The Grand Masters of the Knights Templar in the Kingdom of Jerusalem

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By

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION

Grateful thanks to those who gave me the space and time to complete this short book, and for their encouragement and polite interest.

This book is dedicated to the members of The United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta, in England and Wales and Provinces Overseas.

Also, to my patient and talented collaborator, A.J. Dusted. À moi, beau sire! Beauséant à la rescousse!

And as always, thank you little bear.

December 2024.

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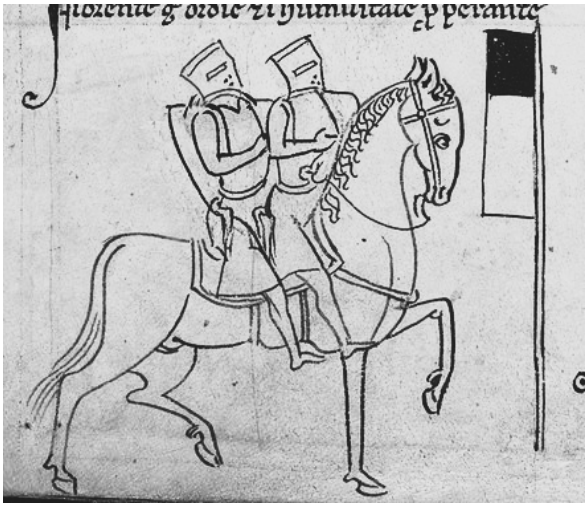
NOMENCLATURE OF SORTS

The mediaeval Crusaders referred to part of what is now broadly known as the “Middle East” as “Outremer”, literally “overseas”. However, the term "Holy Land" is also often used to refer to a territory roughly corresponding to the modern State of Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Jews, Christians, Muslims and Bahá’ís regard it as holy. The term “Levant” more broadly referred to the geographical areas covered by modern Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Cyprus. The title of this book uses “The Kingdom of Jerusalem”, a European Christian phrase that corresponded approximately to what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories, southern Lebanon, and southwestern Jordan, including the four mediaeval baronies of the county of Jaffa and Ascalon, the lordship of Krak or Montréal, the principality of Galilee, and the lordship of Sidon.

All five terms are used in this book, depending on the context in which they are being used. My apologies for any inconsistencies, errors or inadvertent offence caused by my use of any of them.
AEW



The emblem of the Templars, two knights seated on a single horse, shown alongside the *Beauséant*; miniature from the *Chronica* of Matthew Paris.

PREFACE

The Order of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon was established in the aftermath of the First Crusade. The Order's origins can be traced to the Council of Troyes in 1129, where its foundational rules and purpose were defined. Also known also as the Templars, they were initially a small group of knights dedicated to protecting Christian pilgrims travelling to The Holy Land. Their name derived from their headquarters, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where they established their main base on the site of the Temple of Solomon.

The primary mission of the Knights Templar in Jerusalem was to ensure the safety of Christian pilgrims journeying to the Holy City. They operated at critical junctures, such as key roads and pilgrimage routes, safeguarding travellers from various threats, including bandits and hostile forces.

The Templars later became not only defenders but also active participants in military campaigns during the subsequent Crusades. They played a crucial role in the defence of Jerusalem and other important Christian strongholds in the region. Their military prowess and strategic contributions earned them recognition and support from both the Church and secular authorities.

The newly established Knights Templar set up their headquarters on the Temple Mount, taking over the Al-Aqsa Mosque and converting it into their main command centre. This central location not only provided strategic advantages but also symbolized their connection to the biblical history of Solomon's Temple.

In addition to their military functions, the Templars engaged in various other activities in Jerusalem. They developed an extensive network of commanderies, fortifications, and preceptories throughout Outremer, solidifying their presence in key regions.

The Templars' commitment to safeguarding pilgrims also extended beyond the city of Jerusalem. They patrolled pilgrimage routes, including those leading to Bethlehem and other significant holy sites. Pilgrims could seek refuge in Templar-controlled strongholds and receive protection during their journeys. The Templars' efforts to secure safe passage for pilgrims contributed to the Order's reputation and garnered support from the broader Christian population. Pilgrims often relied on the Templars for protection, fostering a sense of trust and dependence on the Order.

Collaboration was also a key aspect to the success of the Templars' operations in Jerusalem. Although relationships were often fraught, they worked closely with other military orders, such as the Hospitallers, as well as the secular rulers and leaders of the Crusader states. These alliances were essential for coordinating military campaigns and defending Christian territories.

