The Lifestyle and Practices of the Templar Knights

By Andrew J. Koeling, 2002
Advisor Dr. Fredrick Suppe

A special thanks to Dr. Suppe, who was extremely accessible and supportive throughout the entirety of the project.
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Preface

The Templar Knights were a monastic order formed in the early 12th century to protect Christian pilgrims visiting the holy land in the wake of the first Crusade. In addition, they formed as a policing unit to maintain a Christian influence in the holy land in a time when most knights returned home to their own lands and families.

I plan on using this text to allow those interested in the Templars to learn more than just the beginnings and slanderous downfall of this monastic order, but also more about their lifestyle, their wealth, and the regions in which they held influence. Although history is sometimes viewed as a series of events that occurred through time to create the world in which we now live, it must be remembered that the names and groups that frequent modern textbooks include real people. In this regard, we must acknowledge the fact that they had to at least fulfill the basic necessities of life (eating, sleeping, shelter), but the questions we must ask ourselves what exactly was life like back in the age of knights and castles, and what rules did a monastic knight have to follow? Was there a philosophy taken by the knights to justify their ability to violate one of the Ten Commandments ("Thou Shalt not Kill"), yet still remain pious in the eyes of God? I will also look at the accusations of heresy and devil worship that accompanied the downfall of this majestic order of knights and speak on the validity of these claims.

At the end of this resource, I have also printed some important primary documents, some of the most powerful tools we have when studying the Templars today. Although most were originally written in Latin, they have been graciously translated and been made available for classroom use. Although I quote them frequently throughout the
work, I have included them in their entirety, which will allow the student and scholar alike to be able to make their own deductions about the Templar lifestyle.

It is important to realize that although documentation is our primary means of deriving what the Templar lifestyle was like, excavations in the Holy Land have also provided us with some Templar remnants, such as weaponry, armor, and castles. In the study of history, it is important to draw upon as many sources as possible to paint an accurate portrayal over the events that occurred so that we can better analyze those events and understand why history took the directions that it did.

It is my intention that this paper will help give one viewpoint of the Templars, and from that one viewpoint further analysis can be deduced (regardless of whether the reader agrees or disagrees with the deductions and conclusions – as long as further thought is provoked, then my job has been done correctly). More importantly, I hope the reader gains further understanding and interest in the Order of the Temple and its practices.
Chapter 1 - The Expansion of the Order

The Templars, known to begin in meager numbers for a noble cause (to protect pilgrims traveling to the holy land) began as a very small nucleus of Knights, and eventually spanned out and grew immensely. Although it is difficult to know exactly how large the Order became, we have a few documents, which give us relative estimates of Templar growth.

The Primitive Rule of the Templar, written by Church officials and delivered by Bernard of Clairvaux (who is given credit for authoring it), states that the Order, "assembled at Troyes from divers provinces beyond the mountains on the feast of my lord St. Hilary, in the year of the incarnation of Jesus Christ 1128, in the ninth year after the founding of the aforesaid knighthood." In a document authored by William of Tyre in 1170, The Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar he states "In this same year [1118] certain noble men of knightly rank, religious me, devoted to God and fearing him, bound themselves to Christ’s service in the hands of the Lord Patriarch." Thus, through these documents, it can be deduced that the Knights Templar started in the year 1118. We are also given, in both documents, the names of the two leaders of the Order, Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey of St. Omar. Back in The Primitive Rule of the Templar, we are given our first indication of the numbers of members on the order. "And also present was Brother Hugues de Payens, with some of this brothers whom he had brought with him. They were Brother Roland, Brother Godefroy, and Brother Geoffroi Bisot, Brother Payen de Montdidier, Brother Archambaut de Saint-Amand." The passage goes on referring to
them as fathers of the Order. In addition, we are told that Hugues de Payens came with some of his brothers, and not all. Thus, from this document, it can be concluded that the Order had more than six members in its beginnings. In addition, we can see that they are all nobles through the use of the last name. Although literature concerning the locations the Knights originated from is scarce, it is presumed that most were French based on the dialect of the names of which they are known.

In The Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar, William of Tyre gives a more exact number. “Although the knights now had been established for nine years, there were still only nine of them. From this time onward, their numbers began to grow and their possessions began to multiply.” For the first few years of their existence, the Templar presence existed to protect pilgrims going to the Holy land. William of Tyre wrote, “Their primary duty, one which was enjoined upon them by the Lord Patriarch and the other bishops for the remission of sins, was that of protecting the roads and routes against the attacks of robbers and brigands. They did this especially in order to safeguard pilgrims.” Since the Templar Knights formed following the First Crusade, Muslim aggression was very high, and with an influx of Christian pilgrims, someone would be needed to safeguard the main roads and holy sites.

Although it is difficult to know exactly how fast the Knights grew, William of Tyre gave a rather good estimate in The Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar when he wrote, “They have now grown so great that there are in this Order today about three hundred knights who wear white mantles, in addition to the brothers, who are almost countless.” William was writing around the year 1170, so we know that the order grew substantially from 1118 to 1170, but questions remain over why the Templars grew
so large so fast. Perhaps zealous recruiting and another crusade helped to bolster the Templar ranks.

In 1128, Hugh de Payens went on an extensive recruiting drive in England. This trip was documented in The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 1128. "This same year came from Jerusalem Hugh of the temple to the king in Normandy; and the king received him with much honor... and afterwards he sent him into England... And he invited folk out to Jerusalem; and there went with him and after him more people than ever did before, since that the first expedition was in the day of Pope Urban." This drive to bring crusaders to the holy land for a Christian purpose was probably one of the major contributors of Templar growth. In addition, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also gives us the reason that Hugh traveled to England in the first place – since Normandy and England were controlled by the same King, if he obtained the king's favor he would have free reign to recruit in both locations. In addition, Hugh was quite upset after the end of the first crusade because, "a mighty war was begun between the Christians and the heathens; but when they came thither, then was it nought but leasing." What Hugh meant was that even though there was a great victory in the Holy Land, it would be short lived if the area remained devoid of a Christian presence. Hugh believed an epic war was breaking out, one over the holy city of Jerusalem. However, when he arrived, he found that, although conquered, Muslims still frequented the area, and were not adequately driven out. In addition, in the wake of the first crusade, many crusaders returned home which left the Holy Land without a continuous Christian presence.

Another source of membership was probably found after Bernard of Clairvaux wrote the letter In Praise of the New Knighthood to Hugh de Payens in 1147. The benefit
of having a very outspoken churchman (Bernard) backing the Templar cause would have
definitely raised awareness of the Order, as well as causing more nobles to either join or
assist the Order more readily. Bernard did well in making the Templars seem both
inviting to nobles, allowing them to sate their lust for battle, as well as the Church by
presenting them as warriors of Christ.

In Praise of the New Knighthood spoke on the worldly knighthood (secular
knights) as being warriors who not only die in vain (not for Christ) but also as being
inefficient. "Then why do you blind yourselves with effeminate locks and trip yourselves
up with long and full tunics, burying your tender, delicate hands in big cumbersome
sleeves?" Bernard then wrote of the new Knighthood (monastic knights), "The knight of
Christ, I say, may strike with confidence and die yet more confidently, for he serves
Christ when he strikes, and serves himself when he falls." The ability to be killed on the
field of battle, essentially dying with honor, and guaranteed a place in heaven would be
very attractive to a prospective member at the time of the Templars’ existence.

Around the same time In Praise of the New Knighthood was written, Bernard of
Clairvaux was also preaching for the need for a second crusade. The Templars provided a
perfect outlet for an influx of people who wanted to fight in the Holy Land for a Christian
cause. From this point onward, it is very difficult to estimate the number of members in
the Order – in many cases, the number of Knights are known since their land was donated
to the Templar order in many cases, but the large number of men who were of humble
birth and joined the Order was very hard to keep track of, although we know that
compared to the other military monastic orders, the Templar were in fact the smallest.11
The reasons for their small numbers are difficult to determine, although we can speculate
that the Templars were one of the last Orders to take on new membership which may have affected their growth, as well as having a much more stringent lifestyle to adhere by, which may have been a deterrent to many who would have joined the order had the Templar lifestyle not been so structured. After reviewing the records at the time of their dissolution, it has been concluded that there were “144 Templars in England in their last years, including 15 to 20 knights, 8 to 16 priests, and 108 to 121 sergeants or serving brothers”\textsuperscript{12}. However, it must also be noted that these results do not include any members who were not recognized in some way, and thus is somewhat inaccurate. The numbers in other areas are also difficult to find, and since England had some of the best records around, they are the best indication of the size of the Order. Unfortunately, England would have the lowest occupied membership based solely on the large distance between that country and the holy land, again making the count done of all recorded Templars inaccurate. It can be assumed that the majority of members would be located in and around the holy land, although multiple garrisons would be located throughout Europe. However, the Templars were granted a large amount of land in both England and France, which makes it very possible that the largest number of brothers were located in these areas while the knights they supported traveled within the crusader states.

Overall, the growth of the Templar Order is very difficult to trace accurately. However, it can be safely assumed that the greatest amount of members of the Templar Order existed in the late thirteenth century, based on the repeated drives to gain new membership and the unification that occurred during the Third Crusade. As the Templars eventually moved their base of operations to the island of Cyprus, it can also be assumed that their activities as warriors probably decreased as they increased the amount of
commerce they conducted, which would have also increased the amount of Templars (since less would be involved in combat which would inevitably result in the deaths of at least a few members). In addition, more people would want to become Templars, as their reputation and prestige grew considerably throughout their existence (although there was quite a lot of criticism as well, as occurs for anyone that makes themselves the center of attention). The Templar Order was enabled to grow considerably and was able to support its larger membership through the multiple land grants and tax exemptions the Order held. In addition, the Templar were most likely a welcomed addition to any city, as the nobles would be able to use the Templars for banking purposes, which may have also inflated the ranks of Templar members.
Chapter 2 - The Growth of Templar Wealth

From their advent to their demise, the Templar Order was known for amassing a large amount of wealth. Considering the fact that they took monastic vows, it is very difficult to comprehend how the Order could gain such vast wealth and not be under the scrutiny of the Church itself. However, the ability to gain wealth seemed beyond the boundaries of the Templar Rules. In this chapter, we will analyze how the Templars were able to collect such vast amounts of wealth, as well as how this wealth affected their standing with secular rulers and church officials.

