities, although the idea of time oriented towards an end has antecedents in earlier traditions and is not a Christian invention. Medieval writing also possessed its own instruments of historical awareness: computus, genealogy, comparison of authorities, and dating by reigns. Hagiography and historiography shared concerns with memory, authority, and authenticity, but their generic conventions are not identical. In some manuscripts and compilations the boundaries among miracle, ecclesiastical history, and chronicle can be porous; in other cases, authors clearly distinguish types of narrative and source. It is precisely this variability that requires philological and contextual reading.

Hagiography and historiography may share a desire to preserve events regarded as memorable and an assertion of authenticity, but they do not always pursue the same ends or employ identical criteria of proof. Comparison between them must attend to genre, audience, liturgical or political function, and procedures of transmission.

These forms of writing provided elites and institutions with resources for legitimising authority, interpreting conflict, and representing religious war. They were not merely instruments of one-way propaganda: they also preserved tensions, contradictions, and voices that allow the limits of that legitimation to be reconstructed. For the study of the crusades and the Temple, their value lies both in what they narrate and in the categories through which they render the exercise of power intelligible.

The result of this survey is an instrument rather than a conclusion: a set of criteria for asking each source what its genre permits it to answer. Applied to the Temple, that instrument has an immediate effect. Much of what is asserted about the Order derives from texts written for devotional, apologetic, or judicial purposes, and their evidential value must be measured in relation to those purposes. The

following chapters transfer this criterion from the general framework to the Templar case.

MEDIEVAL SOCIETY, NOBILITY, AND POLITICAL CULTURE

The question organising this chapter is how a society could produce men willing to surrender property, lineage, and will to an armed corporation. The answer proposed here is that the Temple created none of the dispositions it required: in ecclesiastical reform and in the transformation of the aristocracy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it found monastic discipline, lineage consciousness, and the subordination of the warrior to a higher authority already formed. Its innovation lay in combining them.

This context does not directly describe the Templar institution, but it allows it to be situated within ecclesiastical reforms, aristocratic transformations, and the forms of authority and discourse of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These conditions help explain how a religious militia could recruit members, impose discipline, acquire property, and present armed violence as compatible with a religious vocation.

Between the tenth and eleventh centuries, various movements of monastic and ecclesiastical reform sought to address problems such as simony, clerical marriage, lay appropriation of ecclesiastical property, and clerical discipline. Reform was directed against concrete and localisable practices, not against a general decline: earlier centuries had not been uniformly virtuous, nor were later ones uniformly disciplined. Within this reforming context, William I of Aquitaine founded the Abbey of Cluny in 910. Cluny and the monastic network associated with it promoted rigorous liturgical observance, strengthened monastic autonomy from certain local powers, and became reference points for reform. The asceticism, discipline, and communal organisation developed in these environments formed part of the institutional background from which new forms of religious life would later emerge, although there is no direct causal line from Cluny to the Temple.

Monastic life was structured around prayer, liturgy, discipline, estate administration, intellectual work, and networks of patronage.

Monasteries and abbeys could organise agricultural estates, workshops, libraries, and building projects, while the reading and copying of patristic and other texts contributed to the preservation and production of written culture. Reform movements demanded stricter clerical discipline, opposed simony and clerical marriage, and participated, with varying degrees of effectiveness, in initiatives such as the Peace and Truce of God. These practices did not entail a renunciation of reason: doctrinal obedience coexisted with complex forms of theological, legal, and exegetical argument. At the same time, the transmission of early medieval texts combined Roman, Visigothic, and Christian inheritances; documentary forgeries and interpolations were also used to support claims to rights, a phenomenon that must be demonstrated case by case. In the very different and much later context of late medieval Flanders, Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers have shown that subversive speech could constitute a persistent dimension of urban politics and a threat to dominant groups. Their work is useful here as a reminder that medieval power was also negotiated and contested through discursive practices.

Engaging with the now-classic work of James C. Scott, who presents subordinate groups as operating in opposition to “hegemonic ideology” and thereby producing “hidden transcripts” that alternate with and oppose “public transcripts”, Dumolyn and Haemers argue that Flemish rebels could construct and articulate political discourses of their own while partially subverting dominant ideologies.

Medieval and early modern speech events constituted, and even defined, political relationships between rulers and subjects. Tracing these subversive expressions is difficult but not impossible, since they have survived as fragments or indirect quotations in sources that may be regarded as hostile and that emanated from dominant groups.

There appears to have been an awareness of the potential danger embodied in popular speech. The well-known phrase *Vox populi, vox Dei*—first recorded in a letter by Alcuin of York—does not mean that the voice of the common people was wise or good, but simply that it was overwhelming and could not be ignored. What Genicot had

demonstrated was, as Georges Duby summarised it in 1961, that “medieval nobility is independent of knighthood and anterior to it; it is a condition inherited from one’s ancestors, a matter of blood”. It was this finding that revealed the full significance of the results obtained by German historians.

Frankish nobility had earlier roots than Bloch had proposed. What changed was the structure of the family. Following pioneering formulations in German historiography, Duby argued that the Carolingian period had possessed a true nobility, a nobility of blood tied to ancestry. The difficulty of reconstructing kinship lines lay in the structure and representations of the aristocratic family. As Schmid had already observed, the aristocratic family constituted a loosely cohesive group of relatives, with little internal hierarchy and limited genealogical consciousness, within which lines of descent through men and women operated on equal terms.

After the year 1000, by contrast, the conception of the family would acquire a dynastic character, reflecting greater cohesion among kin, the reinforcement of agnatic descent, and the establishment of succession patterns based on male primogeniture. For Duby, these changes in family organisation were linked to political transformations. In the Carolingian period, the monarch distributed offices and honours among members of noble families without regard to agnatic descent or primogeniture. The most prestigious line of descent, and the one closest to the royal environment, was thus emphasised. Around the year 1000, however, nobles began to acquire autonomous powers, converting lordships that they had held by royal delegation into family property.

The emergence of political forms in which certain aristocratic powers and properties tended to be transmitted hereditarily contributed, in some regions, to the strengthening of agnatic descent and lineage identities. The chronology and scope of this process remain debated and should not be projected uniformly across Europe. Medievalist scholarship on nobility, kinship, and power is far too extensive to exhaust here; only a selection relevant to the Templar

problem is presented. Its purpose is to explain the social context of aristocratic recruitment and the construction of authority, not to establish a universal model for the evolution of the medieval family.

Monasteries, abbeys, and episcopal schools played an important role in the preservation, copying, and teaching of texts during the Middle Ages. From the twelfth century onwards, some cathedral schools and other urban centres participated in processes that led to the formation of universities, although there was no single linear genealogy. Monastic libraries preserved classical and Christian manuscripts, and various centres of translation brought Greek and Arabic works into Latin circulation, often through bilingual intermediaries. Written culture also spread in vernacular languages through poetry, chronicles, and courtly literature. These networks of transmission are essential to understanding both the production of historical memory and the symbolic repertoires available to religious and military orders.

The chapter establishes that Templar recruitment and discipline relied on pre-existing social materials, which explains the speed of the Order's establishment without recourse to exceptional factors. The limit of this analysis should be stressed: the chronology and extent of transformations in aristocratic kinship remain disputed, and the selection presented here responds to the Templar problem rather than attempting to resolve that debate. The next chapter examines the movement that turned these dispositions into a military enterprise.

POLITICAL INTERESTS: THE CRUSADES

This chapter argues that the crusade should be understood as a device capable of translating heterogeneous motivations into a common vocabulary, and that its historical effectiveness lay precisely in that capacity for translation rather than in either the intensity of participants' devotion or their material calculation. The consequence for the Temple is direct: the Order emerged within a culture that had already resolved, at the level of discourse, the compatibility between warfare and salvation.

The crusades cannot be explained by a single motive. Devotion, penance, salvation, aristocratic prestige, political loyalties, material opportunities, and papal projects combined in different ways according to the individual and the expedition. Historiography has debated extensively the relative weight of these factors. For the analysis of the Temple, two reductions must be avoided: presenting the crusades as exclusively spiritual enterprises or, conversely, as purely economic campaigns. The Order emerged within a culture in which violence could be sacralised through legal and religious categories, and that legitimisation constitutes a central element of its institutional identity¹⁸

Crusading mobilisation also had a social dimension that acted upon groups with very different positions and expectations, rather than on a uniform collective psychology. Scarcity, famine, epidemics, indebtedness, and instability could affect different sectors of the European population, while preaching offered religious frameworks capable of converting displacement, penance, and warfare into actions endowed with spiritual meaning. Crusading contingents, however, brought together nobles, knights, clergy, peasants, artisans, and followers with diverse motivations. The sources describe enthusiasm, fear, violence, and eschatological expectations, but these categories must be contextualised rather than treated as evidence of irrationality. The force of preaching lay precisely in its capacity to articulate different

¹⁸ For a general synthesis of the period, see Grimberg, Carl. *La Edad Media*. Historia Universal Daimon. Madrid, 1973.

social experiences under a common vocabulary of armed pilgrimage, remission of sins, liberation of holy places, and Christian duty¹⁹

It is therefore established that no monocausal explanation—spiritual or economic—accounts for the crusading phenomenon, and that analytical interest shifts towards the mechanism by which disparate social experiences were articulated. That mechanism is what the Temple institutionalised: what was a temporary vow for the crusader became a permanent condition for the Templar. The following chapters examine the foundational event of that political order and the way successive expeditions exposed its limits.

¹⁹ 'The sudden appearance of prophetae preaching the crusade gave these afflicted masses the opportunity to form salvationist groups on a much larger scale and at the same time to escape from lands in which life had become intolerable.' Cohn, Norman. *En pos del Milenio*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1985.

THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

The purpose of this chapter is twofold and should be stated explicitly, because it determines how the chapter is to be read. It reconstructs the events of July 1099 and at the same time uses them as a test case for the evidential criterion adopted in this volume: an abundantly documented event for which the sources diverge irreconcilably in numbers, speeches, and sequences. The thesis is that this divergence can itself be analysed, and that such analysis yields more than any attempt to average the testimonies.

Jerusalem, 15 July 1099. Before the walls of the thrice-holy city gathered a powerful army from Constantinople, where the retinues of various Frankish lords and members of the European nobility had gradually and disorderly converged. This considerable military force made its way to Jerusalem and laid siege to it. After a long and arduous siege, troops under Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, stormed the city and took it from the Muslims. In the aftermath of battle, the holy city seethed with fire and blood; from its towers and machicolations flew the various banners of the crusaders: the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had just been created and would pass under the authority of the Bouillon and Lusignan dynasties. Godfrey of Bouillon, unable to “wear a crown of gold where Christ had worn one of thorns”, declared himself not king but Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre. The crusading armies later expanded their military and political influence in the region and claimed parts of the territories of Syria, where they created the Principality of Antioch and the Counties of Edessa and Tripoli. Military orders and their members—half monks, half soldiers—would later help defend these territories, fighting alongside crusaders, riding beside their caravans, and patrolling the desert routes of the Holy Land to protect pilgrims from bandit attacks and skirmishes with Muslim warriors. It was in this context that the military orders were consolidated: the Hospitaller community in Jerusalem was recognised by the papacy in 1113; the Temple formed around 1119–1120 and received formal recognition in 1129; the Teutonic Order

arose later, at the end of the twelfth century. None of these orders participated as such in the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099.

The *Gesta Francorum*, an anonymous account of the First Crusade composed in the early twelfth century, is an important primary source for the study of the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. Like any participant narrative, it combines information about military operations with a providential framework and the perspective of the crusading contingent to which it belonged. Modern reconstructions of the capture of the city must distinguish the text transmitted by the source from later paraphrases and compare it with other Latin, eastern, and Muslim narratives. This precaution is especially important when citing speeches, numbers, or sequences of events that may vary across manuscript traditions.

As a primary source, the *Gesta Francorum* allows us to reconstruct the perspective of a participant in, or near-contemporary witness to, the First Crusade, but it must be distinguished from later descriptions of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The establishment of the kingdom after the conquest of 1099 and the subsequent development of its institutions belong to a chronology that cannot be projected wholesale onto the narrative of the initial expedition.

To protect the conquered territories and the pilgrims travelling to the holy places, the military orders mentioned above were created: the Temple, the Knights Hospitaller, and the Teutonic Knights. These orders combined military defence with significant social and economic functions: hospitals, monasteries, and charitable centres integrated them into the structure of the Latin kingdom as much as their garrisons did.

The *Gesta Francorum* narrates the conquest of Jerusalem within a providential framework characteristic of part of the crusading literature. Its value lies not only in establishing a sequence of operations, but also in showing how participants discursively constructed the legitimacy of violence and victory. Godfrey of Bouillon's succession by Baldwin I belongs to the political history

following the capture of the city and must be reconstructed through specific documentation, without turning a modern paraphrase into a literal quotation from the *Gesta*.

The source remains valuable for studying crusader perceptions and the religious construction of the event. Claims concerning the subsequent organisation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem must also draw on chronicles and documentation from the following decades.

The Latin presence in the Levant was maintained for almost two centuries through a combination of fortresses, alliances, maritime routes, western support, and military capacity. Its retreat did not result from a supposed “growing strength of Islam” understood as a single bloc, but from concrete political processes: dynastic changes, the consolidation of regional powers, internal conflicts within the Latin states, and the military superiority of particular adversaries in specific conjunctures. The military orders played a central role in this defence. At the same time, prolonged contact encouraged material, technical, and cultural transfers between Christian and Muslim societies, although the existence of exchange does not imply symmetry or stable coexistence. Significant circulation can be observed in architecture, trade, medicine, and translation; each case, however, requires its own documentary chain.

The sources for the First Crusade and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem offer different perspectives on the conquest, the establishment of Frankish powers, and the subsequent organisation of the territory. Quotations used in this volume must refer to identifiable editions and should not be reconstructed from secondary formulations lacking precise references. This rule is especially necessary for speeches attributed to protagonists, military figures, and descriptions of massacres, areas in which textual traditions present substantial divergences.

This corpus should be identified precisely, because divergence among its testimonies is the argument rather than an obstacle to it. On the Latin side, the anonymous *Gesta Francorum et aliorum*

Hierosolimitanorum, written around 1101, transmits the perspective of a participant in the Norman contingent from southern Italy; Raymond of Aguilers's *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* derives from the Provençal circle of Raymond of Saint-Gilles; Fulcher of Chartres's *Historia Hierosolymitana* was written from the chaplaincy of Baldwin of Boulogne; and Albert of Aachen's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, composed in the West from the accounts of returning crusaders, preserves material omitted by the previous three. On the Muslim side, Ibn al-Qalanisi's *Dhayl ta'rikh Dimashq* offers a virtually contemporary Damascene record, while Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi-l-ta'rikh* belongs to the thirteenth century and reworks earlier traditions. None of these works is a report; all are interventions.

