



The Templars in France: Between History, Heritage, and Memory¹
Los templarios en Francia: entre historia, patrimonio y memoria
Os templários na França: entre História, Patrimônio e Memória

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Resumé: Les Templiers en France n'ont jamais fait l'objet d'une étude scientifique de synthèse. Leur ordre, pourtant, a été dès l'origine étroitement lié à l'espace actuel du pays: une majorité de frères en était issue, et l'oïl, très vite, s'est imposé comme la langue officielle de l'institution. Pendant deux siècles, cette dernière a utilisé le royaume capétien comme sa principale base-arrière pour opérer en Orient et alimenter cette vocation si singulière fondant dans une même démarche religieuse prière et combat. À l'issue du procès ouvert en 1307, né de la volonté de Philippe le Bel, le Temple, bien que dissous, n'a pas totalement disparu du paysage français: un bâti a subsisté et, plus encore, un mythe a pris forme, duquel, peu à peu, une historiographie s'est déprise. Celle-ci, qui s'est considérablement renforcée au tournant des XX^e et XXI^e siècles, permet désormais de considérer la présence templière en France avec un regard neuf, capable d'aller contre bien des idées reçues afin de mieux saisir une réalité médiévale qui, si elle continue à fasciner, demeure parfois étrangement abordée.

Abstract: A comprehensive scholarly study of the Templars in France has not been published yet. Yet their order, from the outset, was closely linked to the French present space: most brethren were born there, and the langue d'oïl rapidly stood as the official tongue of the institution. For two centuries, the Templars used the Capetian kingdom as

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the main operations base to act in the Latin East and to sustain their singular vocation merging prayer and warfare into the same religious move. After the trial which opened in 1307 on King Philip the Fair's initiative, the Templar order, although suppressed, did not entirely disappear from the French landscape: some buildings remained and, even more, a myth took shape, from which an historiography gradually emerged. This scientific movement strengthened from the end of the twentieth century and it now allows to shed new light on the French Templar presence, and to question the generally accepted ideas in order to better understand a medieval reality, which is still fascinating, but often strangely evoked.

Mots clés: Ordre du Temple – France – XII^e-XXI^e siècles – Mémoire – Mythe – Historiographie.

Keywords: Templar Order – France – XIIth-XXIth Centuries – Memory – Myth – Historiography.

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Introduction

Throughout Europe, and sometimes far beyond, the Templars continue to fascinate; the Middle Ages, knights, swords and castles are all the rage among the general public. Yet, in France, perhaps more than elsewhere, fiction has largely gained an upper hand over the historical reality of the Temple brethren. As early as 1805, François-Just-Marie Raynouard created a tragedy for the French Theatre, *Les Templiers*, focused on the trial and the figure of Jacques de Molay. Published in a revised version a decade later, it was translated into several languages and was constantly reprinted throughout the nineteenth century.³

Since then, it has been estimated that the Temple appears in some three hundred works of fiction, portrayed from various angles.⁴ Film and television, and most

* Part of the French text and some of the illustrations and maps used here were printed in earlier works, and I would like to thank the publisher Gisserot and the *Revue Historique* for allowing me to reproduce them here.

³ Alain Demurger, *Jacques de Molay. Le crépuscule des Templiers* (Paris: Payot, 2002), 275-276.

⁴ Nicolas Dohrmann, "Un Temple fantasmé? Le Temple dans la fiction contemporaine", in *Templiers. De Jérusalem aux commanderies de Champagne*, eds. Arnaud Baudin et al. (Paris: Somogy, 2012), 174-179, here at 174.



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recently video games, have of course fed the public's extraordinary enthusiasm. In the imagination of a large public, Jacques de Molay's fellow Templars are still present today, as evidenced by, for example, the seven volumes of comic books by Didier Convard and Denis Falque, *Le Triangle secret*. There are also the investigations by Police Commissioner Antoine Marcas in *Le Rituel de l'ombre*, which Eric Giacometti and Jacques Ravenne created in 2005 and whose ten published volumes, translated into over fifteen languages, have reached a million readers. In France, the success of everything related to the Temple is such that foreign titles are often adapted to include the word 'Templar,' bizarrely considered to make anything sell. Two films from 2011 illustrate this point: *Le Dernier des Templiers*, whose original English title was *Season of the Witch*, and *Le Sang des Templiers*, whose English title was *Ironclad*, which has been adapted to the French in a very curious way since there is only one Templar knight in the entire film.

