

# [Monks](https://assignbuster.com/monks/)

The Knights Templar, a military order   
of monks answerable only to the Pope himself, were   
founded in 1118. Their primary responsibility, at least   
initially, was to provide protection to Christians making   
pilgrimages to the Holy Land. They rose in power, both   
religious and secular, to become one of the richest and   
most powerful entities in Christendom. By the time of their   
disbandment in 1307, this highly secretive organization   
controlled vastwealth, a fleet of merchant ships, and castles   
and estates spanning the entire Mediterranean area. When   
the crusaders captured Jerusalem from the Muslims in   
1099, the Church encouraged all faithful Christians to visit   
that holy city in order to affirm their faith. The area,   
however, was still subject to sporadic attacks from various   
non-Christian factions. A small group of knights, led by   
Hughde Payens, vowed to protect the pilgrims. The group   
was grantedquasi-official status by King Baldwin II of   
Jerusalem, who allowed themquarters in a wing of the royal   
palace near the Temple of Solomon. It isfrom this initial   
posting that the order derived its name. They took   
thestandard vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and   
were bound to the rulesof the Augustinian order.

Upton-Ward 1 The order languished in near-anonimity   
for several years, despite generouscontributions from   
various European personages. In 1126, Count Hugh   
ofChampagne, having donated his estates to Bernard of   
Clairvaux for use in building a monestary for the Cistercian   
order, arrived in Jerusalem to jointhe Templars. This action   
indirectly obligated Bernard to support the newly chosen   
advocacy of his benefactor. He wrote to the count, " If, for   
God's work, you have changed yourself from count to   
knight and from rich to poor, I congratulate you." Howarth   
49 In the year 1126, King Baldwin found two reasons for   
wanting officialrecognition of the order. First, he had,   
perhaps prematurely, bestowed uponHugh de Payens the   
title of Master of the Temple. Second, the king had   
theopportunity to launch an attack on the city of Damascus,   
but he needed moreknights. Papal recognition would allow   
open recruiting in Europe for theorder. King Baldwin sent a   
letter to Bernard of Clairvaux, the order'sprimary patron,   
later known as Saint Bernard, asking him to petition the   
Pope for official recognition of the order. Howarth 50-51   
The King'sletter was hand-carried to Bernard by two loyal   
and trusted knights, Andrewde Montbard, maternally   
related to Bernard, and Gondemare. Upon theirarrival at   
Clairvaux, the two knights presented Bernard with   
Baldwin'sletter, which came right to the point.

Upton-Ward 3 " The brothers Templar, whom God has   
raised up for the defence of our province and to whom he   
hasaccorded special protection, desire to receive apostolic   
approval and alsotheir own Rule of life ... Since we know   
well the weight of yourintercession with God and also with   
His Vicar and with the other princes ofEurope, we give into   
your care this two-fold mission, whose success will bevery   
welcome to us. Let the constitution of the Templars be such   
as issuitable for men who live in the clash and tumult of   
war, and yet of a kind which will be acceptable to the   
Christian princes, of whom they have beenthe valuable   
auxiliaries. So far as in you lies and if God pleases, striveto   
bring this matter to a speedy and successful issue." qtd. in   
Howarth 50-51 Bernard realized at once the genius of the   
proposal to combine religiousand military endeavors.

Through such organizations, the borders ofChristendom   
could be extended and fortified. He immediately granted   
hisapproval of the plan and pledged his full support. He   
petitioned PopeHonorius II for a special council to   
consider the matter, and he notifiedHugh of his actions.

Howarth 51 The Council of Troyes convened on January   
13, 1128, a bitterly cold SaintHilary's Day, for the primary   
purpose of considering the request of theKnights Templar.