The massacre that followed the capture of the city illustrates the problem with particular clarity. Raymond of Aguilers employs an eschatological image—blood rising to the knees and bridles of the horses—whose function is liturgical and apocalyptic before it is descriptive, since it echoes Revelation. Later Muslim traditions transmit figures of tens of thousands killed in the precinct of al-Aqsa. Both sets of data are sources for the construction of the event, not measurements. Critical reassessment of this documentation, particularly Kedar's (2004) work on western historiography of the massacre, has shown that the transmitted figures reflect generic conventions and interests of memory, and that reconstructing the number of victims requires treatment independent of the numbers proposed by the sources themselves. For this volume, the methodological consequence is direct: when two traditions diverge, the historian's task is not to average them but to explain why each required the version it offers.

Accordingly, any passage cited as direct testimony must be distinguished from historiographical paraphrase. Where literal wording cannot be established from a verifiable edition, the information is presented only as critical synthesis, with the source or historiographical discussion from which it derives identified. This practice prevents a

modern reconstruction from artificially acquiring the authority of a medieval voice.

The military orders were enduring components of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the political networks that sustained it. The Temple acquired considerable military, patrimonial, and financial capacity, but this capacity must be described within medieval legal and social frameworks rather than converted into an equivalent of modern state power. Its suppression at the beginning of the fourteenth century arose from a conjuncture different from that which had shaped its activity in the Levant. The persistence of its image after 1312 therefore belongs to another historical problem: reception, memory, and the formation of the Templar myth.

Modern historiography on the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the military orders emphasises the interaction between western institutions and local realities in the Levant. Synthetic formulations attributed to modern authors should be presented as paraphrases when no verifiable textual quotation exists. The argument of interest here does not depend on an isolated phrase: the documentation shows cooperation, conflict, negotiation, and adaptation among Latin powers, eastern communities, and Muslim actors throughout two centuries of crusader presence.

The Latin presence in the Levant also had documentable cultural and religious effects. Western contingents introduced artistic, literary, and devotional forms that came into contact with local traditions. They also established ecclesiastical institutions—monasteries, convents, and churches—whose implantation can be traced in documentation from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; each concrete case, however, requires its own chain of evidence.

The chapter yields two conclusions. The first is that the military orders did not participate in the conquest of 1099 and were products of the kingdom founded by that conquest, an elementary chronological correction that much popular literature still fails to observe. The second is methodological: when two textual traditions disagree, the

task is to explain why each required its own version. The next chapter shows what happened when that military order had to be sustained over time.

AN ENTERPRISE DESTINED TO FAIL

This chapter argues that the failure of crusading expeditions after 1099 was not the consequence of increasing Muslim military superiority or a decline of western faith, but of a structural problem of institutional form: crusading armies were temporary, whereas the front they had to sustain was permanent. The military orders were the response to this asymmetry, and their importance grew in direct proportion to the ineffectiveness of the expeditions.

The Second Crusade must be situated within the Latin response to the fall of Edessa in 1144 and the capacity of papal preaching to mobilise European monarchies and aristocracies. Its military failure cannot be attributed to a single cause: problems of coordination, strategic decisions, relations with Byzantium, and tensions among actors in the Latin East all played a part. For the Temple, the expedition confirmed the growing centrality of the military orders in the permanent defence of the Levant, in contrast to the temporary nature of many western crusading armies.

Accounts of the Second Crusade must be treated according to the same criterion applied to the sources for 1099: words attributed to kings, preachers, or chroniclers require a verifiable textual reference. Where secure literal wording cannot be established, it is preferable to present the content as critical paraphrase. This procedure does not impoverish the argument; it separates documentary evidence from the rhetorical effect produced by reconstructed quotations or quotations transmitted through secondary works.

The central source for the French expedition is Odo of Deuil's *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, written by Louis VII's chaplain and an eyewitness to the march shortly after the events, and edited with an English translation by Berry (1948). His testimony is partisan in a precise sense and therefore especially useful: he writes to explain a failure and needs to allocate responsibility. The systematic hostility towards the Byzantines that runs through the text is not evidence about Byzantium but about the narrative economy of defeat. Read with this

caution, the *De profectione* preserves logistical, itinerary, and military information provided by no other western source.

One episode in this chronicle is decisive for the institutional history of the Temple and is often omitted from general syntheses. After the disaster suffered by the French vanguard at Mount Cadmus in January 1148, Louis VII entrusted the organisation and marching discipline of the army to the Templars led by Everard des Barres, master in France and shortly afterwards master of the Order. Odo describes the reorganisation of the contingent into units under Templar command and the obligation imposed on the crusaders to obey the brothers. This was accompanied by a major financial operation: the Order advanced the king very substantial sums to sustain the campaign, a credit that Louis VII acknowledged and arranged to repay from the West.

The analytical value of the episode is twofold. Militarily, it documents a moment when a religious order assumed effective command of a royal crusading army, confirming the thesis advanced in this volume that the Temple's usefulness lay in its permanence in contrast to the temporary nature of western expeditions. Economically, it provides one of the earliest explicit testimonies to the Order's credit function at the highest political level, in 1148, long before the period in which popular historiography usually locates the emergence of Templar finance. Together, these elements allow a generic assertion about the importance of the Temple during the Second Crusade to be replaced with a documented description of the specific functions it performed.

Louis VII of France and Conrad III participated in the Second Crusade, whose eastern campaign culminated in 1148 with the abandonment of the siege of Damascus. The outcome should not be explained through a generic opposition between "success" and "failure", but by attending to coordination among contingents, strategic decisions, and relations between western crusaders and the powers of the Latin East. The expedition did not recover Edessa and damaged certain regional alliances, but it did not by itself produce an immediate political transformation of the Levant. Its importance for

this study lies above all in demonstrating the difficulty of coordinating temporary western mobilisations with permanent structures of defence. In this setting, the military orders acquired growing relevance because they could maintain resources, garrisons, and institutional networks beyond the duration of a particular expedition. The preaching and organisation of the crusade also demonstrate the Church's capacity to formulate a language of penitential warfare, although the response of monarchs and aristocrats was conditioned by interests, obligations, and political decisions of their own.

Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem in 1187 triggered the mobilisation that led to the Third Crusade (1189–1192). Philip II Augustus of France, Frederick I Barbarossa, and Richard I of England took part. Frederick died during the march through Anatolia; Philip returned to the West after the capitulation of Acre in 1191, while Richard continued the operations and won an important victory at Arsuf. The expedition recovered Acre and helped restore a Latin coastal presence, but did not reconquer Jerusalem. The agreement concluded between Richard and Saladin in 1192 preserved certain conditions of Christian access to the holy places and temporarily stabilised relations between the Latin territories and Ayyubid power. The significance of the Third Crusade for Templar history does not lie in presenting it as an exceptionally "successful" campaign, but in observing the function of the military orders within a defensive system that combined expeditionary armies, fortresses, diplomacy, finance, and local knowledge. Runciman described the outcome as Muslim retention of Jerusalem alongside the survival of a Latin coastal strip; this synthesis is useful as a general characterisation, but must be integrated into a broader later historiography of the Crusader States and their institutions²⁰

²⁰ The glorious legend of Richard the Lionheart (1157–1199) does not correspond to the historical record. As king of England, he consistently placed his personal interests before those of the realm. A vassal of the king of France, Philip Augustus, he quarrelled with him in the Holy Land, after

The Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) offers an especially clear example of the distance that could open between the proclaimed objective of an expedition and its political development. Financial obligations incurred with Venice, the intervention at Zara, and Byzantine dynastic disputes contributed to the diversion that culminated in the capture and sack of Constantinople in 1204. Venetian interests were decisive, but they do not by themselves explain the sequence. Innocent III condemned various episodes of violence against Christians, although the relationship among papal authority, crusading vows, and the army's decisions was more complex than a simple opposition between the papacy and mercantile "greed"²¹

The Fifth Crusade was prepared after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and unfolded between 1217 and 1221. Andrew II of Hungary participated in its first phase and John of Brienne played a prominent role; the strategy eventually concentrated on Egypt and failed after the Damietta campaign. The Sixth Crusade, led by Frederick II between 1228 and 1229, produced a very different outcome: through negotiation with Sultan al-Kamil, the emperor obtained Christian access to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth for a limited period. Frederick's relations with the Templars and Hospitallers were tense, and there is insufficient basis for turning the agreement into evidence of secret Templar collusion. Louis IX's Seventh Crusade again attacked Egypt in 1248; the king's defeat and capture in 1250 required payment

which the French monarch supported the interests of Richard's brother, John, in the English succession. During the siege of Acre (1191), Richard offended Duke Leopold of Austria by removing the banner the Austrian had planted on the city walls and replacing it with his own. On Richard's return from the crusade, while passing near Vienna, the duke had him imprisoned and held him for two years, with imperial acquiescence, until England paid the required ransom.

²¹ The first monarchs of the Latin Empire of Constantinople were Baldwin I, count of Flanders (1204–1205); his brother Henry (1206–1216); Peter of Courtenay (1217), married to their sister; and the latter, Yolanda (1217–1219).

of a ransom. The Eighth Crusade was directed towards Tunis in 1270 and ended after Louis IX died during an epidemic illness. These campaigns demonstrate the diversification of crusading strategies and the difficulty of sustaining positions in the Levant. Popular mobilisations also occurred, among them the movements of 1212 later known as the “Children’s Crusade” and the Pastoreaux of 1251. The numbers, ages, and accounts of enslavement transmitted by later traditions require caution and should not be reproduced as uniformly established facts. In the Iberian Peninsula, crusading language and privileges were applied to campaigns against Muslim powers, integrating Iberian warfare into papal policy of Christian expansion. Finally, in 1291, the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil captured Acre. The fall of the city and other coastal positions removed the principal Latin territorial base in the Levant; the Templars transferred their eastern centre to Cyprus until the Order was suppressed in 1312.

The survey of the eight expeditions establishes the central argument: each western failure increased the relative weight of the permanent institutions of the Levant. By 1291, when Acre fell, the Temple was not merely one order among the crusading actors but one of the few still standing, and that position explains both its prestige and its later vulnerability. The following chapters reconstruct the function from which the Order originated and the process of its legal formalisation.

THE PROTECTORS OF PILGRIMS

This chapter examines the function from which the Temple originated and argues that the protection of pilgrims was simultaneously a genuine military necessity and the most effective formula of legitimation available to the Order. Both dimensions matter equally: the first explains why the fraternity was useful, the second why it was acceptable. Reducing the protection of pilgrims to a pretext is as inaccurate as treating it as the entirety of the Order's mission.

After the crusader conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, the movement of western pilgrims towards the holy places increased, although Christian pilgrimage to the Levant predated the First Crusade. The journey involved maritime dangers, disease, high costs, and exposure to violence along transit routes. The security of roads and pilgrims therefore became a political and religious problem for the authorities of the Latin kingdom. Charitable institutions existed in Jerusalem before the Temple. The community associated with the Hospital of St John received papal recognition through Paschal II's *Pie postulatio voluntatis* in 1113;²² its first leader was Gerard, while Raymond du Puy later played a decisive role in the Hospital's organisation and militarisation. In this context, the fraternity that would become the Temple assumed a specifically military function associated with the protection of travellers and, over time, the defence of the Latin states. The contrast between Hospitallers and Templars should not be formulated as an absolute division between care and warfare, since both orders evolved during the twelfth century and ultimately combined religious, patrimonial, and military functions.

²² *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, Paschal II, 1113. The privilege recognises the community of the Hospital of St John and predates recognition of the Temple at Troyes by more than a decade. This point matters because it prevents the institutional chronology of the two orders from being reversed or the Temple from being presented as the model from which the Hospital derived its form.

It is thus established that the distinction between care and warfare does not neatly separate the Hospital from the Temple, since both institutions evolved during the twelfth century to combine religious, charitable, patrimonial, and military functions. What distinguishes the Temple is the order in which this combination occurred: it was born armed and added the rest afterwards. The next chapter reconstructs the process by which this armed fraternity acquired legal form.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE

The thesis of this chapter is that the foundation of the Temple was a process, not an act, and that confusing the two lies at the root of almost every misunderstanding about the Order. Two decades of negotiation, travel, patronage, and normative drafting separate the establishment of the fraternity around 1119–1120 from the consolidation of its autonomy through *Omne datum optimum* in 1139. Troyes did not create the Order all at once, nor was Bernard of Clairvaux its institutional founder.

The foundation of the Temple requires us to distinguish between the documentary reconstruction of its earliest years and the later history of their interpretation. After the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, the Latin kingdom had to secure cities, roads, and pilgrimage routes with limited human resources. It is within this context that the fraternity led by Hugues de Payns and Geoffroi de Saint-Omer appeared around 1119–1120. Later tradition fixed the initial number at nine knights; the figure has a strong narrative presence, but the documentation does not allow the composition of the group to be followed precisely throughout its first decade. Baldwin II and the religious authorities of Jerusalem facilitated their establishment in quarters near the al-Aqsa Mosque, which the crusaders identified with the Temple of Solomon. The Order's name derived from this location. The site had obvious symbolic value, but it does not in itself constitute evidence of archaeological excavations or searches for relics or secret knowledge.

During the 1120s, Hugues de Payns travelled to the West to obtain support, recruit members, and secure a normative form recognised by the Church. The Council of Troyes, held in January 1129 according to the chronology used here, provided the framework for the formalisation of the new militia. Bernard of Clairvaux intervened as an advocate and inspiration and later developed, in *De laude novae*

militiae, a theological justification of the miles Christi.²³ The Rule, however, was an institutional corpus that evolved and received additions; it should not be attributed in its entirety to Bernard. The Cistercian and ecclesiastical reform environment helps explain the vocabulary of austerity, obedience, and discipline, but does not make the Temple a branch of Cîteaux. Recognition at Troyes did not produce all of the Order's later autonomy at once either. This was consolidated in particular by papal privileges such as Innocent II's *Omne datum optimum* (1139), which reinforced direct dependence on the papacy and extended the Order's immunities.

The protection of pilgrims was an early function and a powerful formula of legitimation. As the institution grew, its tasks came to include the defence of fortresses, participation in campaigns, estate administration, the transfer of resources, credit, deposit, and political negotiation. These activities must be described in medieval categories rather than as though they formed a "state" or a modern banking system. The network of western commanderies made it possible to convert revenues, donations, and production into resources used to support men, horses, weapons, and houses in the Levant. The scale attained by the Order was extraordinary, but it remained dependent on the papacy, patrons, markets, maritime routes, and agreements with secular powers.