As historians, we may easily be annoyed by this Templar mania, by the endless collection of absurdities that it often conveys; certainly, many historians do not deny themselves the pleasure of unleashing their criticisms. Doing so, however, does not necessarily make much sense, and, in any case, criticism would only be legitimate under two conditions. First, historians should not seek to set ourselves up systematically as an absolute judge of what is true and false; we must admit that the artist enjoys a certain freedom that the historical event, no matter how much the facts are proven, cannot restrict. Raynouard knew this well and in his play, *Les Templiers*, he did not hesitate to ignore his knowledge occasionally in order to serve the plot.⁵

Second, it is important that scholars agree to work on a subject that is popular with the general public and not to consider it *a priori* as unworthy of study simply because this craze tends to render it rather suspect. Too often in France, studying the history of the Order of the Temple still encounters a sort of double distrust. On the one hand, as Alain Demurger noted, probably the best French specialist on the Templars, historians are reluctant to study the Templars, distanced by an entire body of esoteric literature whose "fantasy is not even good quality fantasy."⁶ On the other hand, the general public, unfamiliar with recent research and sometimes fearing that scholarship

⁵ Alain Demurger, "The Knights Templar between Theatre and History: Raynouard's Works on the Templars (1805-1813)", in *The Military Orders*, vol. 3: *History and Heritage*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 45-52, at 46.

⁶ Alain Demurger, "Histoire de l'historiographie des ordres religieux-militaires de 1500 à nos jours", in *Prier et combattre. Dictionnaire européen des ordres militaires au Moyen Âge*, eds. Philippe Josserand and Nicole Bériou (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 22-46, at 22.

embodies an ‘official’ history that they consider biased, continues to give credence to works by storytellers and charlatans— who willingly deal with the subject of the Temple, but through the prism of secrecy, mystery and looking for who knows what kind of lost treasure.⁷ This mutual suspicion, which is highly regrettable, is not inevitable, however. The case of Britain proves this to be true, where several books created by the best experts have recently made scholarly information about the Templars accessible.⁸ There is no reason that the same thing could not happen in France. That is the conviction that inspired the writing of this article, which, far removed from Laurent Dailliez’s itinerary of ‘Templar’ sites or recently, general overviews by Julien Frizot and Jean-Luc Aubarbier,⁹ seeks to provide a synthesis on the Templars in France that is properly based on facts. As Alain Demurger noted in 2007, such an article has never yet been published.¹⁰

Talking about the Templars in France requires first agreeing on the geographical area in question. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the kingdom of France did not cover the same territory as today. At that time, France reached from the origins of the Scheldt River to the Pyrenees and only rarely stretched over the course of the Meuse, the Saone and the Rhone rivers in the east.¹¹ Beyond was the land of the Holy Roman Empire. Lyons, for example, only became part of the Capetian world in 1312, the year that the Council of Vienne ordered the dissolution of the Order of the Temple.

Thus, the Templars experienced a France that was quite different from today, in particular (but not only) to the east. In many ways, it would have been logical in the following lines to keep to the territory of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Yet, I made the decision to embrace the France of today. This choice is not merely one of convenience: although it enables readers to situate themselves in a space that is immediately familiar, this choice primarily seeks to show that the history of Temple also plays out in the present. The imprint left by the brethren is indeed considerable, and we historians, even more so than usual, must take this into account by drawing on all the sources at our disposal, opening ourselves up to more than written documents

⁷ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

⁸ Evelyn Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (London: Longman, 2002); Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Templar on Trial. The Trial of the Templars in the British Isles (1308-1311)* (Stroud: History Press, 2009).