Economically, the Templars developed a unique system that involved banking and financial management. Pilgrims and Crusaders deposited valuables with the Templars, who issued them letters of credit that could be redeemed at various Templar locations. This financial system not only facilitated commerce but also generated wealth for the Order. They also extended their operations to include Muslim clients and kept officials who could specialise in Islamic affairs (Runciman, 1994b, 260).

The Knights Templar actively participated in several major battles during the Crusades. They were renowned for their discipline, military skill, and unwavering commitment to their cause. Notable Templar leaders, such as Gerard de Ridefort and Robert de Sablé, played pivotal roles in key military engagements.

The Templars' military contributions were evident in battles like the Siege of Ascalon, the Battle of Montgisard, and the defence of Jerusalem during the Second Crusade. Their presence on the frontlines and their reputation for bravery made them a formidable force in Outremer.

As the Templars expanded their influence, they became a powerful force not only militarily but also politically and economically. Their financial activities, including lending and trade, contributed to their wealth and influence in the region. The Templars' success in acquiring land and fortifications further solidified their position in Outremer.

Diplomatically, the Templars engaged with other Crusader states and European powers. Their alliances and connections played a crucial role in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Holy Land during the Crusades. The Templars' influence extended beyond the battlefield, and their reputation as dedicated defenders of Christianity grew.

The eventual decline of the Knights Templar in Jerusalem was influenced by several factors. The loss of key territories and strategic setbacks, combined with internal challenges and conflicts, weakened the Order. Tensions also eventually arose between the Templars and other Christian factions, leading to strained relationships and internal strife.

Financial difficulties and the changing dynamics of the Crusades also contributed to the decline of the Templars. The fall of important strongholds, such as Acre in 1291, marked a significant turning point for the Order in Outremer. The fall of Acre marked the end of the Templars'

presence in Jerusalem. With the loss of their last stronghold on the mainland, the Templars were eventually forced to retreat from Outremer. The decline of the Crusader states and the changing political landscape contributed to the dissolution of the Templars' power in the region.

Following the fall of Acre, the Templars gradually withdrew from their holdings in the Holy Land. The last remnants of their presence in Jerusalem faded, and the Order faced increasing challenges in maintaining its influence.

However, the Knights Templar in Jerusalem had played a crucial role in the defence of Outremer during the Crusades. From their formation at the Council of Troyes to their establishment in Jerusalem, the Templars became a formidable force with influence extending beyond military capabilities. Their commitment to safeguarding pilgrims, strategic collaborations, economic activities, and military contributions shaped their legacy in Outremer. But internal challenges, external conflicts, and the changing dynamics of the Crusades ultimately led to their decline and the eventual loss of their presence in Jerusalem. Despite their fall, the Knights Templar left an indelible mark on the history of Outremer, embodying the ideals and complexities of the Crusader era.

Although there are many books dealing with the persecution and trial of the Templars, or the supposedly esoteric aspects of the Order, there are fewer publications that solely discuss the Templar Grand Masters, their activities and influence in the Kingdom of Jerusalem during the peak of their power. This short book focusses on that time and is intended to add to this important element of their history (see Appendix Ten).

PROLOGUE

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?
Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." James 4:1-2

"From almost every country of Europe wanderers took their way to Palestine, under the conviction that the shirt which they wore when they entered the holy city would, if laid by to be used as their winding-sheet, convey them (like the carpet of Solomon in the Arabian tale) at once to heaven" (Cox, 1874, 9).

Victorian era historians often described the Crusades in colourful, if not romanticised terms. Certainly, the First Crusade which was launched in 1096 stands as a vivid, remarkable and pivotal event in mediaeval history, marked by the intersection of religious fervour, political ambitions, and the socio-economic dynamics of the time. It has been argued (Slavin, 2009) that the pestilence of 1093-1094, drought, and famine of 1095 combined to lead to an increase in the religious zeal and localised violence of the communities in Western Europe. However, to understand the First Crusade's significance and impact, one must acknowledge the intricate historical context that preceded it. This chapter aims to provide a concise examination of the historical backdrop against which the First Crusade unfolded.