A different interpretative tradition was constructed upon this documentable core. In later periods, esoteric authors attributed secret purposes to the foundation: excavations beneath the Temple, recovery of ancient doctrines, the Holy Grail, connections with Sufis or Nizaris,

²³ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae*, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, vol. 3. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963. The work is dated variously between c. 1128 and c. 1136. It responds to repeated requests from Hugues de Payns and constitutes a theological apologetic, not a normative document of the Order: its authority is discursive rather than juridical, a distinction that should be maintained when it is cited alongside the Rule or papal privileges.

synarchic programmes, and the continuity of initiatory societies. Works by Louis Charpentier, Juan García Atienza, Robert Ambelain, and other authors helped popularise these hypotheses. Their historical relevance lies in the modern reception of the Temple, not in providing direct evidence for the twelfth century.

Academic historiography, represented among others by Alain Demurger, Malcolm Barber, and Helen Nicholson, begins from a different requirement: every claim about Templar practices, aims, or beliefs must be connected with verifiable medieval documentation and evaluated according to the date, genre, and purpose of the source. Even works explicitly devoted to Templar myths, such as those of Peter Partner, are most useful when employed to study how the legend was formed rather than when confused with evidence of institutional continuity. The issue is not to exclude esotericism from the book, but to place it correctly. The history of the Temple includes both the medieval institution and the enormous symbolic productivity that followed its disappearance; both are legitimate objects of study, but they belong to different evidential levels.

The Order of the Temple was founded in the twelfth century by Hugues de Payns and eight other French knights with the purpose of protecting Christian pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land.²⁴ In its earliest years the Order had neither a clearly defined structure nor an established rule, but recognition and support expanded during the 1120s. According to Barber (1994), Templar organisation combined a defined military hierarchy with its own religious and administrative structure.²⁵ The internal structure distinguished, among other categories, knights and sergeants, as well as chaplains and service personnel, with different functions and statuses. The Order also possessed a large number of houses and properties throughout Europe, enabling it to finance its activities and maintain a network of support and communication. The Order of the Temple was constituted as a religious and military institution, made up of knight-

²⁴ Barber (1994).

²⁵ Barber (1994).

monks required to obey rigorous rules of life. According to the Rule and specialist historiography (Upton-Ward 1997; Barber 1994), the Order's organisation articulated military, religious, and administrative functions, and its internal regulations were among its principal instruments of government. The master was the superior of all members, while great commanders, commanders, and knights held different offices in the various commanderies, convents, and castles. Templar life was founded on poverty, obedience, chastity, and the defence of the Christian faith and of pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land²⁶.

In this same year [1118], certain noble men of knightly rank, religious men devoted to God and fearing Him, bound themselves to the service of Christ under the authority of the Lord Patriarch. They promised to live in perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience, like regular canons, without possessions. Their principal leaders were the venerable Hugh of Payens and Geoffrey of St Omer. Since they had neither a church nor a fixed residence, the king temporarily gave them a dwelling in the southern wing of the palace, near the Temple of the Lord. The canons of the Temple of the Lord gave them, under certain conditions, a courtyard near the palace which the knights used as a training ground. The Lord King and his nobles, as well as the Lord Patriarch and the prelates of the Church, granted them revenues from their domains, some for a limited time and others in perpetuity, to provide them with food and clothing. Their principal duty, imposed on them by the Lord Patriarch and the other bishops for the remission of sins, was to protect the roads and routes from attacks by thieves and brigands. They did this especially to protect pilgrims²⁷.

²⁶ Upton-Ward (1997); Barber (1994).

²⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, XII, 7 (ed. R. B. C. Huygens, CCCM 63. Turnhout: Brepols, 1986; also PL 201, cols. 526–527). English translation from Brundage, *The Crusades: A Documentary History* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1962), pp. 70–73. William wrote between c. 1170 and c. 1184, that is, between forty and sixty years after the events: the passage documents the

The chronicle narrative used as a source presents the first brothers as noble knights who assumed poverty, chastity, and obedience under ecclesiastical authority. Hugues de Payns and Geoffroi de Saint-Omer appear as the principal figures. The passage must be read with attention to its retrospective character: it provides information about the institutional memory of the origins, but it is not a contemporary administrative record of every detail. Initial dependence on accommodation, food, clothing, and donations reveals a fraternity still limited in resources and closely tied to the patronage of the king, the patriarch, and other authorities of Jerusalem. Residence beside the space identified by the Latins with the Temple of Solomon produced a symbolic association decisive for the institution's name. That spatial relationship, however, does not in itself justify inferring an archaeological or esoteric programme. The mission of protecting roads and pilgrims appears as one of the central elements of the foundational tradition and is consistent with the security needs of the Latin kingdom. Its penitential dimension is equally important: armed service could be represented as a religious practice linked to remission of sins, obedience, and the defence of Christendom. Institutionally, the passage shows a significant combination of material precariousness and social legitimacy. The fraternity did not yet possess the autonomy and patrimonial network it would later develop, but it had access to patrons capable of providing resources, accommodation, and recognition. This distinction between individual poverty, initial dependence, and later corporate wealth is essential: the members' vow of poverty did not imply the permanent poverty of the institution. The source therefore allows us to observe an early phase of institutionalisation, although its details must be compared with other evidence before they are turned into a closed chronology of the foundation.

For nine years after their foundation, the knights wore secular clothing. They used garments given to them by

institutional memory of the origins as it circulated in the Latin kingdom in the late twelfth century, not a contemporary record of the foundation.

people for the salvation of their souls. In their ninth year, a council was held at Troyes in France, attended by the lord archbishops of Reims and Sens and their suffragans, as well as the bishop of Albano, legate of the Holy See, and the abbots of Cîteaux, Clairvaux, Pontigny, together with many others. By order of the Lord Pope Honorius and the Lord Stephen, Patriarch of Jerusalem, this council established a rule for the knights and assigned them a white habit²⁸.

The report that the first brothers wore secular clothing supplied by benefactors is significant on two levels. Materially, it describes a fraternity that had not yet fully developed the external signs of a recognised order and depended on donations for basic needs. Discursively, the formula linking the gift to the “salvation of souls” places material exchange within a religious economy of merit, memory, and patronage. A donation was not merely a transfer of property: it could be represented as an act of piety capable of linking the donor to a religious community. This relationship between material resource and spiritual benefit helps explain later patrimonial growth without requiring a simplistic opposition between initial poverty and institutional wealth. Poverty was a rule of individual life; the Order, as a corporation, could receive and administer property intended for its mission.

The same source links the change in status to the assembly at Troyes and to the grant of a rule and habit. From a linguistic point of view, excessive inferences should not be drawn from a single verbal form. The fact that a translation uses “was held” for the council does not in itself demonstrate an intention to conceal agents or a special institutional strategy: impersonal and passive constructions are common in historiographical prose. Discourse analysis gains greater force when it observes clusters of lexical and syntactic choices.

²⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, XII, 7 (ed. Huygens, CCCM 63; PL 201, cols. 526–527); trans. from Brundage (1962), pp. 70–73. Continuation of the passage cited above. The account of the nine years and the granting of the white habit comes from the same narrative unit and therefore shares its retrospective character.

In this case, terms such as “rule”, “habit”, “obedience”, “poverty”, and “service” construct a monastic semantic field that reconfigures the identity of the knight. Armed violence ceases to appear solely as an aristocratic attribute and is subjected to religious discipline. The word “rule” is especially important because it inserts members into a normative regime: it distributes time, food, clothing, hierarchies, punishments, and obligations. It does not merely describe an already existing community; it contributes to producing it institutionally through categories of legitimate conduct. The habit performs a similar function at the visual level. White, associated with the knights, expressed belonging and distinction, although its meaning should not be reduced to a universal symbolism of colour. The red cross was incorporated later and ultimately reinforced corporate visibility. Habit, rule, and hierarchy made Templar identity recognisable, repeatable, and sanctionable: they indicated who belonged, how members were to behave, and what they could lose if they breached the norm.

The Council of Troyes must therefore be understood as a moment of formalisation, not as an act that instantly created the entire later structure. Templar regulations continued to develop through additions and retraits, while legal autonomy expanded through subsequent papal privileges. Nor should the presence of prelates and abbots at Troyes be taken to imply direct “control” of every Templar operation. The Order was integrated into the Church and subject to the papacy, but it was precisely this papal dependence that later helped limit the jurisdiction of bishops and local authorities. The source thus reveals a productive tension: religious subordination and growing corporate autonomy are not contradictory terms, but simultaneous dimensions of institutionalisation. From a philological perspective, the principal interest lies in observing how monastic vocabulary, the language of salvation, and categories of service transformed an armed fraternity into an institution capable of being recognised, regulated, and legitimised.

The chapter precisely separates two levels that the literature often conflates: a documentable core—the military conjuncture, the

patronage of Baldwin II, Hugues de Payns's western journey, formalisation at Troyes, and the privilege of 1139—and a later interpretative tradition that attributed secret purposes to that same foundation. Both are legitimate objects of study, but they belong to different levels of evidence and cannot be treated alike. The following chapters examine the elements of this core one by one.

THE NINE KNIGHTS

This chapter is concerned with a number more than with a group. It argues that the number nine belongs to the tradition about the origins rather than to the documentation of the first decade, and that its persistence is explained by its narrative effectiveness: nine men protecting the roads of the Holy Land constitute a foundational story of considerable symbolic power, far greater than that of a fraternity with imprecise contours.

The small initial fraternity depended on patronage, accommodation, donations, and political recognition. Its early activity must be understood in relation to the security needs of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the limited availability of permanent forces. The later image of nine knights who, for nine years, supposedly carried out a perfectly defined mission has strong symbolic value, but the documentation does not permit each stage to be reconstructed with such numerical precision. The figure should be presented as part of the tradition concerning the origins and compared with the available institutional evidence.

Hugues de Payns occupies a central place in the fraternity's initial phase. The documentation allows him to be identified as its first master, while various later traditions have proposed alternative genealogies and origins that lack equivalent documentary support. His relationship with Bernard of Clairvaux becomes visible above all in the process of legitimating the new militia and in *De laude novae militiae*. Establishment in the sector of the former Temple complex in Jerusalem—the Haram al-Sharif, identified by the crusaders with the Temple of Solomon—gave the fraternity the name by which it became known. The symbolic value of this location was immense, but it should not be confused with an archaeological appropriation of the biblical Temple or with evidence of secret excavations. Hypotheses concerning searches for the Ark, the Grail, or other objects belong to later traditions and should be studied as cultural reception.

What the documentation allows us to establish is modest, and should be accepted as such: a small fraternity, dependent on accommodation and donations, led by Hugues de Payns and Geoffroi de Saint-Omer, whose exact composition is unknown. This evidential modesty does not weaken the argument of the volume; it confirms it, because the Order's later growth is explained by privileges, patronage, and military utility rather than by any extraordinary quality of its founders. The next chapter examines the figure who provided this fraternity with its theological justification.

Although the knights had been established for nine years, there were still only nine of them. From this point their numbers began to grow and their possessions to multiply. Later, in the time of Pope Eugene, it is said that both the knights and their humble servants, called sergeants, began to place crosses of red cloth on their mantles in order to distinguish themselves from others. They are now so numerous that in this Order today [William was writing c. 1170–74] there are about 300 knights who wear white mantles, besides the brothers, who are almost innumerable. They are said to possess immense estates both here and overseas, so that there is no province in the Christian world that has not granted the aforesaid brothers a share of its goods. Today their wealth is said to equal the treasures of kings. Because they have their headquarters in the royal palace beside the Temple of the Lord, as we have said above, they are called the Brothers of the Militia of the Temple. Although for a long time they maintained their establishment honourably and fulfilled their vocation with sufficient prudence, later, through neglect of humility (which is known as the guardian of all virtues and which, sitting in the lowest place, cannot fall), they withdrew from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, by whom their Order was founded, from whom they received their first benefices, and to whom they denied the obedience rendered by their predecessors. They have also taken tithes and first fruits from the

churches of God, disturbed their possessions, and become a great nuisance²⁹.

²⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, XII, 7 (ed. Huygens, CCCM 63; PL 201, cols. 526–527); trans. from Brundage (1962), pp. 70–73. The passage includes the chronicler's own internal dating (c. 1170–1174) and his critical judgement of the Order, which should be read against the conflict between the Temple and the episcopate of the Latin kingdom, in which William himself had a direct interest as archbishop of Tyre.

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

This chapter argues that Bernard of Clairvaux's contribution to the Temple was strictly discursive in nature and that this is precisely why it was decisive. Bernard did not found the Order, did not draft its Rule, and did not grant it privileges; he constructed the category under which a canonical anomaly—the monk who sheds blood—could be recognised as a vocation. This was a work of language, and it is what made the Templar institutionally thinkable.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), founder and first abbot of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church, and preacher of the Second Crusade, was one of the principal intellectual advocates of the new militia. He was not the institutional “founder” of the Temple, but his intervention helped provide theological justification for a form of life that combined religious profession with armed violence. *De laude novae militiae* directly confronts this tension: it distinguishes ordinary homicide from the killing of an enemy interpreted within a struggle legitimated by faith. The argument must be read within the crusading theology of the twelfth century and not as a general licence for violence. Bernard constructs the Templar as *miles Christi* through discipline, obedience, austerity, and the direction of force towards a religious end. This formulation was decisive for the Order's public identity. Later traditions linking Bernard, Cîteaux, and the Temple with initiatory secrets, encoded architecture, or a quest for the Grail do not belong to the same evidential level; they constitute a much later reception that must be analysed separately.

His intervention can be divided into three operations of different kinds, and they should be treated separately because they did not all have the same scope. The first is theological and discursive: in *De laude novae militiae* he presented the new militia through the category of *milites Christi* and formulated a defence of the compatibility between religious profession and armed combat within the crusading framework. This construction did not grant the Templars a verifiable “divine mission” as a historical fact; it produced a religious justification

of their function. The vocabulary of obedience, discipline, austerity, and spiritual combat linked knightly practices with monastic categories and helped define a differentiated institutional identity.

The second operation is institutional and had a more limited scope than is often assumed. Bernard, one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of his time, participated in the environment that led to recognition at Troyes in January 1129. The process cannot be reduced to his personal persuasion of Pope Honorius II. The formalisation of the Rule provided a normative framework for an already existing religious and military institution and contributed to its ecclesiastical recognition. *De laude novae militiae* reinforced this legitimacy through the figure of the *miles Christi*: combat in the Holy Land was represented as religious service subject to obedience, not as the autonomous exercise of knightly violence. The effectiveness of this formulation lay in transforming a tension—monk and warrior—into an institutional identity intelligible within crusading culture.

The third operation is properly rhetorical and concerns the content of the treatise. In *De laude novae militiae*, addressed to the new militia, Bernard exalted the Templars as guardians of the Holy Sepulchre, the most sacred place in Christianity, and urged them to live under an austere rule devoted to the protection of the faith. In this text, Bernard presents them as men whose mission encompassed both the physical protection of pilgrims and the spiritual struggle against evil, securing the Christian presence in Jerusalem and other holy territories.