⁹ Laurent Dailliez, *La France des Templiers* (Paris: Marabout, 1974); Julien Frizot, *Sur les pas des Templiers en terre de France* (Rennes: Ouest-France, 2005); Jean-Luc Aubarbier, *La France des Templiers. Sites, histoire, légendes* (Bordeaux: Sud-Ouest, 2007).

¹⁰ Alain Demurger, *Les Templiers* (Paris: Gisserot, 2007), 51.

¹¹ Monique Bourin-Derruau, *Temps d'équilibres, temps de ruptures. Le XIII^e siècle*, Nouvelle histoire de la France médiévale, 4 (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 56.



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alone to include archeological evidence, architecture, toponymy, and traditions. After examining the two centuries of the Order's history in France, I will then turn to examine the material heritage and the memory of the Templars.

I. A Presence Spanning Two Centuries

I.1. A Unique Bond with France

The Order of the Temple was born in 1120 from the initiative of a small lord from Champagne, Hugues de Payns, who would become its first master.¹² Founded in Jerusalem, this institution set itself the goal of protecting pilgrims and defending the Latin States of the First Crusade by arms.¹³ The Templars' mission was thus rooted in the East, and their primary work developed very far from their founder's native region.

However, French lands have always had a privileged relationship with the Temple. The language of northern France at that time, *oïl*, was the "official language of the order," as Simonetta Cerrini has shown.¹⁴ The rule given to the brothers at the Council of Troyes in 1129 was then translated from Latin into *oïl* French under the Mastership of Robert de Craon ten to twenty years later. This decision was revolutionary given the practice of religious communities at the time, and subsequently, the texts and statutes regulating the order were written in the *langue d'oïl*.¹⁵ Most probably, Latin never disappeared from the practice of Temple and other vernacular languages were used, but from the outset, *oïl* French was the international language of the order.

Moreover, its founders were from northern France, such as Hugues de Payns, from the family of the lords of Montigny, from the area between Champagne and Burgundy, or Godefroy de Saint-Omer and Payen de Montdidier, both of more elevated status, who were respectively from Flanders and Picardy. Northern France was the home of these Knights of the Poor Fellow Combatants of Christ, which would become an official order of the Church. The lands of France, especially those of *oïl* culture, were thus crucial to the birth of the Temple.

¹² Thierry Leroy, *Hugues de Payns, chevalier champenois, fondateur de l'ordre des Templiers* (Troyes: Éditions de la Maison du Boulanger, 2001), 65-67.

¹³ Alain Demurger, *Les Templiers. Une chevalerie chrétienne au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 27-31.

¹⁴ Simonetta Cerrini, *La révolution des Templiers. Une histoire perdue du XII^e siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), 192.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

Moreover, outside the Holy Land, it was from France that the Templars received their earliest support in terms of donations. In 1120, the Count of Anjou, Foulques V, future king of Jerusalem, came as a pilgrim to the East and, according to Orderic Vitalis, he joined the confraternity founded by Hugues de Payns. He lived in the palace that King Baldwin II had given to the brethren and on his return to the West, Foulques V granted them an annuity of thirty Angevin *livres*. With this gesture inspired by admiration and devotion, he certainly hoped to set an example.¹⁶

In 1125, the Count of Champagne, Hugues I, who was travelling for the third time to Jerusalem, also joined the Temple once he arrived, as evidenced by a letter from Bernard of Clairvaux, who congratulated him while lamenting that he did not join Cîteaux.¹⁷ Such support shows that the reputation of the Temple had quickly spread beyond the Holy Land. The first donation of land was recorded on July 1, 1124, when a layman named Guilhem de Poitiers, acting for the Templars, gave the church of La Motte-Palaysan in the diocese of Fréjus to Saint-Victor of Marseille. Through an intermediary, probably a pilgrim, this church had previously been transferred to Hugues de Payns' fellow Templars, who then resolved to transfer it to Saint-Victor.¹⁸