Unlike Islam, Christianity had no doctrinal basis for a holy war before the Middle Ages (Madden, 1999). Christ had led no army, and neither did his disciples and early followers. It was in 312, after the conversion to Christianity of the Roman emperor Constantine I that the Christian religion became directly involved in politics and warfare. Christianity and the Roman Empire had become quickly entwined. In the fifth century, St. Augustine spelled out the requisite conditions for a Christian leader to engage in a just war, but he also specifically directed that the faithful should not instigate wars for religious conversion or to destroy heresies or kill "heathens" (Cox, 2018). Warfare was seen as a necessary evil occasionally forced upon a Christian leader, but it was not to be used as a religious tool. The evolving power struggles of the eleventh century changed that. Sheehan notes that:

> "Chivalry was established in the eleventh century alongside the First Crusade and was inseparable from Christian warriors during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Crusading was holy warfare conducted by Latin Christians to recapture the Holy Land, convert pagans, eliminate the Muslim threat in Iberia (Spain and Portugal) or eradicate heretics/ schismatics" (Sheehan, 2023, 77).

By the time the First Crusade had been launched at the end of the eleventh century, Europe and the Middle East could be seen as consisting of three power blocs (Theron and Oliver, 2018). The East was dominated by Islam, the West consisted of the mainly Christian feudal states of western Europe, and between the two, at the centre of the world, was Byzantium, although Europeans also popularly believed that the centre of the world was Jerusalem, a belief supported by early mediaeval maps (see Fig. 1.1)

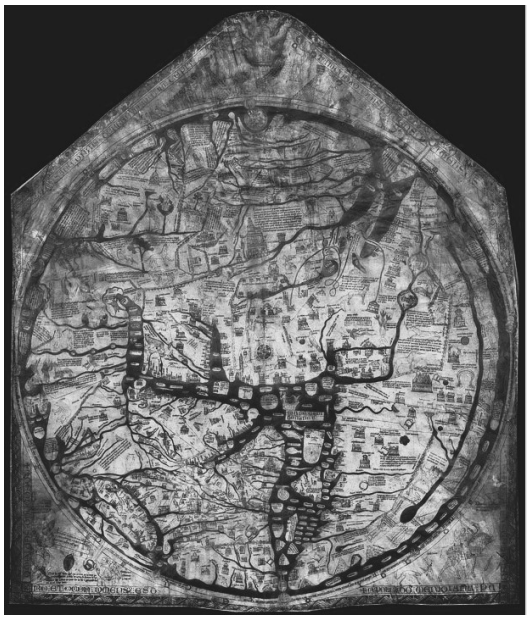


Fig. 0-1 The Hereford Mappa Mundi, a map of the world with Jerusalem at its centre. Public Domain.

The seventh century had witnessed the rapid and sometimes aggressive expansion of Islam, spreading from the Arabian Peninsula across vast territories (O'Neill, 2010). By the eleventh century, Islamic Caliphates had established dominion over the Levant, including Jerusalem, which held

immense religious significance for Christians as the site of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. This rise and spread of Islam occurred so quickly that in the century following the death of Mohammed, large parts of the Mediterranean basin, significant areas of which had been under Roman rule, became subject to domination by Muslim caliphs. Islam's success as both a political force and a religious movement had a profound impact on the Iberian Peninsula and most significantly spread to the economically and militarily strategic city of Constantinople. It was largely in response to a plea from the Byzantine emperor who was in danger of being invaded by Muslim Turks in 1095 that Pope Urban II appealed to Western Christians for help, with the added intention of regaining control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land (Blaydes, L. and Paik, C., 2016).

The Islamic conquests posed a challenge to Byzantine territories in the East and sparked centuries of conflict between Muslim and Christian powers. Byzantium, the successor of the Eastern Roman Empire, struggled to maintain its territorial integrity amidst internal strife and external threats. In particular, the Seljuk Turks, a formidable force in Anatolia, posed a significant menace to Byzantine holdings, culminating in the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, where Byzantine forces suffered a devastating defeat.

At the same time, in Western Europe, the Catholic Church was wielding immense influence, with the pope serving as a central figure of authority. Pope Urban II, in his call for the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095 (see Appendix One), capitalized on religious fervour and promised spiritual rewards to those who took up arms to reclaim Jerusalem from the Muslims. This "Deus vult" with which the Council applauded the encouragement of the pope to all Christian countries to mobilise to capture the Holy Land heralded a significant movement in mediaeval history. In preaching for support for the First Crusade, Pope Urban II brought together the ideas of holy war and pilgrimage. Bennett (2012), however, argues that it was only following the success of the Crusade that a coherent and widely agreed philosophy on the concept of crusading developed.

Fig. 0-2 The Council of Clermont and the arrival of Pope Urban II. Bibliothèque Nationale. Public Domain.