The spirituality promoted by Bernard helped consolidate the representation of the Templars as armed religious, subject to prayer, obedience, and discipline in addition to military obligations. This combination was central to the Order's identity and to its legitimacy before benefactors and ecclesiastical authorities. The formula "soldiers of Christ" accurately summarises the argument of *De laude novae militiae*, but should be presented as a Bernardine category rather than as a composite quotation lacking an exact textual reference. The same caution applies to later expressions that turn Bernard into the guarantor of a supposed secret tradition: these belong to the reception

of the Temple, not to evidence concerning its twelfth-century institutional programme.

In summary, Bernard of Clairvaux contributed decisively to the spiritual legitimation of the new militia and to the formulation of the ideal of the miles Christi as applied to the Templars; this formulation is a historiographical synthesis, not a literal quotation from Bernard³⁰

It is necessary to specify exactly what this theological operation consists of, because the very possibility of the military order as an institutional form depends on it. The obstacle Bernard must overcome is canonical, not rhetorical: religious profession entailed a prohibition on shedding blood, and no argument concerning the Temple's military usefulness could by itself remove that incompatibility. The solution offered in chapter three of *De laude novae militiae* is not to authorise the monk to kill, but to redefine the object of the act. The knight of Christ who kills the evildoer, Bernard writes, is not a homicide but—in the term coined for the occasion—a malicide: a killer of evil. The neologism does not embellish the argument; it constitutes it.

The shift has precise consequences. If the object of the blow is not the man but the evil he embodies, the death inflicted ceases to belong to the order of homicide and passes into that of executing a sentence that is not human. Bernard adds the symmetrical corollary: the Templar who dies in battle suffers no loss but gains a benefit, so the operation is advantageous in either outcome. This double movement—removing responsibility from the violent act and positively valuing one's own death—produces a figure that did not exist in the previous institutional repertoire: the religious whose observance is fulfilled through the exercise of arms.

³⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae*, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, vol. 3. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963. The decisive formulation of the treatise occurs in *De laude*, III, 4: the knight who kills the evildoer is not a homicide but, in Bernard's coined expression, a malicida—a killer of evil. The shift is theological before it is rhetorical: it transfers the object of the violent act from the person to the evil that person embodies, thereby resolving the canonical incompatibility between religious profession and bloodshed. On the dating, which ranges between c. 1128 and c. 1136, see Barber (1994).

From the perspective of this volume, *De laude* should not be read as a description of the Temple but as an instrument for producing legitimacy. Bernard does not report what the Templars were; he constructs the category under which they could be recognised. The treatise therefore possesses discursive, not legal, authority: it grants no privileges, regulates no conduct, and binds no one. Its effectiveness consists in having supplied the Order, its benefactors, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the vocabulary through which a canonical anomaly could be described as a vocation. Distinguishing this function from that of papal privileges, which did produce legal effects, is essential if we are not to conflate the different levels at which Templar power operated.

The chapter establishes a distinction employed systematically throughout the rest of the volume: the discursive authority of *De laude novae militiae* does not produce legal effects, whereas papal privileges do. Confusing these levels leads to attributing to Bernard a power over the Order that he never possessed, and provides the starting point for traditions that made him the guarantor of secret knowledge. The next chapter examines the reforming environment in which this language was formed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CÎTEAUX

This chapter defines the limits of a relationship that esoteric literature has exploited with particular insistence. Its thesis is that the Temple's debt to Cîteaux lies in vocabulary, discipline, and reforming prestige, and that no institutional dependence existed between the two orders: different rules, different governments, different purposes. Establishing this boundary precisely is what later makes it possible to evaluate genealogies that deny it.

The Cistercian Order, founded by Saint Robert at the Abbey of Cîteaux in France in 1098 as a renewal and recovery of Benedictine ideals and the purity of the original rule, supplied the Temple with the vocabulary, discipline, and reforming prestige through which the new militia could present itself to the Church, above all through the mediation of Bernard of Clairvaux. This debt was one of language and method, not of institutional filiation: the Temple emerged with its own rule, hierarchy, and purposes.

Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian environment formed part of the context of religious reform within which the new Templar militia obtained legitimacy. This relationship does not make the Temple an institutional extension of Cîteaux: both organisations possessed rules, functions, and structures of their own. Austerity, discipline, and reforming rhetoric provide points of contact, while the Temple's military function introduces a decisive difference. Studying these affinities helps explain how an armed institution could be presented through monastic vocabulary. Esoteric connections later attributed to Cîteaux, the Temple, the Grail, or secret architectural programmes lack a sufficient medieval documentary chain and must be treated as constructions of reception, not as causal foundations of the Order.

It is thus established that the Cistercian environment provided the Temple with the form in which it could describe itself, not the substance of what it was. This distinction has an immediate consequence for the final chapter of the volume: traditions linking Cîteaux, the Temple, the Grail, and encoded architecture operate upon

a real affinity of language and turn it into a hidden filiation. The next chapter examines what did produce legal effects upon the Order.

PAPAL LEGITIMATION AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

The thesis of this chapter is that Templar autonomy was cumulative, legally constructed, and at all times reversible. It was neither an original attribute nor a single privilege, but the sedimented result of successive bulls that expanded different spheres of immunity. Stating it in these terms matters because an autonomy constructed by legal instruments can be dismantled by legal instruments, and that is exactly what occurred in 1312.

Templar autonomy was not an original and unlimited attribute, but the cumulative result of ecclesiastical recognition, papal privileges, patronage, and administrative capacity. The following pages examine this process to show how a religious institution could become directly subject to the papacy while simultaneously developing considerable independence from certain local authorities.

In historiographical terms, the Temple's effective institutional autonomy must be distinguished from maximalist interpretations of a supposed political hegemony. The singularity of the Order lay in a combination without equivalent in the Europe of its time, not in sovereignty comparable to that of a monarchy or in a "hidden government" over the West: papal dependence, transregional establishment, immunities, property, military capacity, and its own chain of command. These characteristics could reduce the intervention of bishops or lords in specific spheres and generate jurisdictional conflicts. The symbolic cohesion of habit and Rule did not eliminate social, ethnic, or political differences among members and benefactors. "Transregional institutional network" describes its functioning better than presenting it as a hidden power destined to replace secular authorities.

Pope Innocent II played a decisive role in consolidating the Order of the Temple within the medieval ecclesiastical structure. Through the bull *Omne datum optimum* of 1139, the pope consolidated a set of privileges that reinforced the Order's direct dependence on the

Apostolic See and limited the intervention of local ecclesiastical authorities. Through this privilege, Innocent II recognised the Templars as an order operating under direct papal protection, granting them a special status within the Church, securing the Order's autonomy from local authorities, and protecting its extensive possessions in Europe and the Holy Land.

This papal recognition was significant because it enabled the Templars to operate in a context in which relations between the Church and feudal authorities were often tense and complex. As Barber and Bate (2002) show, the regime of papal privileges decisively initiated in 1139 was an important step in securing official recognition of the Order and protecting it against attempts at interference by monarchs or feudal lords whose interests might conflict with its own. The guarantee of independence granted by Innocent II allowed the Templars to expand their network of fortresses and properties without fear of losing control to local powers.

This privileged status also allowed them to accumulate extensive estates, revenues, and goods, giving them considerable political and economic influence in many European territories. According to Barber (1994), papal protection was essential to the growth of the Order and also gave it freedom to carry out military and financial activities without the restrictions faced by other religious orders or institutions in a dynamic and conflict-ridden medieval context.

Innocent II's support operated on two levels: it consolidated the Order of the Temple and helped construct an image of the Templars as indispensable defenders of the Christian faith. This position enabled them to establish a network of allies that included other ecclesiastical groups and monarchs who shared common interests in the defence of Christendom, as well as in preserving trade routes and controlling the Holy Places.

By ensuring that the Order operated with considerable legal autonomy from many local authorities, papal protection enabled it to expand its holdings in Europe and the Holy Land. This expansion gave

it access to substantial patrimonial resources and enabled it, through them, to play an important role in the military conflicts of the period. As Barber (1994) and Nicholson (2001) document, the Templars participated actively in the crusades while extending their presence across Europe, where they built fortresses and other strategic facilities that served both as bases for military operations and as refuges for crusaders.

As the Templars became established as protectors of Christian pilgrims and guardians of the Holy Sepulchre, their image was increasingly associated with the struggle against adversaries defined by crusading discourse as enemies of Christendom, reinforcing their status as soldiers of Christ. The Order became a symbol of Christian struggle, especially during the crusades, where it played a prominent role in defending routes, fortresses, and positions of the Latin states. It did not participate in the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, which preceded the Order's formation around 1119–1120.

Its influence, however, was not limited to crusader territories. In Europe, the Templars also became important actors in internal political disputes, and their independence within the Church allowed them to align their interests with those of other sectors of Christian power. The Templars were at once military leaders, administrators, lenders, and financial agents, which enabled them to construct networks of alliances that reinforced their power. As Barber (1994) explains, their ability to operate outside the direct control of local monarchies allowed them to become an important economic actor in medieval Europe, especially through the creation of a network of houses and mechanisms of deposit, credit, and fund transfer that facilitated long-distance financial operations; describing this as a modern banking network would be anachronistic.

The chapter establishes that the Temple's position depended entirely on the Apostolic See and that its independence from bishops, nobles, and monarchs was the counterpart of that dependence. Here lies the paradox organising the rest of the volume: the same bond that shielded the Order for a century and a half left it, when that bond

turned against it, without any authority to which it could appeal. The following chapters examine how this autonomy operated in practice.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE: SERVANTS OF OTHERS

This chapter reads Templar regulation as a device for producing subjects. Its thesis is that the Rule does not describe the Templar but manufactures him: it defines who may enter, what he must eat, how he must dress, when he must sleep, with whom he may speak, and what he loses if he disobeys. The obedience expressed in the formula opening these pages—the man who is master of himself must become the servant of another—is the mechanism by which an aristocratic warrior becomes a member of a religious corporation.

“You who are master of yourself must make yourself the servant of another,” the Templar normative tradition states in describing the obedience required of the brother.³¹ Other prescriptions regulate movement, sleep, fasting, food, and readiness for service. Templar life was therefore shaped by a discipline comparable in several respects to that of other religious communities, with the particular addition of military preparation and obligations.

Hugues de Payns, the first master, devoted much of his activity during the 1120s to obtaining recognition, patronage, and recruits for the new fraternity. The Council of Troyes, held in January 1129 according to the chronology followed here, provided the framework for the formalisation of the Rule. Hugues died around 1136; the date of 1139 at Reims lacks a secure basis³².

³¹ The formula belongs to the Templar normative stratum concerning profession and obedience; see *La Règle du Temple*, ed. Curzon (1886), and Upton-Ward’s translation with article numbering (1997). It should be recalled that the corpus is cited by article rather than page, according to the criterion set out in this volume’s note on sources.

³² The chronology of the masters of the Temple was established on a prosopographical basis by Bulst-Thiele (1974). Hugues de Payns died around 1136 and was succeeded by Robert de Craon, under whose mastership *Omne datum optimum* was obtained in 1139. The date 1139 associated with Reims, which circulates in popular literature, lacks

The regulations were not fixed all at once. French versions, statutes, and retraits were added to the Latin Rule during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. *Omne datum optimum* of 1139 was a decisive papal privilege for the Order's legal position, but not a simple textual "amendment" to the Rule. Nor is there sufficient basis for attributing a normative revision of 1131 to the Patriarch of Constantinople³³.

Templar discipline combined poverty, chastity, and obedience with rules concerning food, clothing, property, hierarchy, arms, mounts, and sanctions. Poverty applied to members as an individual regime of possession; the corporation could receive and administer lands, houses, weapons, horses, and revenues. This distinction helps avoid the false contradiction between an ideal of poverty and patrimonial growth.

The habit functioned both as a material rule and as a sign of belonging. Non-knightly brothers could wear dark garments, while the white mantle became associated with knights; the red cross was incorporated later. Loss of the habit could form part of the disciplinary regime and carried a powerful symbolic dimension. Rules governing food and fasting, the regulation of offences, and bodily discipline reveal an institution concerned with converting individual conduct into uniform practices. There is no need to describe this regime as a "rudimentary penal code": it was a monastic-military disciplinary system adapted to its context.

Admission was subject to conditions concerning legal freedom, prior commitments, health, debt, ecclesiastical status, and capacity to

documentary support and probably results from confusing the year of the papal privilege with an alleged conciliar act.

³³ The attribution lacks support and also presents an institutional improbability: in 1131 the patriarchate of Constantinople had been in schism with Rome since 1054 and possessed no jurisdiction over a Latin order subject to the Apostolic See. The later development of the Templar normative corpus—the French version, retraits and penances—can be followed in Curzon (1886) and Upton-Ward (1997).

assume the Order's obligations. References to "secret illnesses" should not be anachronistically associated with syphilis. The exclusion or restriction of certain contacts with women formed part of a discipline of chastity expressed in particularly severe terms by the regulations. Likewise, rules concerning excommunication and absolution reflect the relationship between admission to the house and ecclesiastical status.

Social hierarchy also structured the institution. The rank of knight required recognised knightly status, while sergeants came from different social strata and performed military and administrative functions of their own. This distinction should not be translated into a simplistic opposition between "virtuous" nobles and subordinate commoners, nor used to attribute a supposedly quarrelsome or libertine temperament to members without prosopographical evidence. The Rule was designed precisely to transform the habits of the warrior aristocracy through corporate obedience. Combat provisions sought to limit retreat and regulate the conduct of the contingent, although transmitted formulations must be read within their normative versions rather than as literal descriptions of every battle. The comparison with a supposed Nizari rule against retreating before seven opponents lacks documentary support here and forms no part of the Templar Rule. Capture, ransom, and apostasy were also regulated, particularly sensitive problems for an order engaged in recurrent warfare in the Levant.

Habit, banners, seals, hair, beard, weapons, mounts, and equipment are minutely regulated. The baussant, the bicoloured banner associated with the Order,³⁴ and the cross helped produce a recognisable visual

³⁴ The regulation of the banner, recognition signs and equipment appears among the hierarchical statutes; see Upton-Ward (1997). The form and meaning of the baussant have been interpreted in various ways in modern literature, whereas the medieval documentation describes primarily its operational use on campaign rather than a codified symbolism.

identity. Provisions concerning hunting reveal a desire to limit a habitual aristocratic practice; the exception concerning the lion must be interpreted within the symbolic and practical framework of the Rule itself. The retraits gradually expanded regulation of offices, campaigning, discipline, and the reception of brothers. Admission included questioning concerning freedom, debts, health, and prior obligations, the reading or exposition of the rule, promises of obedience, and a ritual of incorporation. The kiss of peace and other ceremonial formulae belonged to broader medieval religious repertoires and do not in themselves constitute evidence of secret initiations.