Despite the delays of written communications, Hugh   
dePayens, accompanied by several brother knights, arrived   
from the Holy Landin time to attend the meetings of the   
Council. Howarth 51 William of Tyre wrote an account   
of the events: " Nine years after thefounding of this order,   
the knights were still in secular garb. They woresuch   
garments as the people, for salvation of their souls,   
bestowed uponthem. During this ninth year, a council was   
held at Troyes in France. Therewere present the   
archbishops of Rheims and Sens, with their suffragans;   
thebishop of Albano, the Pope's legate; the abbotts of   
Citeaux, Clairvaux, Potigny; and many others. At this   
council, by order of Pope Honorious and ofStephen,   
patriarch of Jerusalem, a rule was drawn up for this order   
and ahabit of white assigned them." qtd. in   
Burman/Templars 27 Although referred to in William's   
account by the generic title Abbott of Clairvaux, Bernard,   
in actuality controlled the proceedings of the council. There   
was little doubt Bernard's request would be met with   
approval; he waswell known for his successes in reforming   
monastic life. He was held in theutmost respect by religious   
and lay leaders alike; in many circles he wasreferred to as   
the second pope. In fact, many of the popes were supplied   
bythe mendicant orders. Robinson 66-67 At a time when   
monks were more highly regarded than priests, and   
consideredcloser to God because of their ascetic life-styles,   
Benard said, " The peoplecannot look up to the priests,   
because the people are better than priests." Robinson 67   
Bernard's offer to personally assist in the formulation of the   
Rules of theorder was gratefully accepted by all. Bernard   
based his Rule of the Templarson that of his own Cistercian   
order, which was itself based on the olderBenedictine Rule.

Robinson 67 The Rule of the Templars was a strict and   
complex system of 686 writtenlaws, meant to cover every   
possible aspect of daily life. As an example, Rule 25, On   
Bowls and Drinking Vessels, states: Because of the   
shortage ofbowls, the brothers will eat in pairs, so that one   
may study the other moreclosely, and so that neither   
austerity nor secret abstinence is introducedinto the   
communal meal. And it seems just to us that each brother   
shouldhave the same ration of wine in his cup. qtd. in   
Upton-Ward 26 In 1139, Pope Innocent II issued a Bull,   
titled Omne Datum Optimum, declaring that the Knights   
Templar were under the direct and sole control ofthe Pope.

This freed the Knights to operate throughout Christendom   
and theLevant unencumbered by local ecclesiastical and   
secular rulers. Thisunprecedented autonomy was due, in no   
small part, to the personal petitionsof the new Grand   
Master, Robert the Burgundian. While Hugh had been an   
excellent warrior, Robert was an ideal administrator who   
understoodpolitics. Howarth 80 The Order was   
authorized to have chaplain brothers, who were authorized   
tohear the confessions of their fellow brothers, and thereby   
absolve them oftheir sins. There were, however, five   
specific crimes for which granting ofabsolution was   
reserved by the Pope. These were: " the killing of a   
Christianman or woman,; violently attacking another   
brother; attacking a member ofanother order or a priest;   
renouncing holy orders in order to be received asa brother;   
and entering the order by simony." Upton-Ward 5 It was   
also during the mastership of Robert that the Rules were   
translatedfrom Latin into French. Church documents were   
normally in Latin only, butsince most of the Knights were   
soldiers rather than educated clerics, theywere unable to   
read Latin. In 1147, the Knights were authorized to wear   
ared cross upon their white mantles, despite rule 18, which   
forbade anydecorations on their clothing. Upton-Ward   
12 As the Knights Templar gained political and economic   
strength, they foundthemselves involved in many aspects of   
secular life. They established thefirst truly international   
banking service; travelers not wanting to travelwith large   
sums could deposit their monies at any Temple and collect   
a likeamount at their destination. Burman/Templars 85   
The Templars were the primary bankers for the Holy See.