Originally, it can be deduced that Hugh de Payens and the other eight founding knights of the Order of the Temple were wealthy before the Order began, as they were able to act as knights and go on the first crusade.

We know that by becoming monastic knights, the Templars took the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Thus, it was against their monastic nature to individually own land or ornate things. However, the Templars were an exception within the church, as they were allowed to both hold lands and fields, and thus would receive a substantial income, which would be beneficial to the group. In the Primitive Rule of the Templar the rules state that, “For this reason we judge you to be rightly called knights of the temple, with the double merit of beauty and probity, and that you may have lands and keep men, villeins and fields and govern them justly, and take your right to them as it is specifically established.”¹ This section of the rules gave them the ability to become
vassals essentially, allowing them to accumulate wealth as any other noble would be accustomed to.

In addition to individuals being able to hold land, the Templars were also able to receive tithes. In the Primitive Rule of the Templar, the Templars are able to receive church tithes if a bishop decides to give them to the Order. However, this would seem like a menial source of wealth, as the bishop would probably want to keep as much of the wealth as he could. However, the rules were written so that if a person wished to donate directly to the Order, in lieu of giving it to the Church, he was allowed to do so.

"Moreover, if any layman keeps the tithes of his patrimony, to his detriment and against the Church, and wishes to leave them to you, he may do so with the permission of the prelate and his chapter."3

In 1128, Hugh de Payens went to England to recruit. As well as gaining many new members, the wealth of the order grew substantially. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states, "and the king received him [Hugh] with much honour, and gave him rich presents in gold and in silver. And afterwards he was sent into England; and there he was received by all good men, who all gave him presents, and in Scotland also: and by him then sent to Jerusalem much wealth withal in gold and in silver."4 By receiving the favor of king Henry in Normandy, Hugh de Payens was able to vastly increase the Templars' wealth, through the king's own gifts, and through the gifts of all the kings' vassals. The year Hugh recruited was also the year the Primitive Rule of the Templar was enacted, insinuating that the Templars were becoming better known to both the clergy and the secular rulers. Since the Templars were favored by the church, it would be beneficial for specific secular rulers to back them, thus increasing their own power through their
support of the church. In addition, by backing the Templars, a secular ruler was also making an investment in the crusading movement, which may eventually lead to more land and wealth for the ruler who backed them.

In a document written by William of Tyre, The Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar, many allusions to Templar wealth is made. "Although the knights now had been established for nine years (founded in 1118), there were still only nine of them. From this time onward their numbers began to grow and their possessions began to multiply." Later, in the same document, "They are said to have immense possessions both here and overseas, so that there is now not a province in the Christian world which has not bestowed upon the aforesaid brothers a portion of its goods. It is said today that their wealth is equal to the treasures of kings." This document leads to some very important insight into the collection of Templar wealth. First, we know that they held land not just in the holy land, but also throughout Europe. Secondly, the Templars received tithes from a majority of nobles, which may have been for both political and spiritual reasons. Politically, donating to the Templars ensured that the Order would continue to exist, thus putting pressure on the Muslims in the Holy Land and opening up possibilities for new territory. Spiritually, donating to the Templars would essentially be good for the Church, as the Templars were attempting to drive the Saracens from the Holy Land.

However, this same document also gives us an indication of some criticism that the Templars had to endure during the late twelfth century. "They withdrew from the Patriarch of Jerusalem ... from whom they received their first benefices and to whom they denied the obedience which their predecessors rendered. They have also taken away
tithes and first fruits from God's churches, have disturbed their possessions, and have made themselves exceedingly troublesome." This passage has some indications of a slight animosity towards the Templar Order, manifesting from its ability to accept Church tithes and ability to capture relics. In addition, their withdrawal from Jerusalem created a lot of disapproval of the Order, as they seemed to break the bond of fealty that was created when the Order first was given land in Jerusalem.

The Templars were also given many other holdings, although it is very difficult to account for exactly what the Templars controlled because records that exist are very sparse and are different from the territories that exist in modern times. Some material can be found when we look at records of an inquest from the Master of the Templars in England, occurring in 1185. The Inquest performed by Geoffrey Fitz Stephen gives accounts of significant Templar holdings in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, as well as a variety of holdings that were dispersed throughout England. Although we fail to have records of Templar holdings in other countries, it can be safely assumed that the Templars also held a strong influence in France, Spain, and the Holy land, as well as Cyprus. Another record of Templar holdings occurred after their demise – in 1338, the Hospitallers gave a report over the lands that they obtained from the Templar Order.

Both of the records over Templar holdings are incomplete, but from the limited information they give, it can be deduced that the Templars were given small parcels of land throughout the entirety of England. However, if most of the land were spread out, it would be impossible for the Templars themselves to manage the multitude of small properties. Thus, the Templars would either rent the land, or have hired hands manage it
for the goods that they would have produced. The Records also show a high number of properties in Yorkshire, donated by the various nobles in the area.

Although it is not known for certain whether the Templars bought territory, records have been kept of territories that were sold off by the Templars. Obviously, this alone could have contributed significantly to Templar wealth, whereas the Order would gain a parcel of land as a tithe from wealthy noble, and then they would go and sell the parcel for profit, essentially making money from nothing. Although the donor may have frowned upon this practice, the Templars surely could not have rented every single piece of land they held (or run them as demesnes), so selling them was an acceptable alternative to gaining profit from lands, which would otherwise go unused. In a study done by Kosminsky using the Hundred Rolls for 1278 and 1279, the Templars were found to have held twelve small (less than five hundred acres) and four medium sized (five hundred to one thousand acres) manors in the areas of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire—since no large manors were found in Templar possession, it would be unlikely that the Templar holdings would have been all run by the actually Order itself.\textsuperscript{11} Officially, there were certain members who acted as procurators, or business men, who would "represent the order... in such matters as the receipt and acceptance of donations of all kinds, the transfer and sale of land and goods of all sorts, and in the defense and prosecution of cases involving the Templars."\textsuperscript{12} These men would have been very important, as they must have been educated in Common Law, which would have made them invaluable to the Order since they could more easily use the system to keep the Templar Order in the favor of the nobles in the areas which the Templars resided. More importantly, the ability to transfer lands would have been helpful, since it would allow other Templar officials to
worry about other issues instead of the financial transactions that must have been taking place.

The Templars had to trade for many items that they could not produce themselves. We know that the Templars either used products produced on their land or their money to buy the goods necessary to run an efficient military order. “In 1298, royal agents of the king contracted to buy 16 sacks, 27 ½ stone of wool from the Templars in Lincolnshire for 134 pounds 15s 7 ½ d.; 6 sacks, 18 ½ stone of good wool and 3 sacks 22 stone of medium wool at Temple Bruer; 2 sacks, 25 stone of good wool and 1 sack, 12 ½ stone of medium at Eagle.”¹³ There are also other examples of the Templars dealing in wool with various merchants or kings in exchange for the goods they needed. The ability to actively produce wool and grain meant that the Templars either had control of some manors, on which serfs and free men lived and gave toward the Templar holdings, or that the Templars themselves were involved directly in the production of goods. Based on what is known of the Templars, they probably obtained most of what they produced from the people that lived on their estates, rather than producing goods themselves. The Templars had to fulfill their duties as monks, but they also had to maintain a significant time in which they could practice cavalry skills, as well as uncounted combat. However, it is also known that other monastic orders were able to keep flocks of sheep and maintain them themselves. It is therefore possible that the sergeants or lesser members of the Templar had to tend the flocks in addition to their other duties (such as the care of the horses and arms of the Knights).

It is very important to note that it was very expensive to maintain an armed and mounted knight. Although tithes could maintain the order and help it buy the necessary
items for survival, it is very unlikely that tithes alone could maintain even a small repertoire of knights. Business transactions must have been very important to the Templar order, and it is very probable that goods that the lesser members produced were sold or traded for the weaponry and equipment of the knight brothers. Short of wool produced by sheep, it is probable that at least some of the lesser brothers were farmers, giving them the dual purpose of not only creating a viable food source for the brothers in the area, but also a valuable cash crop.

It is quite possible that modern banking originated with the Templar order, due to their vast amounts of wealth at their disposal, although the Jews preceded them in the practice of money lending. Since the Templars were a permanent Order, and with their monastic roots, they became the perfect receptacle to hold wealth while the various nobles and kings from around Europe were going off on crusades. The Templars also were spread ubiquitously throughout Europe in permanent structures, which gave them another advantage over the Jews (which, although spread throughout Europe, lacked permanent defensive dwellings). In essence, this could have been a major source of Templar wealth – if some stipulation was made that at the death or a donor a part of the land would pass into Templar hands, it would have proven to be a great source of wealth for the Templars.

There are some examples of the Templars being used as a banking facility. "[King] John entrusted 20,000 marks on one occasion, 10,000 marks on another, 7,000 marks on still another, and other sums totaling at least 5,000 pounds to the Templars." In addition, King John also gave order to pay money out to certain people in various amounts. In addition, the places in which he paid the money out were all vastly different;
again giving evidence that the ubiquitous spread of the Templars throughout Europe made them a valuable institution for the transfer of funds. In addition, it can be noted that the Templars were dealing with multiple types of currencies – since the Order of the Temple spanned from the holy land across Europe and into England, the order would have encountered many different types of money. This was a primary function of banking establishments of the medieval time period, when it would be important to know the exchange rates between the various types of currency. The nobles of Britain seemed to have used the Templars extensively for the use of both storing and withdrawing money. The Earl of Pembroke had a large, undisclosed account to be used whenever Simon de Montfort needed funding\textsuperscript{17}. However, that is only one example of the usage of the Templar order as a banking institution. Another example is how Hubert de Burgh had 150 pounds in the Templars' possession in 1232.\textsuperscript{18} Hubert was a noble and official of England. It also must be noted that the Templars didn't only deal in large scale transactions: although 150 pounds is indeed a large sum of money for the time period, it was a paltry sum compared to that deposited and withdrawn by other various nobles and kings.