Taken as a whole, the regulations reveal an institution that converted monastic categories—obedience, chastity, renunciation, and service—into a technology of discipline applicable to a transregional military organisation. This is the central analytical point: the Rule does not merely describe the Templar; it defines the conditions through which a knight can be transformed into a member of a religious corporation with its own hierarchy, signs, obligations, and sanctions.

The new Templar takes his vows, and that is all. Very different are the later confessions made by many knights during the proceedings in France between 1307 and 1314 concerning the admission protocol, secret ceremonies, and alleged heretical rites. These confessions must be read critically: torture, coercion, and threats were used in France, testimony was not uniform across Europe, and some accused men recanted. But for now—in the early twelfth century—the knights bow their heads and reflect on the words defining the arduous life ahead of them as soldiers of Christ: “You who are master of yourself must make yourself the servant of another,” like the Roman pontiff (“Servant of the servants of God”) and Jesus Christ himself: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). It is, in short, a religious experience: abandonment of the world’s vanity, pursuit of ascetic discipline, dedication to the service of the unfortunate and unprotected, and defence of the values and places held most precious by Christendom.

The chapter establishes that Templar discipline operated through conversion rather than repression: it transformed pre-existing aristocratic habits—the handling of weapons, personal loyalty, care of the horse—into regulated religious observance. This explains both its effectiveness and its fragility. A regime that governs the details of everyday life within a closed chapter provides anyone who chooses to accuse it with an almost unlimited surface for suspicion. The next chapter examines the textual architecture of this normative system.

THE RULE: CORPUS, STRATA, AND DISCIPLINE

To speak of “the Templar Rule” in the singular is a convenient shorthand that obscures the object. What historiography designates by that name is not a single text but a stratified normative corpus, formed by layers written over more than a century and a half and transmitted together in the manuscripts. Distinguishing these strata is not a matter of philological erudition: it is necessary if practices documented only in 1260 are not to be attributed to the Temple of 1129, or a late provision read as though it expressed the founders’ intention. This chapter examines the architecture of the corpus, the logic of its growth, and the type of institution produced by its language.

The oldest stratum is the primitive Latin Rule, approved at the Council of Troyes in January 1129 and consisting of just over seventy articles. Its content is recognisably monastic: liturgical hours, fasts, silence in the refectory, uniformity of dress, prohibition of individual property, and regimes of admission and expulsion. Specifically military provisions are few and elementary. This fact is significant in itself, because it shows that at the moment of ecclesiastical recognition the new militia described itself through a vocabulary of religious observance rather than military organisation: the institutional novelty had to be formulated in the only language the Church was in a position to recognise.

A French translation produced in the following decades expanded the text and began adapting it to conditions in the Levant. It was later supplemented by the so-called *retraits* or hierarchical statutes, written around the second half of the twelfth century, which regulate in detail the Order’s offices—master, seneschal, marshal, commanders of provinces and houses—the allocation of mounts, equipment, and personnel to each rank, the division of booty, and conduct on campaign. Successive later layers incorporated the regime of penances, conventual life, the holding of ordinary chapters, a casuistic development of offences and sanctions, and finally the section devoted to the reception of brothers. In the standard French edition established

by Curzon (1886) and translated into English by Upton-Ward (1997), the corpus reaches almost seven hundred numbered articles.

The manner in which the corpus grew is as revealing as its content. The regulations are not rewritten; they accumulate. New layers do not repeal earlier ones but specify, qualify, or contradict them without saying so, and the manuscripts transmit them together. This produces a text in which the programmatic austerity of Troyes coexists with the minute administration of resources in the retraits, spiritual exhortation with inventories of harness. A modern reader tends to interpret this coexistence as incoherence or as evidence of the relaxation of primitive ideals. It is more accurate to read it as the sedimented record of an institution that solved successive problems without possessing a mechanism of codification through which it could reorder what had already been established.

From this structure follows a rule of reading applied systematically throughout this volume. Any claim about “what the Rule established” must indicate the stratum to which the provision invoked belongs. A rule concerning the division of booty or the number of horses assigned to the marshal does not describe the fraternity of Hugues de Payns; it describes an order already equipped with provinces, a treasury, and armies. Conversely, the individual poverty prescribed at Troyes is not contradicted by later corporate wealth, because the two provisions operate on different subjects: the first on the brother, the second on the house. The contradiction exploited by popular literature—poor monks governing an immense patrimony—disappears as soon as attention is paid to the normative level at which each precept is formulated.

The section devoted to the reception of brothers deserves separate consideration, because it is the exact point at which the normative corpus and the judicial dossier of 1307 intersect. The Rule describes an admission procedure organised in three stages: questioning about impediments—marital ties, previous vows, debts, servile status, illness, membership of another order—the exposition of the obligations and hardships of Templar life, and the profession itself, with promises of

obedience, chastity, and poverty and the delivery of the habit. The act took place in chapter, behind closed doors and before the brothers of the house. This privacy is the key to the later problem.

The privacy of chapter was neither a Templar anomaly nor an indication of esotericism: conventual chapters of religious orders were ordinarily held without outsiders present because offences, sanctions, and internal affairs were discussed there. The Temple, however, lacked one circumstance possessed by other orders: most of its members were not clerics, and their lives unfolded among armed laymen with whom they shared social space but not institutional regime. Chapter secrecy, perfectly canonical, was thus exposed to the imagination of those who could not witness it. In 1307 the accusation did not need to invent the existence of a reserved ceremony; it merely had to give heretical content to a privacy prescribed by the Order's own regulations and publicly known. The Rule, a document written to govern, became retrospectively circumstantial evidence for something it did not contain.

This is the analytical point of interest to this volume. The Templar normative corpus does not merely describe the conduct of its members: it produces the category of the Templar, defines who belongs and who does not, distributes time, food, mounts, and punishments, and establishes the terms under which an infraction can be recognised as such. In the most literal sense, it is a technology of government. Its effectiveness is measured by its capacity to sustain for almost two centuries an organisation dispersed across Jerusalem, Cyprus, Aragon, Provence, Champagne, and England under a single regime of obedience. Its vulnerability is revealed in 1307, when the same device that guaranteed internal cohesion—the closed chapter, reserved discipline, unquestioning obedience—provided the accusation with the exact form of the offence imputed to it.

ECONOMY, PROPERTY, AND CREDIT

The Temple's financial capacity is mentioned in almost all literature on the Order and explained in very little of it. It is usually condensed into a formula—"the Templars were the bankers of Europe"—that substitutes a modern analogy for description and closes precisely the question that matters. This chapter proposes the reverse: to reconstruct the concrete mechanism and show that Templar financial sophistication was not a commercial project but the technical solution to a logistical problem that no other institution in Latin Christendom confronted on the same scale.

The problem can be stated precisely. The Order fought in the Levant and was financed in the West. Its resources came from donations, rents, seigniorial rights, and agricultural estates dispersed across Portugal, the Iberian kingdoms, the French Midi, Champagne, Flanders, England, Germany, and Italy; its expenditure was concentrated on garrisons, fortresses, horses, weapons, and men two thousand kilometres away, in a region accessible only by sea and seasonally. Turning Provençal harvests and English rents into heavy cavalry quartered at Acre required a system of collection, accounting, conversion, and transport that no twelfth-century European monarchy possessed. The Templar financial network was, above all, the response to this requirement.

The basic unit of this network was the commandery. Far from the image of the frontier castle, most western Templar houses were rural estates: arable land, vineyards, mills, ovens, livestock, grazing rights, rents, a chapel, and a handful of brothers, in many cases sergeants rather than knights. Commanderies were grouped into bailiwicks and these into provinces, each under a commander and subject to periodic visitation. A fraction of the net product of each house—fixed by the Order's custom at around one third and known as the *responsio*—was to be remitted to the central house in the East. This regular flow, not the legend of the treasure, is what materially sustained the Templar presence in the Levant.

The *responsio* required three capacities that the Order developed out of necessity. The first was accounting: to demand a third one must know how much each house produces, implying records, rendering of accounts, and a procedure of internal audit through visitations. The second was conversion: income arrived in kind and in heterogeneous local currencies and had to be converted into means of payment usable in the eastern Mediterranean. The third was secure transport: moving coin along overland routes was risky and expensive, making it preferable to move payment orders and settle balances between houses. Everything else arose from these three capacities, combined with a network of fortified establishments and a corporate reputation for reliability.

On this basis the Order provided third parties with services that were not part of its mission. Deposit was the most elementary: individuals, prelates, and monarchs entrusted Templar houses with money, jewels, charters, and documents, attracted by the physical security of the premises and the legal immunity protecting them. The Paris Temple and the New Temple in London became first-rank depositaries in this way, and the French royal treasury was kept at the former for much of the thirteenth century. To these activities were added the administration of others' revenues, execution of payments on behalf of third parties, custody of sums intended for crusading, and advances of funds secured against future income. The credit granted to Louis VII in 1148, discussed above, and Templar participation in the payment of Louis IX's ransom in 1250, related by Joinville, mark the two chronological ends of this practice.

It is nevertheless important to specify what this activity was not. There was no fractional-reserve deposit system: the Order did not lend the money it held in custody while creating additional means of payment. There was no declared interest, because the canonical prohibition of usury required remuneration for credit to be structured through other legal forms—temporary assignment of revenues, exchange-rate differences, penalties for delay. There was no centralised accounting in the manner of an Italian commercial house, but rather

an aggregation of provincial records. Above all, there was no profit-making purpose: surpluses were not accumulated for investment but drained towards the Levant. Calling this device a bank introduces nineteenth-century categories into a thirteenth-century operation and, worse, conceals its distinctive feature.

That distinctive feature was the conjunction, unusual in medieval Europe, of four attributes within a single institution: transregional establishment, jurisdictional immunity, military capacity of its own, and corporate discipline. A Lombard merchant possessed a network but no fortresses or exemptions; a monastery possessed property and immunity but neither network nor arms; a monarchy possessed force but no presence beyond its borders. The Temple combined all four. Its advantage did not lie in superior financial technique—procedures of exchange and transfer were known and others practised them better—but in being the only organisation capable of guaranteeing an operation on a continental scale with its own resources and without dependence on a territorial power.

This reconstruction has a consequence affecting the final chapter in the history of the Order. If Templar financial capacity was instrumental to the eastern mission, the loss of Acre in 1291 deprived the Temple not only of a territory but of the purpose that justified the existence of its entire western apparatus. A network of commanderies remitting one third of its revenues to a front that no longer existed became property without a destination and therefore an available object. The offensive of 1307 is not explained by the Order's wealth, which had been notorious for a century and a half without provoking anything similar; it is better explained by the moment when that wealth ceased to have a recognisable function and became exposed to the question of its destination.

THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND THE MILITARY ORDERS

The Iberian Peninsula constitutes the second theatre of Templar history and, for the purposes of this volume, the most instructive. This is not only because the Order operated there for almost two centuries on an active frontier, but because the outcome of the process begun in 1307 was radically different in the Iberian kingdoms from that in France. The divergence provides something historical research rarely obtains: a control case. The Templars of Aragon, Castile, and Portugal belonged to the same Order, followed the same Rule, conducted the same closed-door reception ceremony, and were subject to the same papal privileges as those in France. The only thing that changed was the procedure to which they were subjected. The outcome changed with it.

Templar establishment in the Crown of Aragon had an exceptional starting point. Alfonso I the Battler provided in his will, drawn up in 1131 and confirmed shortly before his death, that his kingdoms should pass to the Temple, the Hospital, and the Holy Sepulchre. The clause was legally extraordinary and politically impracticable, and it was never executed; but its negotiated settlement, completed in 1143 through the agreement reached with Ramon Berenguer IV, gave the Temple castles, revenues, exemptions, and a share in future conquests that established its position in the Crown. The Order did not obtain a kingdom; it obtained a stable partnership with Catalan-Aragonese expansion. Upon this basis rose Monzón, Miravet, Gardeny, Tortosa, Peñíscola, and a dense network of commanderies reconstructed by Forey (1973) from archival documentation.

In Portugal, the trajectory was earlier and more organic. Countess Teresa's donation of Soure in 1128 preceded recognition at Troyes, and the Order participated in the conquest of Santarém and the capture of Lisbon in 1147. Construction of the castle and convent of Tomar, begun around 1160 under the provincial master Gualdim Pais, gave the Portuguese Temple a centre that would prove decisive in the

fourteenth century. In Castile and León, by contrast, the Templar presence was smaller, and defence of the frontier fell to orders founded locally: Calatrava from 1158, Santiago from 1170, and Alcántara from the following decades. This matters because it disproves the idea of Templar hegemony in Iberia: across most of Castile the Temple was a secondary actor beside institutions born from the local political framework itself.

The application of Iberian crusading privileges to these campaigns—privileges, indulgences, and the language of holy war transferred from the Levant—integrated Iberian expansion into papal policy and placed both fronts on an equivalent legal footing. The practical consequence was that the Temple could employ resources justified by the eastern mission in the peninsula and, conversely, draw from Iberian conquests revenues used to sustain the Holy Land. The Iberian frontier was therefore not a minor theatre of Templar activity: it was the only one in which the Order combined warfare, colonisation, settlement, and seigneurial administration over territory that remained durably under Christian control.

The proceedings of 1307 encountered in this configuration an obstacle absent in France. Iberian monarchs had no reason to destroy an institution that remained militarily useful on a still-active frontier, and every reason to ensure that its property did not leave their kingdoms. James II of Aragon proceeded with arrests, but the Aragonese Templars refused to surrender and resisted in their fortresses—Monzón, Miravet, Ascó, Castellote, Chalamera, Cantavieja—for more than a year before capitulating in 1309. Denis of Portugal chose to seize the property in the name of the Crown rather than persecute the brothers. Ferdinand IV of Castile imprisoned the Templars but obtained no confessions.

The judicial outcomes were unequivocal. Councils held at Medina del Campo and Salamanca in 1310 acquitted the Templars of Castile, León, and Portugal; the Portuguese commissioners reported that there were no grounds for the accusation; the provincial council of Tarragona declared them innocent in 1312. These results were not an

Iberian exception: at Mainz the council proclaimed the Order free of guilt, at Ravenna the use of torture was rejected and even those who had confessed through fear of it were acquitted, and in Cyprus, Trier, Messina, and Bologna no evidence was obtained. The map of convictions coincides with extraordinary precision with the map of the systematic use of judicial torture.

The redistribution of property followed an equally differentiated course. *Ad providam* expressly excluded from the general transfer to the Hospitallers the goods situated in the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Portugal, and Majorca, whose fate the Holy See reserved to itself. The solution came under John XXII and consisted in creating national successor institutions: the Order of Montesa, erected by bull of 10 June 1317 for the defence of Valencia's southern frontier and placed under Cistercian observance, and the Order of Christ, instituted by the bull *Ad ea ex quibus* of 14 March 1319 at the request of King Denis, initially based at Castro Marim and later at Tomar, heir to the property, privileges, and personnel of the Portuguese Temple.