Even though it came to naught, this first landed donation, in addition to the support of several great nobles of the realm, enables us to discredit the idea that there were very few Templars on the eve of the Council of Troyes. Nine brothers in nine years: that is the image forged by Archbishop William of Tyre, who in the second half of the twelfth century came into conflict with the Templars. His image is powerful,¹⁹ but it is false. From its earliest years, the Temple gained a certain renown beyond the Holy Land, especially in France, but it was still insufficient. Thus in 1127, its Master, Hugues de Payns, travelled to the West to make the community more well known and to obtain the Church's recognition as an order.²⁰

¹⁶ “*Sic uenerandis militibus quorum uita corpore et mente Deo militat, et contemptis omnibus mundanis sese martiris cotidie preparat, nobilis heros annuum uectigal diuino instinctu erogauit, et plures alios Gallorum proceres huiusmodi exemplo et simile opus laudabiliter incitauit.*” Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), vol. 6, 310-311.

¹⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Lettres*, French trans. Monique Duchet-Suchaux and Henri Rochais (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 320-324, n. 24.

¹⁸ Damien Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple dans la basse vallée du Rhône (1124-1312). Ordres militaires, croisades et sociétés méridionales* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2005), 87.

¹⁹ “*Cumque iam annis novem in eo fuissent proposito, non nisi novem eran?*”. Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), vol 1, 554.

²⁰ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 31 and 51-52.

Not surprisingly, it was to France, and first to the north, that Hugues de Payns and five brothers came for support. Arriving in the fall of 1127, de Payns spent some time in Champagne, primarily at Provins, before reaching Anjou, where he is reported to have been in the spring of 1128, and then Poitou, perhaps Brittany, and Normandy. From there, he crossed the Channel, then returned through Flanders and Champagne.²¹ Even before the opening of the Council of Troyes on January 13, 1129,²² several donations are recorded from 1127 at Barbonne near Sézanne and the following year in Poitou, possibly also in Nantes, and in Flanders where the Count gave the Templars the *relief* from his fiefs, namely the tax he received from his vassals at each change of vassal.²³

While bringing together a landed patrimony was the necessary preliminary for establishing any religious community, this did not suffice. The Templars, whose radically new way of life blended prayer and combat, needed to obtain the Church's recognition. Thus the Council of Troyes was called to change the confraternity established by Hugues de Payns into an order. It was further legitimized by Bernard of Clairvaux, the leading spiritual authority of the time, in his *De laude nove militie* [In Praise of the New Knighthood] and was granted a rule inspired by the Benedictine rule.²⁴

From that moment in France donations poured in, received by delegates that the Master had named: Payen de Montdidier in the north and Uc Rigaut and Bernat Rollan in the south, as evidenced by the cartulary of the Commandery of Douzens in Languedoc and various episcopal confirmation charters, extant particularly for Troyes and Laon.²⁵ Thus, in 1139, when the papal bull *Omne datum optimum* granted the

²¹ Leroy, *Hugues de Payns*, 72-77.

²² Rudolf Hiestand, "Kardinal-Bischof Matthäus von Albano, das Konzil von Troyes und die Entstehung des Templerordens", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 99 (1988): 295-323.

²³ André d'Albon, *Cartulaire général de l'ordre du Temple (1119?-1150)*. *Recueil des chartes et des bulles relatives à l'ordre du Temple* (Paris: Champion, 1913), 5 and 6-7, doc. 7 and 9; Louis de La Boutetière, "Cartulaire de Coudrie", *Archives historiques du Poitou* 2 (1873): 149-215, at 153-154, doc. 1; Anatole de Barthélemy and Jules Geslin de Bourgogne, *Anciens évêchés de Bretagne. Histoire et monuments* (Paris: Dumoulin, 1879), vol. 4, 121-122.

²⁴ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 56-66.

²⁵ Pierre Gérard and Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier, eds., *Le cartulaire des Templiers de Douzens* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1966), 357; Thierry Leroy, "1127-1143. L'organisation du réseau templier en Champagne", in *Templiers*, eds., Baudin, Brunel, and Dohrmann, 116-117; d'Albon, *Cartulaire général*, 340-344, doc. 555.



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Temple the privilege of exemptions and declared that it depended directly on the Pope, the brethren had already gained an outpouring of support in French lands.