A major question still remains to this day however – Did the Templar make any profit or charge interest over their transactions? There are multiple records of debts being paid in installments. For example, "in 1221, he [Henry III] borrowed the 500 marks needed for making peace with France, promising to repay at the rate of 150 pounds per year out of the income from the royal manor of Godmanchester"\textsuperscript{19}. However, there are no records to show any form of interest being collected on top of the original debt. According to the rules of the Templar and the church, the collection of interest would
have been usury, which was seen as a sin by the Catholic Church. Thus, it can be assumed that interest was not charged, but that the original payment was demanded. An example of this can be seen under the rule of King John, where he borrowed multiple times from the Templar, and seemed as if he would not repay his debt—however, Templars from the mainland pressured John to pass a portion of his revenue from fiefs in Gascony and Bordeaux to the Templar order\textsuperscript{20}. However, even after his death, these loans were not fully repaid and were taken care of by Hubert de Burgh and William Marshall who were in control of England at the time following King John's rule (and before his heir came of age)\textsuperscript{21}. Even in such a drawn out debt, there are no existing records of interest being charged, and thus it can be concluded that the Templar order did not charge for their services, but instead were repaid in tithes and gifts bestowed on the order (such as immunities to taxes).

It was also an advantage that the Templar wealth grew as more and more noble families joined the order. Commonly, a noble without an heir would donate his lands to the Order upon death. In other cases, the noble who joined would will a certain portion of his land to the Order, giving a remainder to his sons and wife. For example, when Hugh of Bourbouton joined, he turned over all his lands to the order\textsuperscript{22}. Then his son joined, his wife became a nun, and soon all the land his entire family had was in the possession of the Templars. Within a short while (by 1130), the Templars were very active in Provence, Flanders, Languedoc, Iberia, Burgundy, and Champagne, and held some political power in all these areas\textsuperscript{23}. The Templar order was not only wealthy in riches, but also in the more important asset of land that was received from the wealthy nobles who decided to join the Order. Unlike other parts of feudal society where land may have been ought over
by two or more sons and split between them, the Templar movement allowed for the
unification of property which would not be broken up, expanding the Templar Order in
power and financial gain.

The Templar system of wealth is quite interesting considering that the Templars
were a monastic order, and knowing that all to members took a vow of poverty. The
Roman Catholic Church today is still accused of being somewhat gaudy and flashy, and
not much has changed in the past thousand years. Beautiful things that exist in the house
of God honor him; therefore, if the Templars had some extraneous things, it was
accepted. These practices could also be seen across the rest of the monastic orders, as
they all not only had monetary donations, but in some cases, such as for the Teutonic
Knights, whole castles were given to the order. Thus, although the Templar Order was
given an excess of wealth, it was accepted by the Church. More importantly, the support
of the Templars gave the Church the ability to strengthen themselves substantially, as the
Templars' property was also considered Church property.
Chapter 3 - On the Lifestyle of the Templar Knight

From the extant information historians have of the Templars, we know that their lives must have been very difficult. The best source that exists today concerning Templar lifestyle is found in the Primitive Rule of the Templar, written by Bernard of Clairvaux. Although it is unknown if the rules were followed to the letter, it can be deduced that to remain in the good graces of the Church, the Templars probably were rather attentive to the rules. Amongst the rules are directions that ranged not only from the daily prayers and holy days, but included sections on eating, sleeping, dress and equipment. Much of the rigidity of the Templar rules stems from their author, Bernard of Clairvaux.

The Templar meals were relatively simple, consisting of vegetables and other similar dishes (lentils) served with bread. Three times per week, the Templar knights were allowed to eat meat. Bernard of Clairvaux writes, “For it is understood that the custom of eating flesh corrupts the body,” thus restricting the Knights to eating it sparingly, unless it was a feast day or a Sunday. On feast days and Sundays, the Knights would receive two meat meals. It was also observed that if a fast were to occur on a meat day in the honor of a particular saint, the Knights would then receive meat the following day. Although meager to modern day standards, the meals the Templars ate were definitely above the norm. Since the Templars had access to other cultures more readily (at least in the holy land), they had access to food found in other lands such as olives, certain types of melon, artichoke, and other middle eastern crops not readily found in central Europe at the time. In addition, the Templars ate better that the majority of the
peasants, who were never guaranteed to eat meat three times a week, and commonly lived on animal products that did not harm the animal, such as milk and eggs. The rules written by Bernard of Clairvaux also state that on Fridays, the entire congregation should be given meat, including the sergeants.\(^3\) The eating conditions for the Templar seemed to only affect the Knight-brothers, since they were of noble birth and would have eaten better, provided they did not become monastic knights. Thus, it can be concluded that, although the Primitive Rules of the Templar were written to make life more rigid and pious for the monastic knight, they only reduced the amount of meat for those of noble blood, while supplying a modest food source for those sergeants and squires who served the order and were of lesser birth. In Bernard’s In Praise of the New Knighthood he states, “...They come and go at the bidding of their superior [the Master]. They wear what he gives them, and do not presume to wear or eat anything from another source. Thus they shun every excess in clothing and food and content themselves with what is necessary.\(^4\).

Another benefit of being a Templar was an additional light meal, or collation, given before nightfall before the call to prayers. Since a monastic Knight followed a similar schedule of that of a monk, this would be a very late meal and occur right before compline, or nightly prayers\(^5\). Obviously, this was beneficial to the members nutrition, giving them some additional food that would help them remain healthy.

Although the rules for eating seemed especially stringent at first, they at least gave structure to the Knight’s diet. When a knight was sick, weak, or injured, the special dietary rules did not apply to him, and he would be given meat, even during times of fasting and during the period from All Saint’s Day to Easter, which was a specific
fasting time (and extended well beyond the period of Lent). In fact, in another section of
Bernard’s rules, the master of the Templars can also order diluted wine to be given to
those of the order, with a stipulation that the wine is given in moderation, “Quia vinum
facit apostatare sapientes. That is to say, that wine corrupts the wise”.

Since bowls were in short supply, the Knight-brothers ate in pairs. This worked in
a two-fold manner. Firstly, it made the Knights value the little they were given. More
importantly, the sharing of the bowls made it impossible to keep secrets, or cheat the
other brothers in their share of the food. In addition, it also built upon the ideal that
everything within the Order was to be shared, and that no individual knight would have
an item another brother did not.

Even the act of eating was restricted. Members were expected to eat in silence,
unless it was absolutely necessary to ask for something. Talking was to be nonexistent,
since meal times were also times when the Scripture was to be read. Thus, the Knights
were supposed to remain attentive and quiet throughout their meals, for the courtesy of
the other brothers and to show piety and respect for the Bible. This not only served in
making the knights pious, but also increased their obedience in general. Since obedience
is vastly important when executing military procedures, this would prove invaluable
when transferred to the battlefield.

Other difficulties included the types of clothing allowed for members of the order.
The Primitive Rule of the Templar contains strict guidelines to clothing. In accordance
with Bernard of Clairvaux’s loathing for flashy and gaudy attire, the Templar dress was
restricted to the colors white, black, and brown. The Templars were also given a white
cloak, which was to mark them as a knight of Christ and allow the Templars (and
Hospitallers) to be able to recognize each other. In addition, Bernard chose a white cloak since white symbolizes the virtue of purity, as well as chastity. The materials used in Templar dress were restricted since they were not allowed to use fur or leather as clothing, nor as bedding. Instead, wool was a common material used in the production of Templar dress, especially since wool would be easily obtained from the flocks of sheep the order kept. Bernard wrote that the Draper, a Knight assigned to Templar dress, would ensure that all robes are a correct fit and do not vary in length from Templar to Templar.

If any Knight brother complained about the condition or wear of his habit (his clothes), he was to be given the worst the Order had. This was to ensure that pride and arrogance was not held by any of the Knights. In addition, since the Knights were originally nobles, this would make it impossible to flaunt wealth, a practice that was common amongst the nobility. It was also put into effect that if a knight did receive new robes, he was to turn in your old ones so they can be given to the squires, the sergeants, or the poor. In Bernard's In Praise of the New Knighthood, he addresses the secular knighthood. Bernard fails to understand why the secular Knighthood would wear long full tunics in a battle, since the hands would be buried in the sleeves – not ideal for a warrior, since it would be difficult to bear arms, as well as provide the knights with a weakness that could be exploited by their enemies (longer sleeves would be easier to entangle). In addition, Bernard attacks the secular knighthood for being gaudy, flaunting wealth at every opportunity with silk and gold. He states, "Do you think the swords of your foes will be turned back by your gold, spare your jewels or be unable to pierce your silks?" Thus, it seems as if the rules given to the Templar were not just monastic in
nature, but were also practical. Pointed shoes and shoelaces were however, forbidden, since these items were associated with pagans. Again, to make certain no witchcraft was afoot, the robes of the Templars were not allowed to be worn long, another sign of pagans\textsuperscript{15}.

Since the holy land (common day Israel) was also very hot, it was made allowable that the Templars could wear a linen shirt from Easter to All Saints day (essentially the summer)\textsuperscript{16}. This would have probably been very comforting to the Knights in Jerusalem and other crusader states since it would be exceedingly hot if a tunic (made of wool) had to be worn at all times. Another way to fight the heat, improve visibility, and again show submission to the lord was to keep the hair cut short. Having short hair in the Middle East would obviously help with heat issues. In addition, the tonsure was a sign of monasticism, and the Templars being monastic knights willingly submitted themselves to this type of haircut. In battle, the tonsure would be beneficial – if a helmet was worn, the hair would not get caught on it and cause discomfort. More importantly however, the hair wouldn’t be blown into the eyes of a mounted Knight, allowing him to keep his visibility and remain vigilant during a skirmish with the Saracens.

Bathing was something that was also not very common. In Bernard’s letter to Hugh de Payens, In Praise of the New Knighthood, Bernard states, “Indeed, they seldom wash and never set their hair – content to appear tousled and dusty, bearing the marks of the sun and of their armor.”\textsuperscript{17} From this statement, we know that the medieval age fear of bathing was still in effect, and in this case is seen as a virtue. In addition, we know that they must have worn their armor for long periods for it to be causing marks (such as bruises). Even
today, we know how hot the Holy Land is, so it is not unlikely that the Templars would be either sunburned or tanned.