The significance of this last point should be measured carefully. In Portugal, seven years after the suppression, the same men, in the same castles and with the same property, continued their activities under another name and with explicit papal recognition. There was no clandestinity, no secret continuity, and no initiatory survival: there was a public, documented, and fully traceable legal procedure. In the light of the Order of Christ, the legend of a hidden survival of the Temple is not merely unproven but unnecessary: continuity existed and is recorded in the papal registers. That later culture preferred to imagine it underground says more about the narrative needs of modernity than about the fourteenth century.

The Iberian dossier ultimately requires the question of the trial to be reformulated. If the same normative corpus, the same admission rite, and the same corporate structure produced mass confessions of heresy in France and unanimous acquittals in Aragon, Castile, Portugal, Cyprus, Germany, and Italy, the explanatory variable cannot lie in the Order's practices. It lies in procedure. This is the strongest evidential

conclusion the documentation permits, and it rests on comparison among jurisdictions rather than on a moral judgement about Philip IV's intentions.

THE ORDER AS A POLITICAL ACTOR IN THE LEVANT

This chapter tests Templar autonomy against events. Its thesis is that legal independence did not produce political isolation but a negotiating position, and that the Temple's relations with the monarchy of Jerusalem, Frederick II, the other orders, and Muslim powers must be reconstructed episode by episode, because they follow no constant line either of alliance or of conflict.

The Order's autonomy acquires meaning only when observed in relation to other actors. In the Levant, Templars, the monarchy of Jerusalem, emperors, nobles, Hospitallers, and Muslim powers alternated among cooperation, competition, conflict, and negotiation. This section examines those variations so that the Temple's legal independence is not confused with political isolation or with a uniform agenda towards all the powers around it.

Its ranks included knights who educated princes, and over the years the French, German, Castilian, and Catalan nobility received Templars into their circles. Kings, emperors, and popes protected, used, or connected themselves with the Order directly or indirectly according to specific political circumstances. This web of relationships established a network of support and influence that explains part of its expansion and helps account for the later survival of its memory, some of its property, and certain members within other institutions, without demonstrating clandestine continuity of the Order after 1312.

Frederick II Hohenstaufen maintained a conflictual and changing relationship with the Order of the Temple. As emperor and leader of the Sixth Crusade, he intervened directly in the politics of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and had to negotiate with military orders possessing interests, fortresses, and dependencies of their own. Templar autonomy could come into tension with imperial authority, but the relationship was not one of permanent opposition: it depended on specific disputes over strategy, jurisdiction, and political control in the Latin East.

During the Sixth Crusade (1228–1229), Frederick obtained through negotiation with al-Kamil an agreement that restored Christian access to Jerusalem for a limited period. The Templars expressed reservations about and came into conflict with imperial policy, partly because of their direct relationship with the papacy and partly because of strategic differences. Their position was that of a body with its own jurisdiction, interests, and loyalties, rather than that of strategic allies of Frederick or instruments of his plans. Their cooperation or resistance must be reconstructed episode by episode, with attention to competition among Latin powers and to the emperor's complex position in relation to the papacy.

The relationship illustrates a broader institutional problem. The Templars possessed legal autonomy, resources, and military capacity, but operated within a system of multiple dependencies. Frederick could value their usefulness while at the same time challenging decisions that interfered with his policy. On the Templar side, papal loyalty and the Order's own interests limited any automatic subordination to the emperor. The phrase "a power within a power" may function as a metaphor, but it should not replace analysis of concrete competences, privileges, and conflicts.

The confrontations between Frederick II and the Temple therefore reflect the overlapping jurisdictions characteristic of the Latin East. The Order's autonomy could frustrate imperial objectives, while the emperor's policy could conflict with papal decisions and the interests of the military orders. Nicholson (2001) and Barber (1994) allow these tensions to be situated within crusading politics without turning them into a constant ideological opposition. Summary formulations of this relationship should be presented as historiographical synthesis, not as literal quotations attributed to Frederick II himself.

In summary, the relationship between Frederick II and the Temple was conflictual and changeable, particularly in the context of the Sixth

Crusade and the political disputes of the Latin East; it should not be reduced either to stable alliance or uniform hostility³⁵

The monarchy and elites of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, during the early phase of the Templar presence in the Levant, recognised the Order's strategic and military value and regarded it as an important ally in the kingdom's defence. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including the decades after the Third Crusade, amid political instability and military pressure from different Muslim powers, the Templars played an important role in defending Christian territories, especially on the military front, protecting routes to the holy places and the kingdom's principal cities.

According to Barber (1994), the Templars were initially valued for their capacity to organise and mobilise rapidly in defence of the kingdom, providing military and financial resources important to the survival of the crusading enterprise in the East. Their network of fortresses and solid infrastructure in frontier regions gave them effective control over important routes of trade and communication, which in turn contributed to their influence in the kingdom's politics.

As the Order became consolidated, its autonomy could generate friction with different actors within the kingdom's monarchy and nobility. Papal protection and the ability to administer fortresses and resources of its own limited the intervention of local authorities in specific spheres. Templar influence, however, was not equivalent to permanent participation in every decision of the kingdom or to parallel sovereignty. Cooperation, competition, and conflict varied according to reign, war, and territory.

The progressive loss of Latin territories altered the context in which the military orders operated. After the fall of Acre in 1291, there was no longer a territorial monarchy of Jerusalem in the Levant comparable to that of earlier centuries. The Temple transferred its eastern centre to Cyprus and took part in debates over new strategies and the future of the military orders. Earlier tensions with the monarchy of Jerusalem

³⁵ Barber (1994); Nicholson (2001).

form part of its institutional history, but should not be mechanically projected onto the European crisis of 1307–1312.

The frictions of the Latin East do not constitute a linear cause of suppression. The process that ended the Temple developed chiefly in western Europe and depended on a specifically French conjuncture. The eastern experience helps explain the Order's autonomy and reputation; institutional dismantling, by contrast, requires analysis of accusations, judicial procedure, papal intervention, and royal pressure.

The relationship between the monarchy of Jerusalem and the Temple passed through phases of close collaboration and conflict. Templar autonomy could be useful to the kingdom's defence while also producing disputes when the priorities of the Order and the Crown did not coincide.

In summary, the monarchy of Jerusalem and the military orders maintained relationships of cooperation, dependence, and conflict that varied by reign and circumstance. The military usefulness of the Templars did not eliminate the tensions generated by their autonomy and institutional interests³⁶

Templar autonomy could generate tensions with monarchy, nobility, ecclesiastical authorities, or other orders, but the perception of the institution as a "threat" was neither constant nor uniform. Its privileges limited certain local jurisdictions and its property gave it capacity for action, while its military usefulness encouraged cooperation and patronage. The relationship must be reconstructed through specific conjunctures, avoiding the transformation of documented conflicts into a structural hostility of the entire Christian world towards the Temple.

Barber (1994) characterises the Temple as a corporation endowed with exceptional autonomy within Latin Christendom. Its capacity to administer land, mobilise resources, and maintain fortresses gave the Order considerable room for action. That room could generate tensions with local authorities, but should not be turned into a

³⁶ Barber (1994).

narrative of inevitable confrontation with the kings of Jerusalem. Autonomy was functional to the Order's mission and coexisted with papal dependence, aristocratic patronage, and military cooperation.

During the final decades of the Latin presence in the Levant, military defeats and progressive territorial losses intensified debates over strategy and responsibility. The fall of Acre in 1291 marked the end of the principal continental base of the Latin states. The military orders, including the Temple, were criticised for rivalries and for the failure of the crusading project, but remained important military actors. There is no basis for claiming that Templar autonomy was universally perceived as a direct threat to a monarchy of Jerusalem that by then had lost its continental territory. The Order's later problem shifted largely to the European debate over the reform, merger, or usefulness of the military orders.

Tensions between the military orders and secular powers reveal a broader problem of medieval politics: the coexistence of overlapping jurisdictions and multiple loyalties. In the Templar case, direct dependence on the papacy, privileges, and the administration of extensive property could generate friction, but they also made its military function possible. No direct causal line should be drawn from these eastern frictions to the suppression of 1312. The process that ended the Temple originated in a specifically French conjuncture and developed through accusations, inquisitorial procedures, papal intervention, and royal pressure.

The Templars' relationship with Muslim powers was equally variable. On campaign they acted as military adversaries of different dynasties; at other times they participated, as part of the political system of the Latin states, in truces, embassies, prisoner exchanges, and negotiations. The existence of diplomacy does not turn adversaries into permanent allies or permit doctrinal affinity to be inferred. Analysis must identify concrete actors, dates, and objectives rather than speak of "the Muslim world" as a political unity.

In the thirteenth century, the Mamluks were central adversaries of the Latin states and the military orders. Levantine diplomacy included truces, embassies, and negotiations between Latin and Muslim actors, but any claim concerning a specific Templar-Mamluk alliance must be demonstrated case by case and not inferred from the mere existence of diplomatic contacts³⁷

It is established that the Order operated within a system of multiple dependencies and overlapping jurisdictions, and that neither the metaphor of a power within a power nor that of an instrument in the service of others adequately describes its position. The chapter also closes off one explanatory route: the frictions of the Latin East do not causally lead to the suppression of 1312, which originated in a French conjuncture and through different mechanisms. The following chapters reconstruct that conjuncture.

³⁷ Barber (1994); Nicholson (2001).

FROM AUTONOMY TO SUPPRESSION

This chapter formulates the problem the volume seeks to resolve. If Templar autonomy was constructed through papal legal instruments accumulated over almost two centuries, the question is not why the Order fell from favour but how that architecture could be dismantled in five years. The thesis is that the same type of instrument that had built it was used to undo it, and that this is where the episode's analytical interest lies.

The autonomy that had strengthened the Order became, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, a political and jurisdictional problem within a conjuncture very different from that of its expansion. The French process of 1307–1312 must be analysed by separating the arrests, the production of accusations, the interrogations, Clement V's actions, and the papal decision to suppress the Order. This sequence allows us to evaluate how an institution protected for decades by papal privileges could be delegitimised through legal and discursive mechanisms.

Two centuries later, under Clement V, relations among the French monarchy, the papacy, and the Order entered a decisive crisis. Philip IV drove the arrests of 1307 and exerted intense political pressure on the pontiff and on proceedings against the Templars; reducing the offensive to the king's personal economic interest does not by itself reflect the documentary complexity of the case.

The suppression of the Order through *Vox in excelso*, promulgated by Clement V in 1312 during the Council of Vienne,³⁸ constitutes a

³⁸ *Vox in excelso*, Clement V, 22 March 1312, approved at the second session of the Council of Vienne on 3 April 1312. The bull suppresses the Order *per modum provisionis seu ordinationis apostolicae*—by way of apostolic provision or ordinance—a technical formula designating an act of papal authority rather than a judicial sentence. The text itself acknowledges that sufficient evidence had not been obtained for a conviction of heresy and grounds the suppression in the infamy incurred and the scandal caused. This terminological precision is the documentary

turning point in the history of the military orders. The decision reflects Philip IV's political pressure and the severe reputational crisis created by the accusations and confessions obtained during the proceedings. It should not, however, be described simply as evidence of papal "weakness": Clement attempted to recover jurisdiction over the case and ultimately adopted a solution by apostolic provision. The Order was suppressed without a conciliar judgement definitively establishing the collective guilt of its members.

Philip IV, known as "the Fair", began his attack on the Templars in 1307, accusing them of heresy, sodomy, and other serious crimes, whose historical consistency must be critically assessed because of coercive interrogations, contradictions among testimonies, and the use of torture in France. The monarchy's financial difficulties formed part of the context, but the offensive cannot be explained solely by a supposed debt owed by the king to the Order. In a process combining royal interests, judicial procedure, ecclesiastical tensions, and financial factors, Philip IV pressured the papacy and deployed royal and ecclesiastical mechanisms against the Order. According to Barber (2006), Clement V ultimately suppressed the Order by apostolic provision through *Vox in excelso*, promulgated during the Council of Vienne in 1312; suppression was not equivalent to a conciliar condemnation of the Order for heresy.

Clement V formalised the Order's suppression through apostolic provision. Philip IV's pressure was a central factor, but the papal decision must be analysed within the legal and reputational crisis created since 1307 (Barber 2006). Suppression entailed the loss of the Templar corporate structure and opened a complex process of property redistribution. *Ad providam* provided in general terms for the transfer of property to the Hospitallers,³⁹ although implementation

basis for the distinction, maintained throughout this volume, between administrative suppression and conciliar condemnation.

³⁹ *Ad providam*, 2 May 1312, transfers Templar property in general terms to the Hospitallers; *Nuper in concilio*, 16 May 1312, completes that

was uneven and conditioned by seizures, litigation, and local political solutions. The notion of a great missing Templar treasure does not arise from this patrimonial process and belongs largely to later legend.

The council did not resolve all the problems opened by the proceedings. Jacques de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney were executed by secular authority in 1314 after retracting earlier confessions. The interrogation records display substantial regional differences and, in France,⁴⁰ many testimonies were shaped by coercion and torture. Accusations of heresy, idolatry, or sexual practices therefore cannot be treated as established facts merely because they appear in judicial dossiers. Political and financial factors are relevant, but neither should they be turned into a monocausal explanation. The historical problem is to reconstruct how accusation, procedure, coercion, reputation, and conflict between Crown and papacy interacted until the institutional continuation of the Temple became unviable.

disposition. Considerantes dudum, 6 May 1312, instead regulates the personal status of the brothers: it reserves the master, the visitor of France and the principal commanders for papal judgement, entrusts the remaining cases to provincial councils, and expressly provides for the absolution of those not convicted. The existence of this latter bull provides the most economical documentary refutation of the notion that collective guilt was declared.

⁴⁰ The so-called Chinon Parchment (ASV, Archivum Arcis, Armarium D 217; authenticated copy D 218), dated between 17 and 20 August 1308, records the interrogation of Jacques de Molay and the principal dignitaries before three cardinals sent by Clement V—Bérenger Frédol, Étienne de Suisy and Landolfo Brancacci—and their absolution from excommunication after abjuration. It was identified in 2001 by Barbara Frale and edited in Frale (2004). The document does not prove the Order's innocence in the modern sense: it proves that the Apostolic See restored to ecclesiastical communion the same leaders whom royal propaganda presented as obstinate heretics. It therefore requires a precise distinction between the French and papal proceedings.

The end of the Temple shows the extent to which a religious order could become exposed to the interaction of papal jurisdiction, royal power, public reputation, and judicial procedure. Clement V acted under strong pressure from Philip IV, but through legal instruments proper to the papacy. The suppression of an institution previously protected by the Apostolic See reveals an inversion of legitimacy: the same ecclesiastical mechanisms capable of recognising and privileging the Order could, in another conjuncture, withdraw its corporate form. Its subsequent disappearance fuelled speculation about secrets and clandestine survivals, which belong to the history of reception.

