

# Knights templar

[History](#), [Middle Ages](#)



The Knights Templar were a monastic military order formed at the end of the First Crusade with the mandate of protecting Christian pilgrims on route to the Holy Land. Never before had a group of secular knights banded together and taken the monastic vows. In this sense they were the first of the Warrior Monks. The Templars fought along side King Richard I (Richard The Lion Hearted) and other Crusaders in the battles for the Holy Lands. From humble beginnings of poverty when the order relied on alms from the traveling pilgrims, the Order would go on to have the backing of the Holy See and the collective European monarchies. Within two centuries they had become powerful enough to defy all but the Papal throne. Feared as warriors, respected for their charity and sought out for their wealth, there is no doubt that the Templar knights were the key players of the monastic fighting Orders. Due to their vast wealth and surplus of materials the Templars essentially invented banking, as we know it. The church forbade the lending of money for interest, which they called usury. The Templars, being the clever sort they were, changed the manner in which loans were paid and were able to skirt the issue and finance even kings. They were destroyed, perhaps because of this wealth or fear of their seemingly limitless powers. In either case, the Order met with a rather untimely demise at the hands of the Pope and the King of France in 1307 and by 1314, "The Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon" ceased to exist, at least officially. Although originally a small group of nine knights, they quickly gained fame largely due to the backing of Bernard of Clairvaux and his "In Praise of the New Knighthood". Bernard at that time was often called the Second Pope and was the chief spokesman of Christendom. He is also the one responsible

for helping to draw up the Order's rules of conduct. In European political circles, they became very powerful and influential. This was because they were immune from any authority save that of the Papal Throne. (Pope Innocent II exempted the Templars from all authority except the Pope.) After the crusades were over, the knights returned to their Chapters throughout Europe and became known as moneylenders to the monarchs. In the process many historians believe they invented the Banking System. The secret meetings and rituals of the knights would eventually cause their downfall. The King of France, Philip the Fair used these rituals and meetings to his advantage to destroy the knights. The real reason for his crushing the Templars was that he felt threatened by their power and immunity. In 1307, Philip, who desperately needed funds, to support his war against England's Edward I made his move against the Knights Templar.