Sleeping was also something that was regulated within the Primitive Rule of the Templar. Each member of the Templar was given a mattress, a bolster (a long narrow pillow), and one blanket. If for some reason these bedding items were not available, a rug was acceptable. Every member was allowed to use a linen blanket at all times (again, for heat regulation). However, it was required that all members wear a shirt, pants, belts, and shoes whilst they were sleeping. In addition, the areas in which the members slept were to remain well lit until morning. By leaving the area well lit, it would be increasingly difficult to go and disobey commands by leaving to indulge in guilty pleasures (alcohol, sex) and would again bolster the chastity of the Knights. Requiring the members to remain in almost full dress inhibited homosexual urges that any of the members may have had, as homosexuality was viewed as a grave sin. Bernard of Clairvaux also wanted the Order to keep a light lit, if all possible, when staying at inns, “so that shadowy enemies may not lead them to wickedness, which God forbids them.”

A large issue that many nobles would have to deal with would be submission to the master of the order. The master acted as both a general and as an abbot, which was in fact a very powerful position. In the Primitive Rule of the Templar, the master is given the ability to give away the horses and armor of a Knight brother. In addition, the Knight whose equipment was dispersed was not to become angry, “for be certain that if he becomes angry he will go against God.” The master was also able to choose his own council, to discuss important issues. Overall, the master had an important position, as he had to regulate the business of all the knights that were a part of his Order.
Obedience was very important to Bernard of Clairvaux. Thus, many basic rights that are taken for granted today were not available to the members of the Templar. For example, when the master would give an order, it was to be immediately obeyed without question or dissent.\textsuperscript{23} It was against the rule to leave the Temple grounds to go the town or city without first getting the permission of the master. If permission was given to the knight to leave the grounds, he was instructed to go with another knight. When staying in an inn, it was against the rules to go to see or speak to another person in their room without first getting permission from the master. The Rule of the Templar states, “We command by common consent that in this Order which is rules by God, no brother should fight or rest according to his own will, but according to the orders of the Master, to whom all should submit...”\textsuperscript{24}

In all exchanges of goods the brothers, sergeants, or squires undertook, it was required to ask the Master first, unless it was something extremely small and invaluable\textsuperscript{25}. If an outsider gave the member a gift or donation, he was required to present it to the Master. In the case of food, he was to present it to the Commander of Victuals. If family wanted to give a gift specifically to a member of the Order, special permission had to first be granted before the gift could be received. Overall, the Master or Commander made the ultimate decision if any transaction was to take place. This ensured that specific members of the Templars would not receive an excess of material things and would not incite jealousy. In addition, it helped to keep them more pious, since poverty was one of the three vows the Knights took to join the Order.

Secrecy between members was something that was to be avoided, since secrets have a way of leading to sin. Thus, locks were forbidden for all but the Master and the
Commander, unless specific permission was received first. This would make it impossible to keep any small possessions for one's self. When a letter arrived for a member, it could only be delivered with the permission of the Master. Even so, if permission was granted, the letter was under scrutiny and could be read to the Master or Commander if it pleased them. This obviously made it very difficult to keep family issues personal, and made the Templar life one of scrutiny. However, as long as the Master was pious and just, it would help bolster monastic life and keep the Order running smoothly. Overall, the Master had the ability to exert quite an extreme amount of control over the members of the Templar Order.

To get a true idea of what Templar life was like, monasticism also has to be investigated. The Templars also had to fulfill the regular duties as monks during the course of the day. Every day, they were required to follow the normal groups of prayer, in agreement with the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The Primitive Rule of the Templar states, "you...strive everywhere with a pure desire to hear matins and the entire service according to canonical law and the customs of the regular masters of the holy city of Jerusalem." Through listening to the entire church service, it would be very difficult to be able to complete extra jobs without outside assistance, since the Templars would also have to train to be Knights as well. Thus, it can be said that he Templar lived a true double life – in one, he would be required to live a life dedicated to God, in the other he would strive to hone his skills to serve God militarily.

In many cases, the Templar Knight would not be able to hear the daily service, if he were sent east, or if he was in an extended campaign with the enemy. In this case, he was required to pray on his own during the hours that usually fulfill the monastic office.
In the case that he could not (when involved in a battle), the Knight was obligated to attempt to pray. In *The Primitive Rule of the Templar* instructions are given to ensure that the Knights understand that these hours are very important to recognize. “But if any brother is sent ... East – something we believe will happen often – and cannot hear the divine office, he should instead of matins thirteen paternosters; seven for each hour and nine for Vespers. And together we all order his to do so.”28 Later in the same passage, “if possible the set hours should not be omitted, in order to render to God his due.”29 Bernard of Clairvaux was obviously trying to emphasize that, to dedicate one’s self to God, one must follow the monastic life no matter what path one chooses to take. Obviously, equal significance was put on both piety and warfare.

The Order of the Templar had a few odd rules which seem unbecoming of a monastic order in comparison to that of the Benedictines or Cistercians because they allowed married brothers to join the Order, with some stipulations that had to be adhered to maintain the chastity of the brotherhood. A married brother was required to leave a part of his estate, on death, to the order, in addition to anything that was acquired after joining.30 In addition, the married brothers were not allowed to wear the white cloaks and habits that were one of the symbols of the order. In the case that they died before their wives did, the Templars would take some of the brother’s land for their own and give some to the widow to support her. Thus, they did not have to take a woman into their houses, which would essentially act as a catalyst to move against their vowed chastity – obviously, the founders knew that this could cause problems with the sanctity of the Order and thus made a rule against it. In fact, the rules also include a section about relations to women and explained how they were a strong temptation to men. Therefore,
“none of you may presume to kiss a woman, be it widow, young girl, mother, sister, aunt of any other, and henceforth the Knighthood of Jesus Christ should avoid at all costs the embraces of women, by which men have perished many times, so that they may remain eternally before the face of God with a pure conscience and sure life.”

Relating to women was obviously frowned upon by the Order, not just to maintain the chastity that all the brothers vowed, but also because women were believed to act as temptresses and seductresses, regardless if they dedicated their lives to God. In another section of The Primitive Rule of the Templar, taking sisters (essentially fighting nuns) into the Order was disallowed because, “by it the old devil has led many from the straight path to Paradise.”

Familial relations were also very difficult. Today, it is a common practice to make close relatives the godparents of children. However, The Primitive Rule of the Templar doesn’t allow Templars to become godparents. Furthermore, it goes on to tell the brothers to not be ashamed of turning down those who ask them to become godparents because, “this shame brings more glory than sin.” It was important that a Templar did not become a godparent because, as we have deduced historically, the death rate in the middle ages was much higher than it is today. Therefore, it was a common practice for the duties of being a godparent coming to fruition. Raising a child in an Order such as the Templars would have been virtually impossible. Between training and monastic life, the Templar was already dedicating much of his time to his various studies, and therefore would have very little time to rear children. Godparents were also expected to have an active role in the upbringing of the children, which would have interfered with the Templar lifestyle. In addition, the Templar Order only wanted members who were
dedicated to the Christian cause. This was important because a common practice during the middle ages was to send your child to a monastery to become a monk, essentially choosing his or her path in life for them. The Primitive Rule of the Templar states, “for he who wishes to give his child eternally to the order of knighthood should bring him up until such time as he is able to bear arms with vigour, and rid the land of the enemies of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{35} The Templars essentially wanted every member to not have divided attention between the Templar lifestyle and child rearing, but instead only between the study and worship of Christ and the tactics and maneuvers used on the battlefield.

The Templar had a very difficult lifestyle to lead – he had to remain pious, and yet at the same time be willing to sacrifice himself for Christianity. Every aspect of life was under scrutiny, including his meals, his prayers, and his actions toward other Templars and non-members – even when the knight was sleeping, he still had rules that had to be followed. The Knights stationed in the holy land had to be willing to march into battle against overwhelming odds. The Templar had to devote all his time to either training for battle, or praying to God – although the knight would occasionally be given another duty that would dictate a leave from the monastery or keep, these were probably very rare and reserved for the more senior members. Probably most devastating to modern contemporary views, the Templar had to almost literally give up all family life in his devotion to a new family, with brothers who were not by blood, but by vow. Overall, becoming a Templar was a lifestyle choice as well as a career – by joining the Order, a brother would have been dedicating his life not only to Christianity, but also to the defense of all Christians.
Chapter 4 - The Organization of the Order

The Templar Order was quite interesting, having members stemming from areas across Europe and into the Holy Land. To have such a widespread Order exist, a high degree of organization must have been necessary to operate effectively. Thus, a hierarchy was arranged so the Order would have a definitive leader, called the Grand Master. Although the method of which a Knight became a Grand Master is unknown, we can make a few assumptions based on the way the Order was initially set up.

It is very unlikely that the Grand Master would have been appointed the position from outside the Church (such as by a king) because this would have conferred a certain degree of power to a secular leader over the Templar Order (who would bow into political pressure as they would be forced to become involved in mainstream politics). In addition, the Templar Order exerted a large degree of freedom from the Church. Thus, the most likely event that chose a leader would either be an internal election (similar to the way the Catholic Church chooses a succeeding pope from a college of cardinals), although it is also possible that a Grand Master would choose his heir – however, this seems unlikely as the list of Grand Masters has members from across Europe and they are not centralized to any particular region.

The Grand Master was the ultimate voice of the Order, and as such, his orders were to be followed to the letter. The Grand Master was only accountable to the pope himself, and therefore this gave him a large degree of immunity. Eventually, as the Order grew, other leadership positions were necessary to keep the Templars efficient.
Commanders were assigned for Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tripoli following the First Crusade, as these sites became the capitals of the crusader states. A stationary force would have been quite beneficial if Islamic forces besieged any of these locations. Although we cannot consider the Templars to be a type of elitist unit, their presence was necessary as a large number of European crusaders left for home in the wake of their victory. It is uncertain of whether or not the Templar Order assigned a commander to Edessa, since this Crusader state was farther inland and would be more prone to Islamic attacks. The Commanders held the same power as the Grand Master within their own domains and thus it became obvious that the knights held a lot of power, similar to that of a king and his nobles.

Many other offices were necessary to keep the Order running effectively. A Drapier was put in charge of the Templar clothing. One Drapier would probably be assigned at each Templar stronghold, as this position would be necessary at all locations. The Drapier was essentially in charge of acquiring materials to be used in Templar dress, as well as repairing and producing additional uniforms as necessary – it would be important for him to fit the Knights correctly so that their sleeves would be a proper length to not infringe on the rules of the Order.