As well as the prevalent ideas of a “Just War”, the “Truce of God” and the “Peace of God” (Dickens and Fellows, 2002) which motivated or justified the Church and monarchy to embark on the First Crusade, there were also practical motives, such as the ambition of the pope to assert his authority, the fervent desire to defeat the Muslims who were threatening Europe, and the need to preserve the supremacy of the eastern Roman Empire. Phillips (2015) also points to the fact that at this time the papacy was embroiled in an acrimonious dispute with the German emperor, Henry IV over the Investiture Controversy, and that by calling for a crusade Urban II could improve his standing and consolidate his political power. Religion and the Church controlled people’s lives which, during the Middle Ages, were often precarious and short. For both the nobility and the commons, the prospect of purgatory was real, and the Church’s ability to shorten time spent there through pilgrimages or crusades offered an escape route from this danger. The Western Roman Empire insisted on the right of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but this was threatened by the advance of Turkish armies into the region.

The First Crusade offered an opportunity to unite Christian kingdoms under a common cause, channelling the energies of knights and nobles seeking redemption and glory. It must be remembered that, in mediaeval times, "...the pains of purgatory, the horrors of hell and the glory of heaven were no less real than the bloody sword in a warrior’s hand” (Roche, 2015, 24) and the promise of salvation was unquestionably real to them.

Feudal society in Europe was also characterized by an hierarchical structure, with lords holding power over vassals and peasants. The prospect of land and wealth in the East, along with the promise of indulgences, motivated many to join the Crusade, leading to the mobilization of a diverse array of participants, including knights, peasants, and clerics. The Crusade also provided an outlet for surplus populations and offered the chance for social mobility to those willing to embark on the perilous journey. Bartlett (2008) examines some modern opinions that view the First Crusade as part of a general Norman Mediterranean expansion that did not link religion as a motivating factor. It is difficult however, to ignore the religious devotion of the early Normans.

The armed pilgrims who embarked on their journey towards Jerusalem one year after Urban's speech at Clermont were comprised of three small armies. The first was led by several Franks, including Peter Bartholomew, Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, and his brother Baldwin. These expeditions needed to travel enormous distances from their starting points in Western Europe to reach their destination in the Holy Land, requiring them to be in transit for many months before they encountered their Muslim enemies (Murray, 2018).

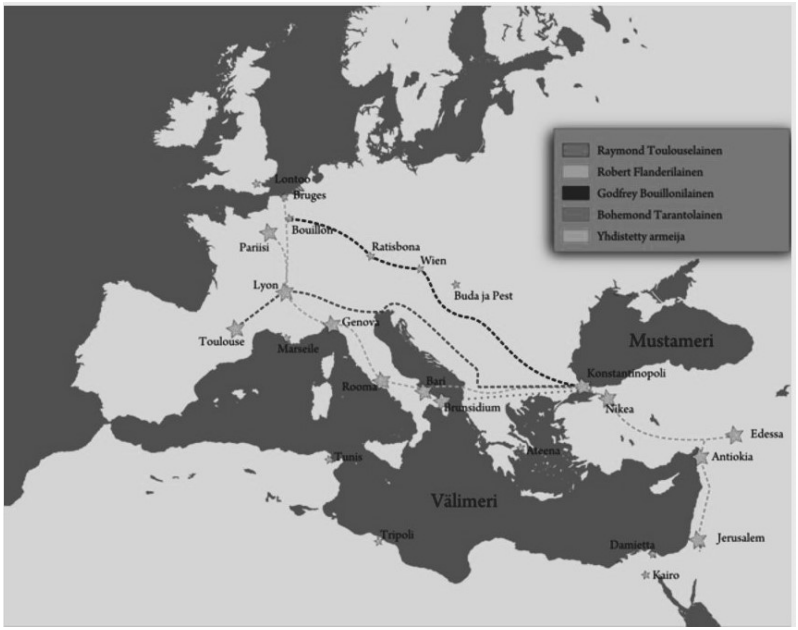


Fig 0-3 Map of the First Crusade: Roads of Main Armies. Creative Commons.

This group followed along Charlemagne's Road, travelling through Hungary and arriving at Constantinople, where they rested to await the other armies. The second group of knights and nobleman were under the command of Raymond IV and Adhemar of Puy and had travelled from Toulouse through the challenging mountains of Slavonia on their way to Constantinople. The third group travelled via the ancient road to Rome. This small army included Bohemund, Richard of Principati, Robert Count of Flanders, Robert the Norman, Hugh the Great, Everard of Puiset, Achard of Montmerle, and Ysooard of Mousson. This third group journeyed to the port of Bari, and then crossed to Durazzo, where they were confronted in battle by Norman forces led by Tancred. Bohemond entered lands that had been taken from Emperor Alexois in 1085 (Howard et al., 2013) and following a minor confrontation between Bohemond and the Normans, Tancred permitted the Crusaders to continue their journey to Constantinople, under condition they were escorted by his soldiers.