It is thus established that the suppression of 1312 occurred by apostolic provision rather than by conciliar judgement, and that the bull itself acknowledges the insufficiency of the evidence. This technical formulation is not an antiquarian detail: it is the fact that prevents the end of the Temple from being read as confirmation of guilt and requires it instead to be read as the result of a procedure. The next chapter reconstructs that procedure piece by piece.

THE TRIAL, 1307–1314: PROCEDURE AND EVIDENCE

Proceedings against the Temple are often narrated as an intrigue: an indebted king, a weak pope, a wealthy order, and an inevitable outcome. This version is not false in its elements, but it shifts attention away from the point at which the phenomenon becomes historically intelligible. What matters is not Philip IV's greed, which is documented but explains nothing by itself, but the procedural apparatus that turned an accusation without evidence into a dossier of thousands of folios of concordant confessions. This chapter describes that apparatus piece by piece, because it is here that the volume's central evidential question is at stake: how a procedure can manufacture the evidence it claims to discover.

The operation began with a written instruction. Sealed orders were sent in September 1307 to bailiffs and seneschals throughout the kingdom with an explicit prohibition on opening them before a specified date. At dawn on Friday, 13 October 1307, royal agents simultaneously arrested the Templars of France and seized their houses. The simultaneity is a technical, not anecdotal, fact: it prevented escape, destruction of archives, and coordination among detainees, and reveals a degree of administrative planning that places the initiative well before October. Guillaume de Nogaret, the king's keeper of the seal, directed the operation; Guillaume de Paris, inquisitor of France and royal confessor, provided the ecclesiastical cover that allowed it to be presented as a matter of faith rather than an act of force.

The central instrument was the questionnaire. The accusation was not formulated as a narrative that witnesses were to confirm or deny, but as a list of propositions on which each detainee was questioned one by one. In its initial formulation it comprised around ninety articles; expanded for the later papal commission, it reached 127. Its content combined a core of four charges—denial of Christ, spitting on the cross, obscene kisses at reception, and worship of an idol—with supplementary accusations of sodomy, omission of the words of consecration by chaplains, and absolution of sins by lay superiors.

The form of the questionnaire is the key to the evidential problem and deserves explicit analysis. An interrogation articulated through closed propositions does not collect testimony; it induces it. The content of the answer is already contained in the question, leaving the deponent only to assent or deny. The consequence is that the uniformity of the French confessions, invoked for centuries as proof of the truth of the charges, is in fact an artefact of method: the testimonies agree because the questions agree. If two hundred men under coercion are asked whether they spat on the cross, concordant affirmative answers do not measure what occurred at receptions; they measure the effectiveness of the procedure. This is the point at which discourse analysis and source criticism converge: the syntactic structure of the interrogation determines the form of the evidence it produces.

Physical coercion was added to this. Torture was admitted in French inquisitorial procedure and applied intensively; an appreciable number of detainees died during interrogation. Jacques de Molay confessed on 24 October 1307, only eleven days after his arrest, and repeated his confession before the masters of the University of Paris. That the grand master of a two-century-old order yielded in less than two weeks is evidence about the conditions of detention, not about the truth of what was confessed.

The papal reaction introduced a second procedural line that should not be confused with the first. Clement V protested against the royal usurpation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and, through *Pastoralis praeeminentiae* of 22 November 1307, extended the arrests throughout Christendom, but placed them under Church authority. In the summer of 1308, *Faciens misericordiam* established the dual regime that would structure the case: diocesan commissions to judge individuals and a papal commission to judge the Order as an institution. In August of that year, three cardinals sent by the pope interrogated Molay and the principal dignitaries at Chinon and, after their abjuration, absolved them from excommunication and restored them to ecclesiastical communion. From that moment onward there existed two procedures with divergent logics and outcomes.

The papal commission in Paris, sitting between 1309 and 1311, opened the only window in which a defence was possible. Nearly six hundred Templars came forward prepared to defend the Order, and two brothers with legal training, Pierre de Bologne and Renaud de Provins, articulated a technically strong challenge: they denounced coercion, demanded procedural guarantees, and maintained the corporate innocence of the Order. The defence was dismantled by a legal mechanism of devastating effectiveness. A man who had confessed and then recanted became a relapsed heretic, and the relapsed heretic was handed to the secular arm. On 12 May 1310, fifty-four Templars were burned at Sens by order of Archbishop Philippe de Marigny, brother of the king's principal adviser. To defend the Order was to recant; to recant was to face the stake. The defence dissolved within days.

This mechanism deserves precise formulation, because it contains the structural anomaly of the proceedings. Inquisitorial procedure was designed to obtain the reconciliation of the repentant heretic, not his death; the category of relapse existed to punish a return to error. Applied to a dossier built on confessions extracted under torture, that category completely reverses its function: it punishes precisely the act of telling the truth. A system in which withdrawal of a false statement is punished by burning cannot produce reliable information, and its documentary product must be read accordingly. This is not a retrospective moral judgement on the Middle Ages; it is a finding about the conditions of validity of a source.

The outcome is well known and its documentary chronology is established. Clement V suppressed the Order through *Vox in excelso* on 22 March 1312, approved at the second session of the Council of Vienne on 3 April, and did so by apostolic provision while acknowledging that sufficient evidence for a condemnation had not been reached. The bulls of May distributed the property and regulated the personal situation of the brothers, providing for the absolution of those not convicted. On 18 March 1314, Jacques de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney publicly retracted their confessions before the

cardinals and were burned that same day in Paris by order of the king, without a new ecclesiastical trial. The final act of the Templar affair was not a judgement of the Church but an execution by secular power of two men who, at death, denied what they had been made to sign.

The documentation of the trial has been available since the nineteenth century in Michelet's collection (1841–1851), supplemented by regional editions, including the records of the British Isles published by Nicholson (2011). Its volume is immense and its historical value considerable, but not in the sense in which it was invoked for six hundred years. These dossiers do not document what the Templars did in their chapters. They document, with almost unmatched richness, how a monarchy and a judicial apparatus constructed an offence, classified it, distributed it into articles, applied it to thousands of individuals, and obtained from them the confirmation it required. Read in this way, they cease to be a source about the Temple and become one of the most complete medieval sources for the operation of judicial power in the service of a political decision already taken.

MYTH AND LATER RECEPTION

This chapter changes its object, and that should be stated clearly. It is no longer concerned with the medieval Order but with its later symbolic productivity, and its thesis is that this productivity constitutes an autonomous historical phenomenon, with its own dates, authors, and contexts, which can be investigated with the same rigour applied to the twelfth century. The Templar myth is not an error to be corrected; it is an object to be dated.

From the moment of suppression, the history of the medieval institution must be distinguished with particular clarity from the history of its reinterpretations. Masonic genealogies, synarchic doctrines, the Grail, hidden treasures, and clandestine survivals form a historically relevant cultural corpus, but their existence documents the reception of the Temple in later periods. They cannot be used retrospectively to establish the beliefs or practices of the Order in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries without independent medieval evidence.

The study of the Order of the Temple requires combining analysis of historical texts and archival documentation with critical examination of the mythological and esoteric narratives constructed around it. Later culture has frequently superimposed the medieval institution and the Templar myth; precisely for that reason, historical analysis must maintain an explicit separation between the two levels. Mystical, occultist, or conspiratorial reception constitutes a legitimate object of study, but its existence does not lessen the evidential requirement when claims are made about the medieval Order.

Within modern esoteric reception, the Temple came to be credited with a synarchic project or a form of government directed by a spiritual elite. This idea appears in later authors and not in any medieval Templar political corpus. Genealogies constructed to sustain it linked the Order with mystery religions, Gnosticism, Druidism, Sufism, and ancient models of government by sages. Similarity among these motifs does not demonstrate historical transmission. Their interest lies in showing how modern reception transformed a medieval military order

into a vehicle for universalist theories of authority, knowledge, and government. Any claim that the Templars systematically attempted to implement such a programme requires medieval documentation that has not so far been established.

Modern comparisons linking a supposed Templar synarchic ideal with Alexander the Great, Marcus Aurelius, mystery religions, Druidism, Sufism, or Gnosticism should be read as intellectual genealogies constructed by later authors. The existence, across different traditions, of models of government by sages or virtuous elites does not demonstrate that the Temple adopted an equivalent political programme. These associations may retain interest as documents of reception and as attempts to provide the Templar myth with ancient antecedents, but they do not constitute a medieval causal chain. To explain the Order's expansion and crisis, evidence concerning privileges, patronage, warfare, administration, and jurisdiction offers a historically firmer basis.

On 13 October 1307 a coordinated operation to arrest Templars began in France,⁴¹ orchestrated by King Philip IV in a context involving fiscal and financial interests, royal assertion, accusations of heresy, and jurisdictional conflict; reducing the offensive to a personal debt owed by the king is insufficient. In 1312 Clement V suppressed the Order through the bull *Vox in excelso*, promulgated during the Council of Vienne by apostolic provision and not as a collective judgement of guilt; in 1314 Grand Master Jacques de Molay was executed at the stake by secular authority after retracting his confession. Despite the persecution, however, Templar influence and

⁴¹ *Pastoralis praeeminentiae*, Clement V, 22 November 1307, orders Christian princes to arrest the Templars and seize their property in the name of the Church; the bull transforms a French royal measure into a Europe-wide procedure and explains why proceedings open simultaneously in kingdoms whose attitudes towards the Order differed markedly. *Faciens misericordiam*, 12 August 1308, establishes the dual procedure—diocesan commissions concerning individuals and a papal commission concerning the Order as an institution—that structures the case until 1312.

institutional legacies did not disappear entirely. Some of its property and some of its members were integrated into other institutions through public legal channels. In Portugal, the Order of Christ constituted a particularly significant institutional continuity; in the Crown of Aragon, the Order of Montesa was created. The Orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcántara had prior or independent trajectories and do not demonstrate a clandestine survival of the Temple.

From the early modern period onwards, various lodges, Masonic obediences, neo-Templar organisations, and esoteric currents claimed the legacy of the Order of the Temple. These appropriations used names, crosses, ritual grades, and narratives of filiation to construct antiquity and symbolic authority. Some asserted direct inheritance from the Templars and presented ritual similarities as evidence of continuity. Historically, such claims constitute evidence about the institutions that made them and about the reception of the Temple; they do not in themselves demonstrate an uninterrupted organisational chain from 1312. The Templar cross and other emblems have been widely reused, so iconographic similarity must be analysed through documentable processes of adoption and resignification.

The authenticity of claims to Templar continuity has been widely debated. There is no conclusive evidence of a secret organisation that maintained the structure of the Temple without interruption after 1312. From the early modern period, and especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, initiatory societies, esoteric authors, and neo-Templar movements constructed genealogies linking their own symbols and rituals to the medieval Order. These narratives incorporated conspiracies, treasures, and ancestral knowledge and circulated widely in culture. The demonstrable historical fact is therefore the production of these modern genealogies; the institutional continuity they assert requires independent evidence that cannot be replaced by symbolic resemblance.

In terms of cultural reception, the figure of the Templars became an enduring symbol of mystery and power, encouraged by the violence of

their suppression, accusations of heresy, and the later circulation of stories about secrets, treasures, and survival. This construction consolidated a mythical image that transcends the medieval institution and feeds novels, films, neo-Templar organisations, and theories of hidden knowledge. The historical value of the phenomenon lies in showing how the Temple was reinterpreted after its disappearance, not in turning those reinterpretations into retrospective evidence about the Order of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The result of the chapter is a dating. The esoteric, synarchic, and Masonic genealogies of the Temple were constructed from the eighteenth century onwards, in identifiable contexts and for identifiable reasons, and preserve no documentary chain connecting them to the Middle Ages. This finding does not impoverish the phenomenon; it explains it. An institution suppressed without condemnation, whose leaders died denying what they had been made to sign, left exactly the evidential void that six centuries of literature set about filling.

STATE OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL QUESTION

No study of the Temple begins from zero, and few work in a field so marked by its own history. Templar bibliography carries four centuries of polemical sediment, and many debates now presented as new were already posed in the eighteenth century. Locating this volume within that tradition is not an academic courtesy: it is the final piece of the evidential criterion that organises it, because it allows the reader to distinguish what is argued here on documentary grounds from what is inherited from an ongoing debate.

The first phase of Templar historiography is at once erudite and polemical and grows out of the judicial dossier itself. In the seventeenth century Pierre Dupuy published a history of the Order based on trial documentation that shaped the hostile version, while Étienne Baluze edited materials from the Avignon curia in 1693 that included Chinon documents. The turn came in 1813 with Raynouard, whose *Monumens historiques relatifs à la condamnation des chevaliers du Temple* constituted the first modern reasoned defence of the Order's innocence, constructed through comparison of the French and foreign proceedings. The comparative argument used in this volume's chapter on the Iberian Peninsula is therefore more than two centuries old; what has changed is not its logic but the quality of the documentation available.

The second phase is documentary and coincides with the nineteenth-century professionalisation of the discipline. Michelet edited the records of the Paris trial between 1841 and 1851; Curzon established the French text of the Rule in 1886, which remains the standard edition; Prutz contributed an institutional treatment of the Order's rise and fall from German scholarship. This generation fixed the corpus still used today. Its limitation was methodological: publication of the sources was conceived as access to the facts, and the trial records were long read as though they were simply a record of what had been said rather than a product of the procedure that generated them.

The third phase, from the 1960s to the 1990s, shifted the object from guilt to institution. Forey (1973) reconstructed the Aragonese establishment from patrimonial documentation and demonstrated that Templar history could be written from ordinary archives rather than the criminal dossier; Bulst-Thiele (1974) established the prosopography of the masters; Barber, in *The New Knighthood* (1994) and *The Trial of the Templars* (1978, revised 2006), articulated the institutional synthesis that remains the essential point of departure; Riley-Smith (1986) relocated the phenomenon within a history of the idea of crusading that restored the weight of religious motivation against materialist readings; Demurger and Nicholson consolidated and disseminated this consensus. This is the phase in which the Temple ceased to be an enigma and became a normal historiographical object.

Within this phase a debate emerged that directly concerns the framework of this book. Prawer (1972) described the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem as an enterprise of European colonialism, with an urban Frankish minority militarily segregated from a subjected indigenous population. The model was productive and dominated for two decades, but was challenged by settlement archaeology: Ellenblum (1998) documented a considerably greater Frankish rural presence and greater interweaving with local communities than the colonial model allowed. The debate remains open and this volume does not resolve it; it simply avoids colonial vocabulary where the documentation does not support it and notes that the presence of the military orders in the Levantine countryside is one of the fields in which the controversy remains productive.