Since the order was a papal creation whichwas   
administered directly by the Pope himself, their significance   
as papalbankers is understandable. Less obvious is the   
Templars' function as royalbankers for several of Europe's   
royal houses. The two greatest Templesoutside the Levant   
were located in Paris and London. These two   
Templesoffered a full range of financial services to the royal   
houses, includingcollecting taxes, controlling debts and   
administering pension funds. Burman/Templars 87-88 The   
treasury of the King of France was kept safelywithin the   
vault of the Temple of Paris. Sinclair 36 The Templars   
owned a great fleet of merchant ships with which to convey   
allmanner of goods, e. g., pepper and cotton, as well as   
pilgrims, betweenEurope and the Holy Land. People   
wanting to make a pilgrimage to the HolyLand, but lacking   
the resources to do so, were allowed to assign rights totheir   
houses and property, upon their death, to the Templars in   
exchange forpassage on a Templar ship. To avoid   
accusations of usury, this procedure waslegitimized by the   
papal bull Quantum Praedecessores, issued by   
PopeEugenius II in 1145. Burman/Templars 75-78 The   
Holy Land was divided into four Crusader States:   
Jerusalem, Antioch, Tripoli and Edessa. Shifting alliances,   
complicated by the plotting ofindependent Arab emirates,   
posed a complicated and often confusing backdropfor the   
Knights' military operations. Their first action was in the   
northernsector of the Principality of Antioch. They captured   
the March of Amanus, which formed a natural barrier   
between the city of Amanus and Asia   
Minor. Burman/Templars 50 The Knights Templar   
frequently fought side-by-side with their counter-parts, the   
Knights Hospitaller, another military order, founded to   
provideshelter to sick, wounded or destitute pilgrims.

Together, these two warriororders afforded the Holy Land   
a formidable fighting force. Although somehistories allude   
to a deep and bitter rivalry between the two, it is morelikely   
that they cooperated well during the battles, keeping any   
suchpettiness for the monotonous weeks between actions.

Upton-Ward 6-7 The first military action of the Templars   
was in the northern sector of theHoly Land. In 1131, they   
captured the March of Amanus in Antioch. It was anatural   
barrier between the city and Asia Minor, which afforded   
control oftwo roads into Antioch. The same year, King   
Fulk, Baldwins successor, travelled to the site and granted   
ownership to the Templars. Burman/Templars 52 Control   
of the various areas of the Holy Land see-sawed back and   
forthbetween the Crusaders and the Arabs, with neither   
side enjoying a decisivevictory. Then the balance of power   
began to change with the rise of thegreat Arab leader   
Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn-Aiyub, known to westerners   
asSaladin. Descended from a long line of military heroes,   
he was born in 1138in Baalbek, Syria, where his father   
was military governor. He began todevelop his warrior   
skills by accompanying his father and uncles on   
variouscampaigns. Burman/Templars 98 Saladin's rise to   
power was rapid and successful. His adherance to   
theorthodox Sunni faith caused him to initiate dramatic   
changes in his Shi-itearmy. Upon his ultimate rise to the   
position of Sultan, he declared a'jihad', or holy war, against   
the Crusaders. This intense re-focusing of theMoslem effort   
began a gradual shift in power. Christian strongholds fell   
inincreasing numbers, creating a domino effect. By the   
middle of 1187, Saladin had captured Acre, Nablus, Jaffa,   
Toron, Sidon, Beirut and Ascalon. Jerusalem fell on 2   
October, 1187. Burman/Templars 108 The fall of   
Jerusalem was a disaster from which the Crusades   
neverrecovered. Among Saladin's prisoners were the King   
of Jerusalem and Raynaldde Chatillon, commander of the   
fortress at Moab. After entertaining the twoin his tent,   
Saladin had Raynald killed. The King saw his fellow   
prisonerexecuted and thought he was surely next, but   
Saladin had him brought back into his tent and told him, " It   
is not the habit of kings to kill kings." Saladin's victory was   
complete. Payne 223-4 In the disarray that followed, the   
orders began to disperse. TheHospitallers removed their   
headquarters, first to Rhodes and then to Malta; and, with   
the ultimate fall of Acre in 1291, the Templars lost their   
base ofoperations and relocated to Cyprus. In effect, the   
orders had lost theiroriginal reason for existence.