The First Crusade was not solely driven by religious zeal and personal ambition but was also shaped by political considerations. European monarchs saw an opportunity to extend their influence beyond their domains and establish new territories in the Levant. The Crusade witnessed the emergence of the most prominent leaders such as Godfrey of Bouillon, Raymond IV of Toulouse, and Bohemond of Taranto, each vying for power and prestige in the Holy Land. The motivations were complex. Kostik observes:

> "Overall, the motivation of those on the First Crusade was as heterogeneous as the various social classes who took part. Not only did the balance between spiritual and material considerations vary considerably from social group to social group, within each stratum could be found figures displaying considerable devotion to the spiritual goals of the expedition and those of a more cynical disposition. And no doubt there were those whose outlook changed during the course of the expedition" (Kostik, 2008, 2009.

Monroe (2016) is far more definitive and states with great certainty:

> "...the religious chroniclers, many of whom implicitly — and even occasionally explicitly — account for the massacres at cities such as Antioch and Albara in secular terms, have gone to considerable lengths to portray the killing at Jerusalem alone as religiously motivated and justified. Given this fundamental inconsistency we can conclude with some degree of confidence that the Crusaders were primarily driven by secular motives at Jerusalem." (Monroe, 2016, 28)

Certainly, the First Crusade can be seen as unfolding against a backdrop of complex historical forces, encompassing religious fervour, political ambitions, and socio-economic factors. It represented a defining moment in mediaeval history, reshaping the political landscape of Europe and the Levant. Through the historical context of the First Crusade, one gains insight into the motivations and consequences of this momentous undertaking, which reverberated across centuries, leaving an indelible mark on the course of Western civilization.

Although this book attempts to provide a fair balance between chroniclers from all sides, there is an inevitable Western bias in much of the material examined. As Pelech states:

> "...all the actions of the Crusaders, including the slaughter of cities' inhabitants and taking the spoils have been justified as acts of war against the "other", primarily different in the sphere of religion, and characterized by a specific catalogue of traits and deeds that situate the enemy outside the boundaries of the Christian community" (Pelech, 2020, 285).

The ideologies of the Crusaders legitimised violence against Levant communities on behalf of the Church. Noticeably, this pitted the "hero" against the "anti-hero", in which contemporary Christian chroniclers portrayed the Crusaders and the Church's mission in the Holy Land as heroic, civilized, and holy, whilst stigmatising what Pelech and Dabas have called the 'other'; the Muslim communities and armies as uncivilised, heathen, and somehow inherently evil. By working to consolidate these stereotypes, Christian writers influenced the developing relationship between Europe and the Middle East over the ensuing centuries, and perpetuated the axiom for western Europeans, that Muslims were toxic and could be best understood as the bestial "other" (Dabas, 2020).

Rowan (2019) describes how the First Crusade was started following exaggerated rumours that Roman Catholic Christians were being persecuted by Muslims in the Levant as well as being mistreated by Eastern Orthodox Christians. The differences between the three religious groups were significant enough to allow "the other" to be viewed as the enemy, even after many years of relatively peaceful co-existence. These differences were used to widen the gulf between the religious communities leading to an escalation of violence that endured for many years.

As Paul (2021) has also usefully indicated, there is a context for the violent history of the crusades within the society and culture of the Middle Ages which should be a reminder for any attempted past justifications for modern injustices. Modern Islamic historians frequently note that it was Pope Urban II who deliberately planted the seeds of Islamophobia

amongst Western Christians to help realise his vision of extending Christendom to the Islamic World (Otham, 2014). It has also been remarked that the success of the First Crusade in conquering numerous Muslim cities and the capacity of the Franks to consequently defend the territories of Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and later, Tripoli were largely due to prolonged Muslim disunity and internal strife in those regions (Alatis and Majdin, 2021). It is worth noting that in the aftermath of the First Crusade, both Islamic and Christian interpretations of its history were less discordant than may be imagined. As Chevedden notes: "The Islamic view of the crusades is in fact the enantiomorph (mirror-image) of the Christian view of the crusades" (Chevedden, 2007, 181).