The fourth phase opened in 2001 with Barbara Frale's identification of the Chinon parchment in the Vatican archive and its edition in 2004. Its effect was not the one announced by the press: the document neither exonerates the Order nor closes debate over the accusations. Its real effect was methodological, forcing a clear distinction between two procedures that historiography had treated as one, the French royal and the papal. Added to this is the systematic edition of regional dossiers—including those of the British Isles by Nicholson (2011),

among others—which has definitively shifted the question. For six hundred years the debate asked whether the Templars were guilty. Current research asks how the procedure that produced the answer worked, and that reformulation is the one adopted by this book.

A fifth line runs in parallel, one concerned not with the historiography of the Temple but with that of its legend and which must be kept rigorously separate. Roberts (1972) analysed the mythology of secret societies as a modern political phenomenon, and Partner (1982), in *The Murdered Magicians*, demonstrated that the esoteric genealogy of the Templars was constructed in the eighteenth century in the context of high-degree Freemasonry and possesses no documentary chain connecting it to the Middle Ages. These works are fully academic, but their object is not the Order: it is the symbolic productivity of its disappearance. Confusing the two corpora—an error this volume's bibliographical arrangement seeks to prevent by dividing them into two sections—is the foundational operation of conspiratorial Templar literature.

Finally, it is necessary to state what place this book occupies on that map and what it does not claim to occupy. It does not present unpublished archival documentation or revise critical editions; its empirical basis is the one established by the historiography just reviewed. Its contribution lies on another level and is twofold. First, it proposes an explicit hierarchy of evidential levels and applies it consistently to an object in which the mixing of evidential registers is the rule rather than the exception. Second, it subjects to discourse analysis the instruments through which the Temple was first legitimised and then delegitimised—the Rule, Bernardine apologetics, papal privilege, the inquisitorial questionnaire—treating them not as containers of information but as devices that produce the categories through which an institution can be recognised or destroyed. That both movements employ the same formal mechanisms, and that the difference between consecrating and annihilating lies in the conjuncture rather than in the nature of the instrument, is the thesis this volume offers for discussion.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The preceding survey makes it possible to read the Temple on three connected levels: formation and legitimation, expansion and institutional autonomy, and subsequent delegitimation and reception. This sequence is not intended to reduce two centuries of history to a linear scheme. Its function is to show how different mechanisms of authority—rule, privilege, patronage, discipline, warfare, and representation—reinforced one another and how, in a different conjuncture, some of those same mechanisms could be challenged.

The trajectory of the Order of the Temple offers an especially fertile case for studying the relationship among power, religious legitimacy, and institutional organisation in the Middle Ages. From its formation in the early twelfth century, the Temple combined religious profession, military function, and patrimonial capacity within a structure recognised by the Church. The protection of pilgrims constituted one of its earliest frameworks of legitimation; later, the defence of the Latin states, custody of fortresses, and participation in campaigns expanded its function. Bernard of Clairvaux contributed decisively to formulating the ideal of the *miles Christi* and to intellectually legitimating the new militia, although the Templar Rule should not be attributed exclusively to his authorship. Later papal privileges reinforced a direct relationship with the Apostolic See and granted the Order important immunities. This autonomy facilitated its expansion and, in certain contexts, produced jurisdictional conflicts with bishops, nobles, and monarchs. It did not, however, constitute independent sovereignty or structural opposition to secular power. The crisis of the early fourteenth century radically transformed that position. Philip IV ordered the arrests of 1307 and promoted a dossier of accusations whose assessment requires attention to coercion, inquisitorial procedure, and political context. Clement V ultimately suppressed the Order in 1312 by apostolic provision; there was no conciliar judgement proving the collective guilt of the Templars. Institutional disappearance opened a second historical process: construction of the myth. From the early modern period, and with particular intensity from the eighteenth century

onwards, Masonic, esoteric, and neo-Templar traditions associated the Temple with treasures, the Grail, secret doctrines, eastern knowledge, and clandestine political programmes. The persistence of these images does not prove their medieval origin. Their interest lies in showing how an extinct institution could continue producing symbolic authority for centuries. Distinguishing institutional history from reception does not impoverish the Templar phenomenon; it allows us to explain more precisely why the Temple was powerful in its own context and why it remained culturally productive after its disappearance.

Templar autonomy must therefore be understood as an institutional relationship rather than absolute independence. The Order depended on the papacy, patronage, western revenues, maritime routes, and cooperation with secular powers, although its privileges allowed it to escape certain local jurisdictions. In the Levant, this position produced cooperation and conflict with the monarchy of Jerusalem, Frederick II, other orders, and Muslim powers. In Europe, commanderies functioned chiefly as patrimonial and administrative units; in certain cases the Templars provided deposit, credit, and financial-transfer services to individuals and monarchies. These functions were important, but they do not turn the Temple into a modern bank or a state systematically competing with monarchies. Philip IV's offensive was exceptional also because other kingdoms responded differently to the accusations. Financial factors formed part of French politics, but coexisted with questions of jurisdiction, reputation, inquisitorial procedure, and the relationship between Crown and papacy. The history of the Order should therefore not be narrated as a moral sequence of poverty, wealth, corruption, and punishment. Its expansion was made possible by the usefulness of its functions and an effective institutional architecture; its suppression by a political and judicial conjuncture capable of dismantling that architecture. Its later legacy reveals a different mechanism of power: the capacity of a vanished institution to continue producing meaning through symbols and narratives no longer dependent on organisational continuity.

Taken together, the analysis shows an institutional transformation rather than a simple loss of initial ideals. The Temple developed from a small fraternity into a religious and military order endowed with a rule, privileges, property, and transregional operational capacity. The expansion of resources altered the scale of its responsibilities and conflicts, but does not in itself demonstrate doctrinal corruption. The central question is how an institution legitimated through religious language, discipline, and military service could be delegitimated through accusations of heresy, judicial procedures, and political pressure. This tension between the production and destruction of legitimacy constitutes the interpretative axis of the volume.

CHRONOLOGY

Dates follow modern reckoning, with the year beginning on 1 January. Where contemporary documentation uses the Annunciation style, the old-style date is given in parentheses. Events before and after the existence of the Order are included only where necessary to situate its trajectory.

- 1095 — Council of Clermont. On 27 November, Urban II preaches the expedition to the East.
- 1098 — Foundation of the Abbey of Cîteaux by Robert of Molesme.
- 1099 — On 15 July, the crusaders capture Jerusalem. Godfrey of Bouillon assumes the title Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre.
- 1113 — *Pie postulatio voluntatis*: Paschal II recognises the community of the Hospital of St John.
- 1119–1120 — The fraternity led by Hugues de Payns and Geoffroi de Saint-Omer is formed in Jerusalem and lodged by Baldwin II in quarters of the Haram al-Sharif.
- 1128 — Countess Teresa donates Soure to the Order: the first Templar establishment in Portugal.
- 1129 — Council of Troyes, in January (1128 in Annunciation style). Formalisation of the Latin Rule.
- c. 1128–1136 — Bernard of Clairvaux writes *De laude novae militiae*.
- 1131 — Will of Alfonso I the Battler, bequeathing his kingdoms to the Temple, the Hospital, and the Holy Sepulchre.
- 1136 — Hugues de Payns dies. Robert de Craon succeeds him as master.
- 1139 — On 29 March, Innocent II promulgates *Omne datum optimum*: direct subjection to the Apostolic See, chaplains of its own, and exemption from tithes.
- 1143 — Agreement with Ramon Berenguer IV settling the will of 1131 and establishing the Templar position in the Crown of Aragon.
- 1144 — Fall of Edessa. Celestine II promulgates *Milites Templi*.
- 1145 — On 7 April, Eugene III promulgates *Militia Dei*.
- 1147 — Capture of Lisbon, with Templar participation.
- 1147–1149 — Second Crusade. In January 1148, after the disaster at Mount Cadmus, Louis VII entrusts the army's marching discipline to Everard des

- Barres; the Order advances him credit. The eastern campaign ends with the abandonment of the siege of Damascus.
- c. 1160 — Gualdim Pais begins construction of the castle and convent of Tomar.
- c. 1170–1184 — William of Tyre writes the *Chronicon*, the principal source for the origins of the Temple.
- 1187 — On 4 July, Latin defeat at Hattin. In October, Saladin captures Jerusalem.
- 1189–1192 — Third Crusade. Recovery of Acre in 1191 and agreement between Richard I and Saladin in 1192.
- 1202–1204 — Fourth Crusade. Capture and sack of Constantinople in 1204.
- 1215 — Fourth Lateran Council.
- 1217–1221 — Fifth Crusade. Failure of the Damietta campaign.
- 1228–1229 — Sixth Crusade. Frederick II secures Christian access to Jerusalem for a limited period through negotiation with al-Kamil.
- 1248–1254 — Seventh Crusade. Defeat and capture of Louis IX in Egypt in 1250; payment of his ransom with Templar involvement.
- 1270 — Eighth Crusade. Death of Louis IX before Tunis.
- 1291 — The Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil captures Acre. The Temple transfers its eastern headquarters to Cyprus.
- 1307 — On 13 October, the Templars in France are arrested simultaneously on the orders of Philip IV. On 22 November, *Pastoralis praeeminentiae* extends the arrests throughout Christendom under the authority of the Church.
- 1308 — On 12 August, *Faciens misericordiam* establishes the dual diocesan and papal procedure; *Regnans in caelis* convokes the Council of Vienne. Between 17 and 20 August, three cardinals interrogate Jacques de Molay and the principal dignitaries at Chinon and absolve them from excommunication.
- 1309 — The Templar fortresses of the Crown of Aragon capitulate after more than a year of resistance.
- 1309–1311 — The papal commission in Paris conducts its proceedings. Nearly six hundred Templars come forward to defend the Order.
- 1310 — On 12 May, fifty-four Templars are burned at Sens on the orders of Archbishop Philippe de Marigny; the defence collapses. The councils of Medina del Campo and Salamanca acquit the Templars of Castile, León and Portugal. The Council of Mainz declares the Order free of guilt.

- 1311 — The Council of Vienne opens in October.
- 1312 — On 22 March, *Vox in excelso* suppresses the Order *per modum provisionis seu ordinationis apostolicae*; the bull is approved at the council's second session on 3 April. On 2 May, *Ad providam* transfers the property to the Hospitallers, expressly excluding Castile, Aragon, Portugal and Majorca; on 6 May, *Considerantes dudum* regulates the personal status of the brothers and provides for the absolution of those not convicted; on 16 May, *Nuper in concilio* completes the property settlement. The provincial council of Tarragona declares the Templars of the Crown of Aragon innocent.
- 1314 — On 18 March, Jacques de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney publicly retract their confessions and are burned the same day in Paris on the king's orders.
- 1317 — On 10 June, John XXII establishes the Order of Montesa for the defence of Valencia's southern frontier.
- 1319 — On 14 March, the bull *Ad ea ex quibus* establishes the Order of Christ in Portugal, which inherits the Temple's property, privileges and personnel, with its first headquarters at Castro Marim.

GLOSSARY

The technical, Latin and Arabic terms used in this volume are collected here with the precise meanings they bear in the text. Several circulate in popular literature with broader or wholly different meanings; the definitions below govern their use in these pages.

Baissant. The black-and-white bicolour banner associated with the Order of the Temple. The regulations govern its operational use on campaign; symbolic interpretations of the chromatic contrast belong for the most part to modern literature.

Bailiwick. An administrative grouping of several commanderies, intermediate between the house and the province.

Bellum iustum. A category of Latin canon law and theology establishing the conditions under which a war is lawful: legitimate authority, just cause and right intention. It is not equivalent to crusade, which adds the vow, privilege and remission of sins.

Commander. The officer governing a Templar commandery, bailiwick or province. The term denotes an administrative and military office, not an honorary rank.

Commandery. The basic unit of western Templar organisation: a complex of lands, buildings, rights and revenues governed by a commander. Most were rural estates rather than fortresses.

Annunciation style. A system of reckoning in which the year begins on 25 March. An event occurring in January is therefore recorded under the year preceding that assigned to it by modern reckoning; hence the double dating of the Council of Troyes as 1128 or 1129.

Haram al-Sharif. The sacred precinct in Jerusalem identified by the Latins with Solomon's Temple. The first Templars were lodged within its dependencies, and the Order's name derives from this location.

Malicida. A neologism coined by Bernard of Clairvaux in *De laude novae militiae*, III, 4, to designate the knight of Christ who kills the evildoer: not a homicide but a killer of evil. It shifts the object of the violent act from the person to the evil that person embodies.

Marshal. The Templar officer responsible for weapons, mounts and tactical command on campaign.

Miles Christi. Soldier of Christ. The category by which Bernard's apologetic designates the Templar, making religious profession compatible with the bearing of arms.

- Militia Christi.** The collective designation of the new religious militia. It denotes the institutional form of the Temple rather than a military corps in the modern sense.
- Neo-Templarism.** The body of organisations that have emerged since the early modern period claiming the heritage of the Temple. They are sources for their own periods and for the reception of the Order, not for the medieval Order.
- Omne datum optimum.** Bull of Innocent II, 29 March 1139. It subjects the Temple directly to the Apostolic See, grants it its own chaplains and exempts it from tithes. The initial component in the legal architecture of its autonomy.
- Per modum provisionis seu ordinationis apostolicae.** The technical formula employed by Vox in excelso: by way of apostolic provision or ordinance. It designates an act of papal authority rather than a judicial sentence, which is why the suppression of 1312 does not constitute a conviction for heresy.
- Province.** A major territorial division of the Order, governed by a provincial commander and subject to periodic visitation.
- Relapsed heretic.** In inquisitorial procedure, a person who returns to error after having abjured it. The status entailed delivery to the secular arm. In the Templar trial, it turned the retraction of a confession obtained under torture into a capital offence.
- Responsio.** The share of the net proceeds of each western Templar house—customarily set at around one third—that had to be remitted to the central house in the East. The mechanism that materially sustained the Order's presence in the Levant.
- Retrait.** A statute added to the Templar normative corpus after the Primitive Rule. The hierarchical statutes regulate offices, equipment, campaigning, discipline and the reception of brothers.
- Sergeant.** A member of the Order who was not of knightly status, with distinct military and administrative functions and a status different from that of the knight.
- Seneschal.** The Order's second-ranking officer, immediately subordinate to the master.
- Synarchy.** A doctrine of government by a spiritual elite. It is attributed to the Temple in modern esoteric literature and appears in no medieval Templar political corpus.
- Visitor.** The officer charged with inspecting houses and provinces and with rendering accounts to the master.

Vox in excelso. Bull of Clement V, 22 March 1312, suppressing the Order of the Temple by apostolic provision while acknowledging the insufficiency of the evidence for heresy.

Jihad. An Arabic term with diverse legal and religious meanings depending on school and period. It is not an equivalent of crusade or bellum iustum.

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