The Standard Bearer was another office that existed within the Templar Order. Essentially, the Bearer was assigned to carry the Templar banner into battle. Banners provided a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it signaled your position on the battlefield to your allies. More importantly, the banner would prove to intimidate the Saracens who knew the resolve of the Templar Order.
The Grand Master could also assign himself an advisor, who would most likely be a close friend and confidant, entitled the Seneschal. The Seneschal office existed to provide council to the Grand Master during times of great strategic need.

Similarly to secular armies, the duties of the Grand Master and the Commanders were to lead the army of Templars onto the field. Thus, the positions gave great power, but also required great risk. However, this also gave the leader more respect from his men, who would be more willing to go into battle as long as he seemed confident.

Under the control of the Grand Master and Commanders were the Knight-brothers. These were members of the Order that were actually knights, and thus were at an elevated position. To be a Knight meant that you must have been very well trained, and it is probable that only those of noble birth became full-fledged knights. The Knights had a small following consisting of a few sergeants to maintain equipment and horses. These sergeants were given specific duties that they were required to perform to make the knight as efficient as possible. The Constable was given the duty of caring for the horses of the knight, and was required to keep them well fed and in good health. An Under Marshal was assigned to care and maintain the knight’s equipment. This job was essential, since bent armor or nicked weaponry could mean the death of the knight on the field. Another sergeant followed the knight for the single purpose of helping him onto and off of his horse during battles. Armor was quite flexible and gave a full range of motion, but it also was quite heavy, and hopping off your horse could land you on your back, or more dangerously, on your face.

A large group of men-at-arms were also under the Knights, who acted as members of the Templar Order but were not full-fledged knights. This group was important as it
was used to engage the larger numbers of the Saracens. Men-at-arms with pikes could pull riders from their horses, disabling the Saracen horsemen. Later, the men-at-arms would use bows in a style similar to the Saracens, striking their enemies from range while the Knights could concentrate on heavy charges and breaking the enemy ranks.

Other more common offices also existed. A Knight was assigned to control the food storage, called the Commander of Victuals. When a food gift was given to any particular knight, it was to be stored and recorded by this Commander to insure that all knights were given equal shares of food and meat and made sure to follow the rules of the Order.

Overall, the Templars were organized in such a way as to make them as efficient as possible without making the internal politics overly complicated. Similar to today’s modern militias, the Templars were required to follow the orders given by their Commanders to the letter, which made the Templars very strict, but also very effective. Since all members in the Order had a strict regimen of training in the art of war, formation, and tactics, the organization of their leadership made them all the more successful on the battlefield.
Chapter 5 - The Templar Role in Combat

One of the most important roles of a Templar Knight was his ability to fight. The Templars were renowned for their discipline, and rightfully so, since they had to go through extensive training in the art of combat. In addition, as the Templars grew, their purpose seemed to shift from that of defenders of pilgrims to a more militia-based operation. Since the Templars gained many holdings throughout Outremer and Europe, they either were given or built many defensive structures to aid in their defense. Based on the knowledge that the Order formed after the first crusade after many Europeans traveled back to their homes, we can safely assume that they were at any given time greatly outnumbered. Thus, it was important that the Templars were well armed, had many defensive positions, and were well trained.

In William of Tyre’s *Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar*, William gives an indication that the Knights were well trained based on the idea that they had an area to do so. “The canons of the Lord’s temple gave them, under certain conditions, a square near the palace which the canons possessed. This the knights used as a drill field.”1 With an area to train in, the knights probably practiced swordplay and cavalry skills, which would be essential if they were to be efficient. In *The Primitive Rule of the Templar* it is stated, “to each knight brother we grant three horses and one squire, and if that squire willingly serves charity, the brother should not beat him for any sin he commits.”2 In horse warfare, having more than one horse was a common practice, since it allowed the Knight to use his strongest and largest horse in battle, while allowing it to rest when
traveling or not involved in combat. In addition, he had the third horse to probably carry possessions that were unwieldy for the squire to carry, such as the Knight's armor and weaponry.

In Bernard of Clairvaux's letter to Hugh de Payens In Praise of the New Knighthood, Bernard clarifies that the choice of horse is purely for strength and speed. "They seek out horses which are strong and swift, rather than those which are brilliant and well-plumed, they set their minds on fighting to win rather than on parading for show." Although this comment obviously shows a bias against the secular knight, it can be used to show that the perception of the Templars was indeed that of a true champion, and gives credence to the idea that just dressing as a fighter doesn't make you a true champion of the Christian cause.

A Templar's weaponry seemed to be similar to those of a secular Knight. In The Primitive Rule of the Templar, evidence is given about some of a Templar's weaponry. "Let no brother have a cover on his shield or his lance, for it is no advantage, on the contrary we understand that it would be very harmful." Thus, it can be deduced that the Templar used a lance and shield in horseback combat, and that it was frowned upon to decorate your equipment, as it was common for many nobles. In fact, the authors of The Primitive Rule of the Templar were able to comprehend the dangers involved with hanging pennants and flags from your equipment -- essentially, in the heat of battle, it would be easy to snag a lance cover and put the Knight's life in danger. Not only did the rule effectively prohibit the flaunting of wealth, but it also protected the Knights and made them more efficient than a standard Knight. However, the rules do not state that the Knights would have to go without a surcoat, which would be an important piece of
equipment in the hot sun\textsuperscript{6}. A surcoat was a covering worn over armor to protect a Knight in armor from the sun, which would otherwise heat the Knight in his multi-layered armor and possibly endanger him. The surcoat of a Templar would probably be either plain, or may have possibly been white affixed with the red cross, marking them as Templars after the Order had become more established.

In the document \textit{In Praise of the New Knighthood} another example of Templar weaponry can be found. "Neither does he bear the sword in vain, for he is God's minister, for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of the good.\textsuperscript{7} Again, this gives and indication that the use of a sword was also very important, as it was the Knight's standard weapon. Although no accounts in documentation gives us the types of weaponry used by the Templar, there is some material weaponry that has been excavated in and around the Holy Land in a Frankish style.

The Knight's sword, according to what has been found in Outremer, would have probably been double-edged. For all intensive purposes, this type of sword would be used for slashing, although it also has a point that would allow it to be used as a thrusting weapon as well. It can be deduced that this sword was used for slashing primarily because other versions of swords, such as the Roman gladius, would not have sharpened edges and was considerably lighter and shorter. Swords have been excavated in an underwater survey that occurred off the shores of Atlit\textsuperscript{8}. Based on the length ( Roughly 75 cm) and the weight (1.5 kg) of the swords found, it would be easier to swing them instead of thrusting. In addition to the sword, another staple of a Knight was the dagger, which could be used as a last resort weapon if all other weapons were lost, or if the Knight was
fighting without a shield and was using his sword one-handed. Daggers and pommels from daggers have been discovered in and around Jerusalem and Sidon$^9$.

According to the time frame in which the Knights fought, they probably used a style similarly to that of the Franks – a heavy cavalry with a large battalion of men-at-arms, or infantry (brothers-at-arms) who would use halberds, long polearms affixed with large metal heads to knock riders off of horses. The ability to ride a horse would have been of utmost importance, because fighting on horseback conferred a large advantage over fighting on foot, at least until the bow was popularized. Even then, the many layers of armor and speed of a rider would make it very difficult for a short bow to pierce a Knight. Their enemies, the Saracens, would commonly use hit and run tactics. Eventually, the Templars added the short bow into their arsenal of weaponry, as the Islamic riders often rode light horses (which were quite nimble, but did not allow them to wear the heavy armor the Knights often wore). Still, having a group of two hundred Knights in full armor on large warhorses was a very efficient practice, because a heavy cavalry charge could break enemy lines quite easily.

The actual Knights could not use bows as they required the use of both hands (negating the advantage conferred by a shield) and also had the additional cost of forcing the user to not be able to wear heavy armor (in which it would be impossible to draw back the bow efficiently)$^{10}$. The infantry and Templar brothers who were not full knights used many different types of bows, however. The first type of bow, the simple bow, was a very easy weapon to use. Although it lacked the range or firepower of the other types of bows, the simple bow could be fired at a very swift speed, allowing the archer a better chance to strike their target. Both sides also used the arbalest (crossbow). The arbalest
fired heavier arrows called bolts, which were commonly shorter than traditional arrows but with a heavier tip. Interestingly enough, the Second Lateran Council (1139) banned the use of the arbalest except against the infidels. The arbalest was considered to be a rather inhumane weapon, and was commonly used during hunting. This type of bow was very difficult to draw, and larger versions had stirrups in which to place a foot in to be able to use both arms (and commonly a hook attached to the belt) to draw them back. Since it took so much strength to draw, it is not difficult to imagine the efficiency of this type of weapon—essentially, the light armor of the Saracens would be easily pierced by such a weapon. Unfortunately for the Templar, the Saracens also employed the use of the crossbow, which gave them the ability to pierce through the thick armor of a Knight rather proficiently. The composite bow was also used. The composite bow is similar to a simple bow, although it was made from more than one type of wood, which made it stronger than a traditional bow and conferred it with some additional strength. Although the longbow was not introduced until the third crusade (and even then was uncommon in the East), it would have been used by Richard the Lionheart’s men, although the Templar would not readily have access to such a bow, and would more commonly use one of the other three. Unfortunately, little evidence exists over the types of bows since the majority of a bow is made of wood, which would disintegrate over the years. However, crossbow nuts have been found at Montfort Castle, which gives credence to the use of these types of bows. More evidence includes the discovery of partial shafts of arrows and arrowheads. The Arrow heads found at Vadum Jacob, ‘Arlit, and al-Kurum all differ in shape and size, indicating a widespread production of the arrowheads, as well as
differing bow types. Some metal shafts for arrows have been discovered at Safed Castle, indicative of a heavier type of bow.

The infantry would have also used spears in combat. Evidence of their use also exists, as spearheads have been discovered at Vadum Jacob. The spearheads found had a leaf or lozenge-shaped head, which would allow them to pierce and be more devastating when they were removed. Spears were traditionally shorter than most polearms and were not made for throwing, but for thrusting. Again, the spear would also be used in defense against enemy riders, as well as giving an extensive reaching ability when fighting others who were also on foot. Lance tips in a similar shape have also been discovered. A lance was essentially a polearm that a Knight could use when fighting from horseback. Usually, a lance would be between two and three meters long, allowing the Knight to have an extensive reach, as well as a weapon that could be managed easily. Armor was usually faceted with clips so a rider could bear a lance in one hand and a shield in the other without making the weight too much to bear. A Knight on horseback yielding a lance would be able to move quite swiftly, and thus was a fearful sight to stand against.