In broad terms, the First Crusade had a significant impact on both Europe and Outremer. However, the impact on the Levant, against which the crusade was directed, was initially less than that on Europe, with the Crusade having both positive and negative effects on Western society (Gada, 2017). Amongst the Crusaders who travelled to Outremer to capture Jerusalem and to fight the Muslims, many returned with new goods and artefacts. They also brought knowledge and religious ideas as well as stories from their experiences of the culture represented by a different, sophisticated civilisation. Many of those who stayed found themselves changed. Lostick (2008) notes that the riches and plunder of which the Crusaders availed themselves were not necessarily restricted to the lords and ruling classes, but also to the many "pauperes" who also formed part of the Crusade as camp followers, servants and foot soldiers. In addition, there were those who had mortgaged property to pay for the privilege of participating in the Crusade. Many had to obtain their own equipment, including weapons, armour, horses, and supplies. There were also non-combatants who included women, children, the elderly, the ill, and the destitute. Despite the efforts of Urban II to prevent these people joining the crusade, many of them still went with permission from their parish priests (Wade, 2014). The pope found his sudden reliance on this pilgrim movement highly problematic (Porges, 1946). The crusade had been tasked with achieving a complex and difficult military objective, and efficiency required a selection of trained recruits. The mission was therefore faced with a dilemma. It was also seen as a pilgrimage, and consequently attracted large numbers of non-combatants, such as those who had always embarked on pilgrimages. However, as a military exercise the leaders found it inconvenient or even dangerous to admit very many of them to the company.

Consequently, many who undertook the journey died, deserted or became enslaved en route. For those who survived, both nobility and

peasants, in some instances had their lives transformed. As Fulcher of Chartres observed:

> "For we who were Occidentals have now become Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a Galilean or a Palestinian. He who was of Rheims or Chartres has now become a citizen of Tyre or Antioch. We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already these are unknown to many of us or not mentioned any more" (cited by Jotischky, 2009, 1).

It had, however, been a hard-won battle. Dwyer (2015) notes that when the Franks lay siege to Antioch, Fulcher also says that the princes, "had seen the great difficulty of overcoming it, [and] they swore mutually by oath to work together in siege until, with God favouring, they would capture it." (Dwyer, 2015, 9).

The resounding story of the Crusaders' victory as well as evolving myths including the discovery of the Holy Lance (see Appendix Four), turned the Battle of Antioch in particular, into an enduring legend. Although many historians have identified the discovery of Holy Lance on 14 June 1098 as a cause of transformation of the Crusaders' motivation, precipitating a concerted and unified intensification in their fighting, others such as Asbridge (2007) remained sceptical.

However, as Rambin (2013) points out, the events associated with the siege were coloured by the religious and political ambitions of the Crusade leaders. These ambitions were also fuelled by the fervour surrounding the Crusade as a divinely sanctioned war, as well as the religiously sensitive issues surrounding the Holy Lance (Krey, 1921). Because of this, the chroniclers inevitably reported events in different ways from one another. This is particularly evident in *The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres* (or the *Historia Hierosolymitana* (Eddington, 2007)), the anonymously authored *Gesta Francorum*, and Raymond d'Aguilers' *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*. Although these chronicles have traditionally been read as authentic and trustworthy eyewitness accounts of the crusade, Smith (2020) argues that many of the documents are in fact from the twelfth century and were written in religious communities of Western Europe as a method of supporting, participating in, and being part of the crusading movement. Perhaps inevitably, they might be viewed as propaganda.

The author of the *Gesta Francorum* claims to have been an eyewitness to the conquest of Jerusalem and paints a lurid picture of the carnage that followed the conquest of the Holy City. Having successfully breached the city's defences, the Crusaders gave pursuit to the defenders, who retreated

to the Temple mount, killing many in the process. At last, the *Gesta* records that the Muslim soldiers fled to Solomon's Temple, "And at that place there was such a slaughter that our men were wading up to their ankles (ad cavillas) in blood". Madden (2012) has examined the document in detail and has concluded that although many were probably killed, the description is hyperbolic at best. Even though Stark (2016) rightly attests that "Crusaders were not barbarians who victimized the cultivated Muslims" (Stark, 2016, 26), it was certainly a bloody affair.

Bennet (2012) refers specifically to the *Gesta Francorum* (Appendix Three) which shows how the First Crusade inflicted significant stresses on its participants which in turn resulted in a high rate of death and injury. In Outremer, far from their own culture and society, they experienced a fear of death, hardship and ruination of both a physical and spiritual nature. This fear put them at the forefront of the human instinct towards fight or flight. Bennett argues that the Crusaders saw the intervention of God as a very real element in the Crusade's battle between fear and faith. He goes on to show that the representation of fear also had its own politics because:

> "...representation is unavoidably selective, foregrounding some things and backgrounding others. It ideologically represented certain features of fear as functional to religious practice and helped Crusaders to understand them, such as fear as a test of faith." Bennett, 2012, 56).