I.2. The Generous and Continued Support of the Faithful

Very rapidly, the Temple constituted its patrimony in French lands. All those joining or otherwise associating themselves with the order made donations, following the example of Hugues de Payns and his earliest fellow brethren. Beyond the circle of the Temple brethren and their associates, a number of lay and ordained people made donations to the Temple without joining, simply because they considered it to be a community of perfection that was able to intercede for the salvation of their souls and those of their friends and loved ones.²⁶ Giving alms to the order was a pious act, whose effectiveness seemed even greater because the brothers, unlike monks or canons, were fighting against the infidels and gave their lives to defend the kingdom of Christ.

Thus said one woman, Lauretta, who, in 1133-1134, gave two lands that depended on the castrum at Blomac, along with all the tenants and rights she held at Douzens, “to the Knights of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon, who fight with courage for the faith against the threatening Saracens who are constantly trying to destroy the law of God and the faithful who serve it.”²⁷ All the donations were not as considerable as Lauretta’s, but added together, they constituted a significant sum. Although the donations were extremely varied in nature, they were most often “lands, revenues from land, rents and rights on land”.²⁸

Frequently, they also consisted of taxes on trade, finance or crafts, which were essentially urban activities, such as the rent of twenty-seven *livres* given in 1143-1144 by King Louis VII on the stalls of money-changers in Paris, or the rights granted by the Counts of Champagne on the profits of the fair at Provins, such as the *tonlieu* (transport tax) on wool (1164), animals for slaughter (1214), and pelts from the Saint-Laurent market (1243).²⁹

²⁶ Damien Carraz, “Les ordres militaires et hospitaliers : une ‘nouvelle religion,’” in *Structures et dynamiques religieuses dans les sociétés de l’Occident latin (1179-1449)*, eds. Jean-Michel Matz and Marie-Madeleine de Cevins (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 179-193, here at 179-180 and 184-186.

²⁷ Gérard and Magnou-Nortier, eds., *Le cartulaire des Templiers de Douzens*, 50-51.

²⁸ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 274.

²⁹ d’Albon, *Cartulaire général*, 198-199, doc. 305; Victor Carrière, *Histoire et cartulaire des Templiers de Provins* (Paris: Champion, 1919), p. 103, doc. 82; p. 47, doc. 8 and p. 142, doc. 138.



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In France, all social groups gave to the Temple, but certain groups, by their generosity or their involvement, supported the Temple in particular. The favor of the kings, especially Louis VII, did help the Order grow, but the king's benevolence did not play as essential a role as it did on the Iberian Peninsula or in England. Instead, in France it was the nobility that made the Temple's fortune. Although the support of the highest levels of the aristocracy, both lay and ecclesiastic, was essential in the early days, the majority of those who took vows or associated themselves with the Order as brothers and as confreres were from the ranks of the lower and middling nobility.³⁰

For example, in Champagne, the lords of Payns favored the Temple as did a number of other castellans in the count's entourage, such as the count's seneschal, André de Baudement, who followed his son-in-law Guy de Dampierre in joining the Order, as did several of the lord's vassals.³¹ At Montsaunès in Languedoc, all of the commanders whose identity is known came from the aristocracy of Comminges and all of the local lordly families worked for to promote the Order, although Count Dodon, who joined in 1176, played a major role.³²

Prior to that and not far from Comminges at Douzens, the Temple's expansion was driven by the Barbairano family and other lineages related to them, such as the Canet and the Roquenégade.³³ Outside of the nobility, the Order also found supporters among clerics, humble laypeople, peasants and ordinary townspeople who—more frequently than historians have admitted—joined the Temple's ranks or gave alms, such as Pierre Lévin and Daniel Le Barillier did at the beginning of the thirteenth century near Nantes.³⁴

Until the very end, the faithful gave to the Temple and some continued to join. The profession of vows into the Order did not cease and in France, they do not seem to have even declined, if we believe the trial records.³⁵ As for donations, they declined

³⁰ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 132-133; Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families. Landonning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c. 1120-1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), especially 31-74.