Upton-Ward 9 As the Knights had their policital patrons,   
so had their enemies. In 1305, Philip IV of France, known   
as Philip the Fair, seized control of the HolySee and   
relocated the papacy to Avignon. From there, he initiated a   
seriesof papal decrees, ostensibly issues by Pope Clement   
V, a puppet pope underhis absolute control. Eyeing the   
vast fortunes and resources of theTemplars, he conceived a   
plot of treachery against them. Since he also controlled the   
Inquisition in France, he had no difficulty leveling a whole   
laundry list of horrible, but adsurd and largely   
unsupportable, crimesagainst the Knights.

Burman/Inquisition 95 The role of the Inquisition, under   
the auspices of Chief InquisitorGuillaume of Paris, was to   
obtain confessions and conduct trials. On Fridaythe 13th of   
September, 1307, the warrant was issued for the arrest of   
theKnights and seizure of their property. Many of the   
Temples were 'tipped off'by the local sheriffs about the   
impending sweep, but Grand Master Jacques deMolay and   
his associates were arrested in their bed clothes.

Theinterrogations, aimed at soliciting evidence of any   
wrongdoing with which to prove the allegations against the   
order, dragged on for years. Ultimately, the Grand Master,   
along with other high-ranking Templars, were executed   
byburning in March, 1314, on an island in the Seine.

Howarth 17 The years between the arrest of Templars   
and the order's final dissolutionafforded plenty of time for   
knights on the lam to become absorbed by   
theunderground. Knights in England were never pursued,   
due largely to a riftbetween the King and the Church, and   
many were thought to have participatedin the war between   
Scotland and England, on the side of Robert the   
Bruce. Robinson 150-51 The vast fleet of Templar   
merchant ships was never found. There is norecord of the   
18 Templar ships which had been based at La Rochelle on   
theFrench coast, nor any of the various Templar ships   
normally anchored in theThames or other English seaports.

There is some speculation that the BarbaryPirates, who   
gained worldwide noteriety by plundering European   
shipping wellinto the 19th century, were founded by   
seagoing Templars with revenge ontheir minds. Many of the   
order's ships were galleys, which were particularlysuited for   
piracy. Robinson 165 One of the more mysterious tenets   
of the Freemasons can be found in the initiation of a Master   
Mason. The initiate is told his degree " will make youa   
brother to pirates and corsairs." Robinson 165-66 In   
1813, a merchant ship, captained by a Freemason, was   
captured andboarded by pirates. In desperation, the   
captain rendered the Grand HailingSign of Distress of a   
Master Mason. The pirate captain apparently   
recognizedthe secret sign and allowed the merchant ship to   
proceed unharmed. Robinson166 The destruction of the   
Knights Templar by Philip the Fair was due to whathe saw   
as wealth, arrogance, greed and secrecy on the part of the   
order. Even Philip's lawyer admitted " perhaps not all of   
them had sinned." It tookmore than suspicion of guilt to   
bring about the downfall of such a powerfulentity as the   
Knights Templar. The final blow, however, was   
probablythree-fold: a general unpopularity of the order   
among the Europeanaristocracy, due in part to jealousy; a   
chronic shortage in the Frenchtreasury, despite heavy   
taxation; and Master de Molay's refusal to considera   
merger of the Templars with the Hospitallers, as suggested   
by the Pope. The fact remains, however, that no evidence   
of heresy was ever found. Burman/Templars 180 An   
order founded by nine knights in Jerusalem came to amass   
great wealthand power, which speaks well of their integrity   
and discretion. They becamethe " shock troops" of the Holy   
See. When they lost their original mission ofprotecting   
pilgrims upon the fall of Jerusalem, their downfall   
becameinevitable. Sinclair 37Works Cited: Burman,   
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History