Despite the growth of Islamophobia these direct contacts with the Levant had a lasting impact on the development of European culture, art, architecture, literature, science and technology. Their human and cultural horizons were expanded and enhanced as they were exposed to the Islamic and Byzantine civilizations of the Middle East. The Western commercial trade routes and economies also became extremely lucrative.

However, Pynes (2019) in his discussion of the 1096 en route massacres in the context of the First Crusade argues that the conversion of the Jewish communities to Christianity was the primary motivation of the Christian Crusaders and neighbouring European occupiers. He concludes that characters such as Count Emicho of Flonheim were probably inspired by the eschatological legend of the Last Roman Emperor and were motivated to destroy the Jewish communities in order to trigger the Second Coming of Christ and the End of Days. The Jewish communities' destruction was to be achieved through conversion or murder.

Certainly, a significant by-product of the religious fervour that fuelled the First Crusade was a well-documented sequence of overwhelming attacks on Jewish communities in northern Europe (Chazan, 1987). Certain groups of Crusaders interpreted the papal directive as an attack on

all infidelity and began their mission to the Holy Land with a violent assault on European Jews.

On the return of the Crusaders to Europe, the First Crusade was seen as a resounding success. The reports from the Christian armies caught the imagination of their contemporaries and resulted in the production of many fictionalised as well as historical narratives. Packard (2011) observes that there are four eyewitness accounts, in addition to letters written by the Crusaders (see Appendix Two), which were taken by later historians, and appropriated or adapted into new, sometimes fantastical narratives. Packard tracks this process which continued throughout the twelfth century and well beyond.

Aitchison (2018) sees the major factor for the success of the First Crusade as being the ability of the army to endure. The soldiers had a divine purpose, a belief that the invasion of Jerusalem was justified by the conquest and capture of Jewish and Muslim settlements as well as the defeat of the latter's armies.

The eschatological imperatives that led to the First Crusade began with Pope Urban II's promise for the remission of sins through campaigns to the Holy Land. This idea was not new but had started during the centuries of conflict between those who followed the Roman Catholic Church, and those who were Orthodox Christians, Muslims, or heretics.

Aitchison describes the eschatological element of Particular Judgment during the First Crusade as being evidenced through extant mediaeval documents. The fear of extended time in purgatory or eternal damnation motivated Crusaders to take up the cross and fight to claim Jerusalem. They felt obligated to follow the European nobility to battle the armies of Islam. It was essentially an armed pilgrimage, in which Crusaders travelled on a penitential journey seeking a favourable judgment. The thought of penitence also motivated the leaders to head the expedition as well as the knights to fight for the remission of earthly sins. Aitchison concludes that:

> "This fear of Particular Judgment is related to the other aspect of the First Crusade eschatology, Final Judgment. The Crusader's understanding of Final Judgment centred on Jerusalem. It was thought that the conquest of Jerusalem would usher in the Second Coming. The siege and defence of Antioch demonstrate that the soldiers believed (or wanted to believe) that God was aiding their quest. In October 1099, their greatest eschatological hopes were fulfilled, or at least so it seemed at the time." (Aitchison, 2018, 80)

The First Crusade remains as the sole example in which a Holy War was conceived in Mediaeval Europe and executed in the Middle East, where

the Crusaders could claim complete victory. The capture of Jerusalem in July 1099 was the result of strategic planning, execution, and tactical adaptation during a four-year campaign, without which the Crusaders may never have succeeded (O'Dell, 2020). One of the consequences of the First Crusade was the launching of further crusades. It may be seen that in many cases these were less than honourable and were poorly executed (Chang, 2017). Certainly, it also damaged a once enduring legacy of common understanding between Muslims and Christians.

This book examines the period after the First Crusade, and the role of the Templars in the context of their time in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially through the characters of each of their Grand Masters (for a list, see Appendix Eight).

THE GRAND MASTERS

CHAPTER 1

HUGUES DE PAYENS

"I do not know if it would be more appropriate to refer to them as monks or as soldiers, unless perhaps it would be better to recognize them as being both. Indeed, they lack neither monastic meekness nor military might." - St. Bernard of Clairvaux, In Praise of the New Knighthood (1136)

Hugues de Payens (circa 1070-1136) was a French knight and one of the founding members of the Knights Templar, the mediaeval Christian military order established initially to protect pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land. The earliest source that identifies a possible geographical origin for Hugues is an Old French translation of William of Tyre's *History of Events Beyond the Sea* (translated by Babcock, E.A. and Krey, A.C. 1943). The original Latin text refers to Hugo de Paganis. However, the French translation, dated from around 1200, identifies him as Hues de Paiens delez Troies referring to the village of Payns, near Troyes, in the Champagne district of eastern France. He is usually recognized as the first Grand Master of the Order, a position he held from its inception around 1119 until his death.