We also know that the Templars (as well as the other Christian crusaders) were greatly outnumbered by the Muslim armies, and had to rely on tactics that would allow them to stay well protected and still be able to strike at the Saracen forces when it was beneficial – thus the Templars and other military orders had many strongholds throughout the entirety of the crusader states. The Templar strongholds, like most crusader castles, began by building towers that could act as defensive positions and more importantly, aide in warning the crusaders about enemy invaders. "In 1097 and 1098, during the siege of
Antioch, the Crusaders constructed three towers with the aim of preventing Turkish sorties. It must be noted however, that towers do not provide defense against extended sieges, and bow easily when actually put under siege. Therefore, although they were perhaps some of the simplest fortifications the crusaders had, they were not very efficient.

In many cases, towers could be made larger, and may contain multiple rooms and stories. In addition, they could be classified as keeps if an outer wall was built around them for additional protection. The Templars held whatever fortifications they could find, and improved upon them as necessary to make them adequate defensive structures. One of these such structures can be found at Safita, was held by the Templars in 1170. It consisted of two towers and two walls that surrounded the keep. Obviously, concentric walls were becoming commonplace among crusader castles, as they were easier to defend with smaller garrisons and would last almost indefinitely under a siege. Eventually, keeps were built up further, using curtain walls and corner towers. However, most keeps and enclosed castles remained rectangular in shape, which gave them distinct points of weakness in the overall defense of the castle itself.

The Templars continued to improve upon castle design throughout their occupation of the holy land. The Templars expanded pre-existing castles whenever they could. For example, the sea castle of Sidon was built in 1227 to house Fredrick II's troops. However, the Templars took the castle over after his departure and continued to expand the castle from 1260 onwards.

Throughout the Templar existence, it can be very difficult to understand how a monastic Knight could have existed. In essence, when it is originally spoken about, it
sounds as if it is really an oxymoron and cannot exist. However, the rules for the Templar (and the other monastic Orders for that matter) made them very capable warriors, as well as keeping them true to their Christian causes. The Primitive Rule of the Templar directly gives them the ability to kill the enemies of Christianity without sinning. "That is to say that this armed company of knights may kill the enemies of the cross without sinning." This became a very important and powerful rule for the monastic orders, allowing them to engage the enemy without having to worry about an eternity in Hell.

In Praise of the New Knighthood gives another few accounts of the Templars exemption from the sin of killing. "But the Knights of Christ may safely fight the battles of their Lord, fearing neither sin if they smite the enemy, nor danger at their own death; since to inflict death or to die for Christ is no sin, but rather, an abundant claim to glory." In the same document, there are many other accounts of the Templar ability to kill pagans and Muslims without fear of eternal damnation. "If he kills an evildoer, he is not a mankiller, but, if I may so put it, a killer of evil." The Templars were given a very important privilege, a privilege that essentially allowed the Order itself to exist and function. Bernard of Clairvaux goes on in support of the ability of the Templar to strike at the enemies of Christianity. This ability would have been very important to Bernard, who in the same year he wrote In Praise of the New Knighthood to Hugh de Payens also was rallying for another Crusade in which he would need pious and able fighters. "What then? If it is never permissible for a Christian to strike with the sword, why did the Savior's precursor bid the soldiers to be content with their pay, and not rather forbid them to follow this calling?" The idea that the Templar was not only accepted but also revered by Bernard of Clairvaux gives credence to the ability of the Templar to fulfill both his
duties as a knight and as a monk. More importantly, they were very impressive fighters. Even today, discipline is stressed in the military, and for the Templars, this was no exception. By having to adhere to strict religious guidelines, it gave them the morale necessary to push on even when the odds were against them, along with a religious fervor, which again, drove them onward. In addition, they demanded lifelong membership. Therefore, not only were the recruits loyal, but they also had no reason to run from battle. If the Templar died on the field, he would be revered, his brothers knowing he ascended to heaven.

The Templars were able to act as a stationary force in the Holy Land, since the Templar was not bound by the system of feudalism. Instead of giving forty days of service a year and having to be paid for additional time served, the Templar fought for a purely idealistic purpose. By fighting for a cause instead of being required to do so, the Templars and the other monastic military orders were probably some of the most feared and revered warriors on the battlefield. In addition, the resolve they held allowed then to remain active in the Holy Land for nearly two hundred years, although eventually, their small numbers caused them to eventually be defeated.

The Templars were highly criticized for their ability to kill without retribution, however. A major issue amongst Church officials was that the destruction of other people wasn’t Christian-like, although the original purpose of the knightly orders was not offensive, but defensive in nature. They were created solely for the purpose of defending the pilgrims who traveled throughout Christendom and in the defense of the newly acquired territories in which the Christian holy cities were located. In addition, the Knights seemed to be losing their holy wars, and with them, the area of Palestine. The
Templar Order was also blamed for the loss of Acre in 1291, which essentially made it nearly impossible for further Crusades to be successful – Acre was located on the coast of the Mediterranean and acted as a hub from which the Christian forces could attack. The Fall of Acre seemed to be more of a front of aggression towards the Templar Order, since more than half of the Christian forces involved in the defense of Acre were members of the Templar Order. However, the lack of reinforcements seems to indicate that the Templar Order lacked support in the defense of the Holy Land, where many of the secular forces would return back to Europe after a victory instead of staying and defending what was captured.
Chapter 6 - The End of the Order

Although the Templar Knights consistently grew in power throughout their existence, they were also met with harsh opposition. First, the Templar seemed to be becoming 'soft', living a more illustrious life than the initial members could have ever dreamed of. In addition to just an easier lifestyle, the Templars were also constantly criticized about their abilities to be both monks and knights, regardless of the papacy stance that the Templars could fulfill both roles as long as they remained pious and true to the church. More importantly, the wealth and land that the Templars had collected had brought them to the forefront of taxation issues within the countries in which they resided.

In addition to the controversy created just out of being in existence, the Templars were also being blamed with the failures that occurred during the crusades. In 1291, a most decisive battle at Acre all but eliminated the Christian military presence from the Holy Land. This spurned a backlash against all the military orders, whereas it was believed that they should have been able to hold the Holy Land, even though they were outnumbered and lacked support from the secular Crusaders. However, the fall of Acre did not directly contribute to the downfall of the Templars. Instead, the Templar disbandment was a direct result of secular rulers attempting to secure at least a portion of the Templar wealth. Most of the pressure on the Templar came from king Philip IV, Philip the Fair or France.
Philip IV inherited the crown in 1285. Around that time in France, many of the secular kings and nobles longed for the power that was held during the time of Charlemagne five hundred years formerly. However, the kingdom of France was fragmented politically, and also was very deep in debt from repeated conflicts with other nations. The French coffers were repeatedly drained over a series of conflicts and a war with king Edward I over the control of Aquitaine\(^2\). In addition to the war, there were also multiple skirmishes occurring in Flanders, eventually resulting in Philip’s defeat at Courtrai in 1302\(^3\). Soon after Philip was king, the papacy also changed – the change in papacy soon increased the problems that Philip was experiencing as a ruler of France.

Boniface VIII was one of the most influential popes of the late 11\(^{th}\) century, and although his visions never reached those achieved by Innocent III, he still was able to push many reforms for the Church. In 1296, Boniface issued a papal bull, “Clericus Laicos” which essentially made the clergy nontaxable\(^4\). Obviously, a nation already deeply entrenched by debt would be hurt by such a bull. The next step that Boniface took to show church supremacy was to issue the papal bull, “Unam Sanctam” which stated how the papacy had power over secular rulers, being very similar in regard to an earlier papal letter written by Pope Gelasius I in 494, which stated the supremacy of church power over secular powers\(^5\). The justification of this papal bull was quite simple: temporal power, or political power held by kings, only affected a person during his life. However, spiritual power would affect how one spent the rest of eternity, therefore making it the more important of the worldly powers, and making the king subservient to the pope. Soon after, Philip began showing his disagreement with this papal decision. Philip was accused of burning the “Unam Sanctum” publicly – obviously, this action, regardless if it really
occurred or not, showed the actual severity of the situation in France and expresses the disapproval Philip had of papal authority.

Philip had a lot of issues that had to be dealt with to bolster his authority in France. His first move was to devalue the currency, which would mean that more literal ‘wealth’ (ie gold and silver) would be transferred to Rome. In addition, this also helped those nobles who already were rich by increasing the amount of money that they had. However, it hurt the majority of the citizens of France, who then revolted. Philip luckily was able to take refuge within a Templar stronghold in Paris. However, this was also the time in which Philip was able to see the vast amounts of wealth that the Templars had amassed within the country of France unbeknownst to Philip (although the knowledge of their banking activities were well known, the collection of treasures and money within Templar strongholds was not common knowledge).

Philip followed his stay with the Templars by sending men to Avignon and having pope Boniface arrested. This arrest was in many ways a testament to the anger that Philip had toward the actions that Boniface had been taking, as well as an active rebellion that showed Boniface that the secular rulers affected by the papal bulls were not happy in their aftermath – however the arrest was made under the pretense that the pope was practicing black magic, keeping familiars (demons) as pets, consorting with the devil, and murder (none which were in any way proven true). Soon after his release, Boniface passed away. Many historians associated Boniface getting sick and dying with shock caused by his arrest. In any matter, the arrest of Boniface took him out of commission and allowed Philip to attempt to acquire at least a part of the Templar wealth.
Succeeding Boniface VIII was Clement V, a pope that was much less outspoken and one that could be more easily subdued by the various nobles and kings. Philip was thus able to plan what actions he would need to take to take the Templar wealth without having to do it through forceful means (essentially a direct attack on the church was to be avoided – his earlier exploits concerning the arrest of Boniface VIII was not looked upon kindly by church officials and pious rulers). Philip first made an attack on the Jewish in 1306 (as did the king of England), having the banking families arrested under the charge of usury, and after having confiscated the Jewish wealth, later exiled them. This not only allowed Philip to gain access to the Jewish coffers, but also turned the land they held over to the French king.

