

UTAH SUPPLEMENT

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Hugh de Payns and Knights Templar

Following the success of the First Crusade (1095–99), a number of Crusader states were established in the Holy Land, but these kingdoms lacked the necessary military force to maintain more than a tenuous hold over their territories. Most Crusaders returned home after fulfilling their vows, and Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem suffered attacks from Muslim raiders. Pitying the plight of these Christians, eight or nine French knights led by Hugh de Payns vowed in late 1119 or early 1120 to devote themselves to the pilgrims' protection and to form a religious community for that purpose. Baldwin II, king of Jerusalem, gave them quarters in a wing of the royal palace in the area of the former Temple of Solomon, and from this they derived their name.

Although the Templars were opposed by those who rejected the idea of a religious military order and later by those who criticized their wealth and influence, they were supported by many secular and religious leaders. Beginning in 1127, Hugh undertook a tour of Europe and was well received by many nobles, who made significant donations to the knights. The Templars obtained further sanction at the Council of Troyes in 1128, which may have requested that Bernard of Clairvaux compose the new rule. Bernard also wrote *In Praise of the New Knighthood* (c. 1136), which defended the order against its critics and contributed to its growth. In 1139 Pope Innocent II issued a bull that granted the order special privileges: the Templars were allowed to build their own oratories and were not required to pay the tithe; they were also exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, being subject to the pope alone.

The rule of the order was modeled after the Benedictine Rule, especially as understood and implemented by the Cistercians. The Knights Templar swore an oath of poverty, chastity, and obedience and renounced the world, just as the Cistercians and other monks did. Like the monks, the Templars heard the divine office during each of the canonical hours of the day and were expected to honor the fasts and vigils of the monastic calendar. They were frequently found in prayer and expressed particular veneration to the Virgin Mary. They were not allowed to gamble, swear, or become drunk and were required to live in community, sleeping in a common dormitory and eating meals together. They were not, however, strictly cloistered, as were the monks, nor were they expected to perform devotional reading (most Templars were uneducated and unable to read Latin). The knights' primary duty was to fight. The Templars gradually expanded their duties from protecting pilgrims to mounting a broader defense of the Crusader states in the Holy Land. They built castles, garrisoned important towns, and participated in battles, fielding significant contingents against Muslim armies until the fall of Acre, the last remaining Crusader stronghold in the Holy Land, in 1291. Their great effectiveness was attested by the sultan Saladin following the devastating defeat of Crusader forces at the Battle of Hattin; he bought the Templars who were taken prisoner and later had each of them executed.

The Templars eventually acquired great wealth. The kings and great nobles of Spain, France, and England gave lordships, castles, seignories, and estates to the order, so that by the mid-12th century the Templars owned properties scattered throughout western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Holy Land. The Templars' military strength enabled them to safely collect, store, and transport bullion to and from Europe and the Holy Land, and their network of treasure storehouses and their efficient transport organization made them attractive as bankers to kings as well as to pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Its prominence and growing wealth, however, provoked opposition from rival orders. Falsely accused of blasphemy and blamed for Crusader failures in the Holy Land, the order was destroyed by King Philip IV of France.

Edited by Jay N Mitchell, Deputy Grand Commander