1119 was twenty years after the triumphant victory of the First Crusade, and a small group of approximately nine Frankish knights gathered to establish a lay religious organization in Jerusalem that was based on the recently discovered Augustinian Rule. They took the traditional monastic vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience that was universally required for those who decided to follow a Christian monastic life. Monks were regarded as regular clergy because they lived separate to secular society, according to a Rule (Regula). A Rule was a collection of regulations for daily religious living which exemplified, through word and action, a monastic group's place in Christian society. The Templars were not originally monks, however, but pious laymen who lived in the secular world (Stiles, 1999). Rather than seek refuge in a monastery and renounce their lives as warriors, the Templars set about overcoming one of the major obstacles in the newly declared Kingdom of Jerusalem. They established a bodyguard intended to protect pilgrims from attack on Outremer's roads.

The First Crusade, launched in 1096, had marked the beginning of a series of military expeditions aimed at recapturing Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim control. Amidst the chaos and fervour of crusading, a new institution eventually emerged in the form of the Knights Templar. Established following the First Crusade, the Templars quickly rose to prominence as a military order dedicated to protecting pilgrims, defending Christian territories, and advancing the interests of the Church. This chapter explores the origins, evolution, and significance of the Knights Templar in the aftermath of the First Crusade, and the role that Hugues de Payens played.

The origins of the Knights Templar can be traced back to the effects of the First Crusade, which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. As Christian pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land to visit the sacred sites, they faced numerous perils, including banditry and attacks by Muslim forces. In response to these threats, a group of knights led by Hugues de Payens and Godfrey of Saint-Omer formed a military brotherhood dedicated to protecting pilgrims and securing Christian holdings in the Levant.

The precise circumstances of the Templars' formation remain shrouded in mystery, but historical accounts suggest that they initially operated from the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, hence their name; the Knights Templar or the Order of the Temple. Their proximity to the Temple gave rise to speculation that they had unearthed relics or treasures of immense value, although such claims were and always have been unsubstantiated.

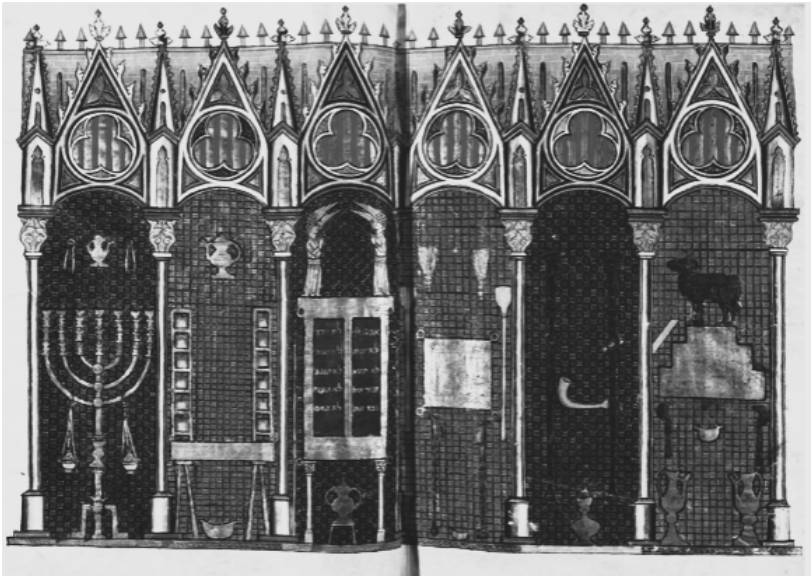


Fig. 1-1 Temple of Solomon from the Historia Scholastica, c.1100–80. Public Domain.

King Solomon's Temple is described in the Old Testament books of 2 Chronicles and 1 Kings. It was believed to have been constructed in approximately 1000 B.C. by King Solomon, son of King David. The Temple was the most significant recorded building constructed during the biblical era. Its innermost room, the Sanctum Sanctorum, was built to hold the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the sacred words of God, inscribed on the tablets Moses was given that contained the Ten Commandments. The temple complex occupied what is known as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, now dominated by the Islamic Dome of the Rock. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.