Philip’s next move was to attempt to unify all the monastic orders into one large knightly order. By unifying all the orders and making himself the ‘Grand Master’, he would be able to transfer tithes and land grants onto himself and France, thus helping him escape the debt that he created. Philip planned on funneling the money through an advisor named Pierre Dubois. However, Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the Templar at the time, didn’t like the idea since he believed that the Templars were more pious than the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights, and he didn’t want to dissolve a religious order that seemed to serve God’s purpose. Without the consent of all the Grand Masters, Philip became unable to unite the orders. Thus, Philip’s next move was to confront the Templars and take their wealth in the only way that was feasible – through accusing them of acting against the Church, Philip could then confiscate the Templar wealth. However, talks still persisted of the unification of the Teutonic and Hospitaller Orders.
On October 13, 1307, all the Templars in France were arrested under a variety of charges and accusations. Through the use of William of Paris, an important figure in the Inquisition, Philip was able to extract multiple confessions of heresy against the Church, directly out of the mouths of the Temple Knights. Various Knights gave confessions of spitting on the cross, denying Christ, worshiping false idols, and many other activities that were unbecoming of a good Christian. Clement V was against the arrest of the Templars, although he was powerless to stop it from occurring. However, Clement also saw the arrest as a direct attack on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and acted to insure that he could regain so control of the situation. Although he was powerless to stop the actual arrest, he initiated an official church inquiry into the trial of the Templar. Thus, on November 22, 1307, he gave the papal bull, “Pastoralis preeminentiae”, which asked that all the Templars be arrested so a fair trial could be put underway. In addition, Clement V was against the use of torture to extract confessions (knowing that under that sort of pretense, even a good man would say anything to stop the pain inflicted upon them), so he stopped the French Inquisition from using the method of torture to extract confessions forcibly. However, Clement V was a little late in his attempt to save all of the Templars – by the time his papal bull was put in effect, fifty Templars had already burned at the stake.

After a confrontation with Philip over the Templars, Clement then set up some other terms to deal with the trial of the Order of the Temple. First, he set up an Episcopal inquiry in each French diocese, eliminating the viciousness of the Inquisition, to hold trial over each individual in the order. Then, Clement passed the bull “Regnans in coelis” that would gather all the inquiries together to determine the fate of the order. This not
only saved a large portion of the Templars, but it also bought the Church some time in
which they could actually find out what was occurring within the monastic order and
make an educated decision over the future of the Order. Four years later, the reports were
gathered and a council was held.

In October of 1311, the Vienne council met. After reviewing the inquiries, the
council found the Templars innocent of the charges set before them. However, this
decision was met with a lot of resistance, since “a third of the archbishops and bishops,
and a half of the abbots, came from France.” Another problem that occurred was the
arrival of Philip IV in March of 1312. With pressure from both the church leaders in
France as well as the secular ruler, Clement V decided that the best course of action
would be to suppress the Templars.

On March 12, 1312, Clement V gave the papal bull, “Vox in Excelso”, which
dissolved the order of the temple. Within this document, Clement V says that he has
been receiving word that the Knights of the Temple have been involved in many dubious
activities. An example of this can be seen with the quote, “There was even one of the
knights, a man of noble blood and of no small reputation in the order, who testified
secretly under oath in our presence, that at his reception the knight who received him
suggested that he deny Christ, which he did, in the presence of certain other knights of
the Temple, he furthermore spat on the cross held out to him by this knight who received
him.” However, the document fails to reveal if Clement believed the accounts the
Templar gave, although it states that the Grand Master of the order swore upon the bible
that the confessions were true. This statement seems very dire for the Templar, as it is
unlikely that a Templar would take an oath upon the bible unless it was actually true.
However, there is also the chance that Clement just wrote this to make his document more powerful. It is also very likely that Clement V was bowing into the political pressure exerted by Philip IV and by the church leaders of France, possibly averting a challenge to his papal authority – Clement and the other Avignon popes needed the support of the church officials in France since it is known that the Italian dioceses were not too fond of the French popes (eventually fueling the Great Schism that occurred later in the 14th century). In addition, we know that Jacques de Molay tried earnestly to protect the piety that the Templars held (not allowing the monastic orders to be merged), and thus it is unlikely that he would speak out against the Templars in a slanderous way. It is very probable that Clement was just bowing to political pressure (frightened from the actions taken by Philip a few years formerly), but since no evidence exists in either direction, the suppression of the Templars can only viewed as a tragic event that drastically changed the structure and view of all monastic military orders, and this cannot decisively state exactly what occurred. The papal bull also states that Philip IV of France had no intention of trying to take the Templar lands, but instead was acting with “orthodox zeal” when he was gathering information about the Templar activities19. It all probability, Clement V knew that Philip was in financial trouble, and thus makes this claim very unlikely – if Clement knew of Philip's financial trouble, his earlier claims of the Grand Master swearing the claims to be true may have also been false. Whether true or not, we know that the movement to dissolve the Order of the Temple and to ease the tension between the Kingdom of France and the papacy helped conserve papal power in France and keep Christendom unified. With a vote of four/fifths of all the cardinals, the Templars were to be dissolved
Regardless, Clement also released a second papal bull on May 2nd, 1312, “Ad Providam”, which gave all the Templar lands and holdings to the Hospitallers, much to Philip’s chagrin. However, many nobles around France and England immediately took Templar holdings before the Order of the Hospital could actually take possession of them. In addition, many Templar holdings were not the Templars to begin with, such as their property in Iberia, which remained under the control of the Kingdom of Portugal and was under loan to the Templar to act as a base of operations. Inevitably, Philip IV gained a large amount of Templar wealth since his vassals took a large majority of the Templar holdings. The papacy also banned all Christians from wearing the garb of the Templar, the white surcoat with red cross, under the penalty of excommunication.

Overall, the downfall of the Templars could have been justified, although there seems to be a lot of evidence to the contrary. It is also rumored that the Templar Order was able to continue on in secret and in some cases, stayed intact but powerless in countries on the outskirts of Europe although there lacks sufficient evidence to truly make this claim. For all intensive purposes, the Templar disappeared from the face of Europe in May of 1312 when Jacques de Molay was put to death at the stake.

Although the Templar dissolution marked the end of the Order, rumors have abounded over a connection between the formation of the Freemasons and the fall of the Templar Order, which occurred roughly at the same time. In quite a few Freemason documents, the ideals of “Templarism” are promoted. According to some freemason literature, the Hesychasts, a type of Illuminati, were monastic Christians in the East confirmed by the Church in 1341. However, although they were monastic Christians that formed roughly thirty years after the fall of the Templar, monastic orders were
frequent in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century and thus no definitive link can be made between the two groups. The ideals held by the Templar Order would have been quite noble principles to model another Order after, although the new Orders that arose lacked the military mindset the original Templars held. Thus, the connection between the freemasons and Templars remains weak, without documentation to further any sort of correlation between the two groups.

Modern versions of Templarism exist, although they are far from the original Templar Order that existed in the medieval age. There are some small groups in Portugal and England that carry on the ways of the Templar, acting as monks and historians, although they lack the military and financial structure that the original Templars exhibited. However, it must be considered that in today’s modern age or warfare, a unit of Knights would seem somewhat ridiculous. They have the benefit of dealing without much of the hardship that the original order had to endure by living in the timeframe in which they did, but they too lack any definitive connection to the original Templar Order, and since no real documentation can be readily found to connect modern variants of Templarism to that of old, it must be concluded that they are in fact two distinct Orders, at least until sufficient documentation can be found to support claims of their correlation. Thus, although they refer of themselves as “Templars”, it is unlikely that a direct correlation can be found between them and the Templar Order of the Crusades.

The downfall of the Order of the Templar may have ended the Order itself, but it is very apparent that the ideals of the Templar lived on long after the Order was dissolved. Interestingly enough, the majority of the primary documentation concerning the Templar was written while the Order was being dissolved or slightly thereafter, which gives a
skew on the viewpoints the church and various states had towards the Templar at the
time. However, based on what we can deduce from the literature that is extant, it is very
probable that the Templars were dissolved for reasons that were not entirely justified,
especially when it must be considered that so many groups took it upon themselves to
carry on the ideals of the Templar Order. Historically, people have openly mentioned a
relationship between themselves and a historical figure from the past that represented
greatness, such as when a King took on the name of a former king that lead honorably
and justly. It can be therefore assumed that the large amount of groups that vehemently
mention Templarism in their doctrines honor and respect the original order.

Overall, the situation in France during the time of the Templar dissolution
definitely played a large role into the reasons for the Order being hunted down with such
fervor, although the Templar were almost destined to fall as they became more lax with
the ideals of the Order – even though an individual Templar could not possess wealth, the
Order itself could. With the increasing amount of land and revenue, the Templars were
destined to go under scrutiny from within the church itself. Although it is unlikely that
the claims of heresy were true, they had long fallen from the initial standards set by
Bernard of Clairvaux in *The Primitive Rules of the Order*, and were therefore due to be
revitalized as many of the monasteries had been. Unfortunately, the politics of Europe
got to the Templar Order first, before any sort of change could be initiated. The secretive
ways of the Order also made them an easy target, since it would have been rather easy to
make claims that were unfounded, yet still have them believed. Although the American
system of government believes you are innocent until proven guilty, the system of law
during the medieval age was quite different, allowing for the claims made by the king to
be sufficient to incite the Inquisition. Although the papal bulls written by Clement V state that the Grand Master of the Order swore upon the bible that the heresies that were revealed were true, we lack a written statement from the Grand Master himself. Clement V obviously wanted to keep the Templars alive, based upon the actions and conclusions that his inquiry exposed, yet he was powerless to take action against the French king and the church leaders of France. Therefore, Clement V may have just silenced the Templar in an attempt to save Christian lives while appeasing Philip IV (and the other nobles in England and Portugal who quickly grabbed Templar lands). Had the Templars actually been found heretical by the official Church inquiry, it would be unlikely that they would be allowed to keep their lives. Although we lack sufficient evidence to know the true reasons the Templars were repressed, the actions taken by the pope and by the king of France seem to indicate that the Templars were being targeted for financial reasons instead of religious ones.
The Impact of Templarism

Throughout Templar history, the Order made quite a few contributions to medieval society. Although they originally formed as a protective group to defend pilgrims, they eventually had enough power and prestige to be in a direct contact with the majority of the nobles of France and England. Similar to other monastic orders, they also carried on the tradition of education, although the Templars were prone to more militaristic means. It wasn’t until the advent of the crusades that the use of the bow was commonplace. Thus, the Templars were one of the first European military organizations to witness the power of ranged combat, and thus had to be one of the first groups to come up with ways to defend themselves against this type of combat (through the use of heavier armor). The Templars and other monastic orders also built, maintained, and upgraded many castles, which could account for the existence of these locations today – without these additional fortifications, many of these castles may have fallen into ruin or been captured and destroyed more readily.