³¹ Leroy, "1127-1143", 120.

³² Higounet, "Le cartulaire des Templiers de Montsaunès", in *Bulletin philologique et historique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (1955-1956)* (Paris, 1957), at 218-220.

³³ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 279-281.

³⁴ Philippe Josserand, "Les Templiers en Bretagne au Moyen Âge : mythes et réalités", *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 119.4 (2012): 7-34, at 12-13.

³⁵ Malcolm Barber, *Le procès des Templiers*, trans. S. Deshayes (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002), 150, 270; Alan Forey, "Towards a Profile of the Templars in the Early Fourteenth

slightly from the first half of the thirteenth century, but still continued.³⁶ At that time, the number of disputes over the 'Templars' rights was increasing, sometimes causing violence as with the lords of Assérac in Brittany, or degenerating into private feuds, in particular in the Larzac area with the Roquefeuil lineage.³⁷ In this context, legal challenges increased; the Parlement of Paris has twenty-seven extant cases involving the brethren between 1260 and 1307.³⁸

Despite this, it is wrong to conclude that the Order was unpopular after the mid-thirteenth century; we historians must refuse to grant blind faith to French proverbs, such as "To Drink like a Templar," which are certainly well-known, but in reality post-medieval.³⁹ In medieval literature, the image of the brethren of the Temple remained positive, even in the early fourteenth century.⁴⁰ The failure of the Crusades and the increasingly insurmountable difficulties of the Latin States of course aroused criticism; *Renart le Nouvel*, written by Jacquemart Gielée in Flanders, is the best example.⁴¹

Yet, the issue was reforming the Temple and not questioning its very existence. Even after the loss of Acre, as Alain Demurger has argued, "without searching for very long, we can easily find texts that are favorable to the Templars," referring to praise by the Bishop of Marseilles, Benoît d'Alignan, who considered the Order to be "greatly famous and renowned by God and men" half a century earlier.⁴² Nothing about the Temple's dissolution was a foregone conclusion, and even the brothers' relationship with the Capetian monarchy provided no indication of what was to come.

Century", in *Military Orders*, vol. 1: *Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, ed. Malcolm Barber (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), 196-204.

³⁶ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 289-290.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 311-313.

³⁸ Alain Demurger, "Templiers et Hospitaliers devant le Parlement de Paris (1250-1307)", in *Un Moyen Âge pour aujourd'hui : mélanges offerts à Claude Gauvard*, eds. Julie Claustre, Olivier Mattéoni, Nicolas Offenstadt (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010), 424-431.

³⁹ Jacques Berlioz, "Proverbes", in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 754-755.

⁴⁰ Helen Nicholson, *Love, War and the Grail. Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights in Medieval Epic and Romance (1150-1500)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), especially 187-237.

⁴¹ Armand Strubel, "Entre fascination et répulsion : l'ordre du Temple et la littérature (XII^e-XIV^e siècles)", in *La fin de l'ordre du Temple*, ed. Marie-Anna Chevalier (Paris: Geuthner, 2012), 23-42.

⁴² Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 399.



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I.3. A Close Relationship with the King

For almost the entire duration of its presence in French lands, the Temple enjoyed good relations with royal power. Although it is said that French monarchs gave less to the Order than their English and Spanish counterparts did, they did not shy away from doing so. Above all, they frequently employed members of the Temple as advisors and collaborators. Louis VII, whose crusade in 1147-1148 was saved by the Temple both militarily and financially, was the first Capetian monarch to admit Templars into his inner circle, such as Eustache Chien and even more so, Geoffroy Foucher, with whom he maintained friendly correspondence.⁴³

Over time, the practice of using Templars as advisors waxed and waned, but it never disappeared: Philip Augustus, St. Louis and Philip the Fair all called on Templars for courtly services.⁴⁴ Rarely used in the field of law and—contrary to England—in war, the brethren were mostly solicited for financial and political affairs.⁴⁵ They were managers of the royal treasury, which was deposited at the Temple in Paris in 1146 and kept there except for a brief period between 1295 and 1303 when Philip the Fair turned to Italian bankers.⁴⁶ They were also given several missions of confidence, such as Gilles, treasurer of the Temple and of the King, who was entrusted to receive oaths of fidelity on the king's behalf from the great vassals of the realm between 1236 and 1250.⁴⁷