Being one of the major forces from Europe to occupy the Holy Land, they were better able to set up commerce with Eastern nations, giving all of Europe better access to the riches of the East. Also, their universal spread throughout Europe and the Holy Land gave the Templars the ability to use banking to transfer money and give loans from two separate and distinct locations.
The Templar movement was also a testament to the power of the Church during the Medieval Era. With the support of the Catholic Church, the Templars were able to grow and expand in size and strength, effectively acting as the Church's own army during the time of the Crusades. Although they were not under the direct control of the pope (which would have officially made them the militia of the Catholic Church), they were constrained by the rules of the Church and governed themselves accordingly. The continued papal support of the monastic orders gave them all an advantage in the areas of commerce and battle – they were not required to pay taxes to the kingdoms in which they resided and had the ability to kill their enemies without fear of eternal damnation.

Overall, the Templar movement provided a longstanding presence in the Holy Land, and although far from permanent, they were able to hold various locations in the East for nearly two hundred years. The Templars also provided a standard for other elite groups to follow, which may account for the mention of Templarism in freemason literature. A study of the Templar Order allows someone to not just learn about a monastic military order, but also about the relationship between the nobles and the monasteries, the politics that the church became involved with through the Avignon papacy, and the justifications for the Crusades. All in all, the Templars prove to be an interesting course of study based solely on the lifestyle they chose to live to support the ideals they held.
Endnotes

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4


Chapter 5

Chapter 6

1) Housley, N. 1986. The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades. p. 262
12) Howarth, S. 1982. The Knights Templar. Chapter 16
Leo IV (847-855): Forgiveness of Sins for Those Who Dies in Battle

With the Heathen

Given to the Frankish Army

Now we hope that none of you will be slain, but we wish you to know that the kingdom of heaven will be given as a reward to those who shall be killed in this war. For the Omnipotent knows that they lost their lives fighting for the truth of the faith, for the preservation of their country, and the defence of Christians. And therefore God will give them, the reward which we have named.

In Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 115: 656-657, and 161:720,

Pope John VIII:

Indulgence for Fighting the Heathen, 878

John VIII to the bishops in the realm of Louis II [the Stammerer].

You have modestly expressed a desire to know whether those who have recently died in war, fighting in defence of the church of God and for the preservation of the Christian religion and of the state, or those who may in the future fall in the same cause, may obtain indulgence for their sins. We confidently reply that those who, out of love to the Christian religion, shall die in battle fighting bravely against pagans or unbelievers, shall receive eternal life. For the Lord has said through his prophet: "In whatever hour a sinner shall be converted, I will remember his sins no longer." By the intercession of St. Peter, who has the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on the earth, we absolve, as far as is permissible, all such and commend them by our prayers to the Lord.

Note:

Thatcher and McNeal attribute this text to "John II," but this appears to be a typographical error since John II ruled in 523. The pope who was ruling in 878 was John VIII (872-882). [Thanks to a correspondent for pointing out the problem here.]

In Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 126: 816
The Primitive Rule of the Templar

This translation of the original, or primitive, Rule of the Templars is based on the 1886 edition of Henri de Curzon, La Règle du Temple as a Military Manual, or How to Deliver a Cavalry Charge. It represents the Rule given to the fledgling Knights of the Temple by the Council of Troyes, 1129, although "it must not be forgotten that the Order had been in existence for several years and had built up its own traditions and customs before Hugues de Payens' appearance at the Council of Troyes. To a considerable extent, then, the Primitive Rule is based upon existing practices." (Upton-Ward, p. 11)

This translation is excerpted from Judith Upton-Ward's The Rule of the Templars, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992, and is reprinted here with permission. The Rule of the Templars includes an introduction by Upton-Ward; it also contains the Templars' Primitive Rule and the Hierarchical Statutes; regulations governing penances, conventual life, the holding of ordinary chapters, and reception into the Order; and an appendix by Matthew Bennett, "La Règle du Temple as a Military Manual, or How to Deliver a Cavalry Charge." The book is highly recommended to those interested in the Templars or any other military order. It is now available in paperback.

The notes to the Primitive Rule, supplied by Mrs. Upton-Ward in The Rule of the Templars, are not included below. They are of considerable interest and should be consulted by those wishing to study the Rule in more detail, however.

The Primitive Rule

Here begins the prologue to the Rule of Temple

1. We speak firstly to all those who secretly despise their own will and desire with a pure heart to serve the sovereign king as a knight and with studious care desire to wear, and wear permanently, the very noble armour of obedience. And therefore we admonish you, you who until now have led the lives of secular knights, in which Jesus Christ was not the cause, but which you embraced for human favour only, to follow those whom God has chosen from the mass of perdition and whom he has ordered through his gracious mercy to defend the Holy Church, and that you hasten to join them forever.

2. Above all things, whosoever would be a knight of Christ, choosing such holy orders, you in your profession of faith must unite pure diligence and firm perseverance, which is so worthy and so holy, and is known to be so noble, that if it is preserved untainted for ever, you will deserve to keep
company with the martyrs who gave their souls for Jesus Christ. In this religious order has flourished and is revitalised the order of knighthood. This knighthood despised the love of justice that constitutes its duties and did not do what it should, that is defend the poor, widows, orphans and churches, but strove to plunder, despoil and kill. God works well with us and our saviour Jesus Christ; He has sent his friends from the Holy City of Jerusalem to the marches of France and Burgundy, who for our salvation and the spread of the true faith do not cease to offer their souls to God, a welcome sacrifice.

3. Then we, in all joy and all brotherhood, at the request of Master Hugues de Payens, by whom the aforementioned knighthood was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit, assembled at Troyes from divers provinces beyond the mountains on the feast of my lord St Hilary, in the year of the incarnation of Jesus Christ 1128, in the ninth year after the founding of the aforesaid knighthood. And the conduct and beginnings of the Order of Knighthood we heard in common chapter from the lips of the aforementioned Master, Brother Hugues de Payens; and according to the limitations of our understanding what seemed to us good and beneficial we praised, and what seemed wrong we eschewed.

4. And all that took place at that council cannot be told nor recounted; and so that it should not be taken lightly by us, but considered in wise prudence, we left it to the discretion of both our honourable father lord Honorius and of the noble patriarch of Jerusalem, Stephen, who knew the affairs of the East and of the Poor Knights of Christ, by the advice of the common council we praised it unanimously. Although a great number of religious fathers who assembled at that council praised the authority of our words, nevertheless we should not pass over in silence the true sentences and judgements which they pronounced.

5. Therefore I, Jean Michel, to whom was entrusted and confided that divine office, by the grace of God served as the humble scribe of the present document by order of the council and of the venerable father Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux.

The Names of the Fathers who Attended the Council

6. First was Matthew, bishop of Albano, by the grace of God legate of the Holy Church of Rome; R[enaud], archbishop of Reims; H(enri), archbishop of Sens; and then their suffragans: G(ocelin], bishop of Soissons; the bishop of Paris; the bishop of Troyes; the bishop of Orlèans; the bishop of Auxerre; the bishop of Meaux; the bishop of Chalons; the bishop of Laon; the bishop of Beauvais; the abbot of Vézelay, who was later made archbishop of Lyon and legate of the Church of Rome; the abbot of Citeaux; the abbot of Pontigny; the abbot of Trois-Fontaines; the
abbot of St Denis de Reims; the abbot of St-Etienne de Dijon; the abbot of Molesmes; the above-named B[ernard], abbot of Clairvaux: whose words the aforementioned praised liberally. Also present were master Aubri de Reims; master Fulcher and several others whom it would be tedious to record. And of the others who have not been listed it seems profitable to furnish guarantees in this matter, that they are lovers of truth: they are count Theobald; the count of Nevers; Andrè de Baudemant. These were at the council and acted in such a manner that by perfect, studious care they sought out that which was fine and disapproved that which did not seem right.

7. And also present was Brother Hugues de Payens, Master of the Knighthood, with some of his brothers whom he had brought with him. They were Brother Roland, Brother Godefroy, and Brother Geoffroi Bisot, Brother Payen de Montdidier, Brother Archambaut de Saint-Amand. The same Master Hugues with his followers related to the above-named fathers the customs and observances of their humble beginnings and of the one who said: Ego principium qui et loquor vobis, that is to say: 'I who speak to you am the beginning,' according to one's memory.

8. It pleased the common council that the deliberations which were made there and the consideration of the Holy Scriptures which were diligently examined with the wisdom of my lord H[onorius], pope of the Holy Church of Rome, and of the patriarch of Jerusalem and with the assent of the chapter, together with the agreement of the Poor Knights of Christ of the Temple which is in Jerusalem, should be put in writing and not forgotten, steadfastly kept so that by an upright life one may come to his creator; the compassion of which Lord [is sweeter] than honey when compared with God; whose mercy resembles oine, and permits us to come to Him whom they desire to serve. Per infinita seculorum secula. Amen

Here Begins the Rule of the Poor Knighthood of the Temple

9. You who renounce your own wills, and you others serving the sovereign king with horses and arms, for the salvation of your souls, for a fixed term, strive everywhere with pure desire to hear matins and the entire service according to canonical law and the customs of the regular masters of the Holy City of Jerusalem. 0 you venerable brothers, similarly God is with you, if you promise to despise the deceitful world in perpetual love of God, and scorn the temptations of your body: sustained by the food of God and watered and instructed in the commandments of Our Lord, at the end of the divine office, none should fear to go into battle if he henceforth wears the tonsure.

10. But if any brother is sent through the work of the house and of Christianity in the East--something we believe will happen often--and