Some of the Templars working for the king were even part of the palace's inner circle: playing on their financial and political skills, at least four were chaplains at court during the thirteenth century.⁴⁸ Another, Arnoul de Wezemaal, a member of the Brabantine aristocracy, became Royal Chamberlain if we believe his tombstone (formerly kept at Chevru), after having served as a diplomat, especially in 1277 and 1285 to the Netherlands and the Iberian Peninsula.⁴⁹

⁴³ Marion Melville, *La vie des Templiers* (1951) (reprint Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 89-90; Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 369.

⁴⁴ Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood. A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 273-275; Alain Demurger, "Service curial", in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 866-868.

⁴⁵ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 374-375.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 380-381.

⁴⁷ *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1894), t. 24, vol. 1, 37.

⁴⁸ Xavier de La Selle, *Le service des âmes à la cour. Confesseurs et aumôniers des rois de France du XIII^e au XV^e siècle* (Paris: École des Chartes, 1995), 35, 161 and 284-285.

⁴⁹ Alain Demurger, "Arnoul de Wezemaal", in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 120.

In 1306-1307, on the eve of the outbreak of the Templar trial, the relationship between the Order and the king was not rosy. When had it changed? Knowing about the arrest of the brethren and the ensuing trial, too many authors have tended to reconstruct their history *post factum*, turning even the slightest element into an unmistakable sign of the hostility of the king and his entourage towards the Temple. There is a risk here of over-interpreting the data, not all of which are proven. Admittedly, since the reign of St. Louis, the Temple's privileges had caused an increase in tension with the monarchy, which was desirous of better asserting its own prerogatives. Yet, there was nothing new in that, nor anything specific to France nor particular to the Order.⁵⁰

Can we really talk of a split between the king and the Knights Templar in the early fourteenth century? Often brought to the fore is the case of the treasurer of the Temple of Paris, who was supposedly dismissed from his position by Grand Master Jacques de Molay for having lent, without authorization, four hundred thousand florins to Philip the Fair, although this allegation has no basis in fact.⁵¹ Despite what has been written, it is not at all certain that the sovereign felt resentment towards the Order following the riot that, at the end of 1306, supposedly forced him to seek refuge at the Temple to escape the opponents of his monetary policy.⁵²

Before 1307, therefore, there was no open conflict between the brethren and the king, although the Order did find itself in an uncertain position. The attitude of some of the Order's leaders during the wars of Guyenne and even more so, those of Flanders, where some of the Templars supported the party hostile to the French, according to a communal account from Bruges,⁵³ may have upset Philip the Fair. Moreover, the Temple dignitaries' sitting on the fence in the conflict with Pope Boniface VIII and

⁵⁰ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 426.

⁵¹ *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro, 1243-1314: la caduta degli Stati Crociati nel racconto di un testimone oculare*, ed. and trans. Laura Minervini (Naples: Liguori, 2000), ch. 460, pp. 340-343.

⁵² This incident is recounted by Jean of Saint-Victor (Étienne Baluze, *Vita paparum Avenionensium*, ed. Guillaume Mollat (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1913-1922) 4 vols., t. 1, 4-5) and by one of Guillaume de Nangis' continuators (*Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1130 à 1300 avec les continuations de cette chronique de 1300 à 1368*, ed. Hercule Géraud (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1843) t. 1, 355-356), although neither of them blames the Temple.

⁵³ Bernard Schotte, "Fighting the King of France: Templars and Hospitallers in the Flemish Rebellion of 1302", in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars, 1307-1314*, eds. Jochen Burgtorf et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 52; "Tempeliers en hospitaalridders in de Vlamse opstand van 1302", *Militiae Christi. Handelingen van de Vereniging voor de Studie over de Tempeliers en de Hospitaalridders* 1 (2010): 29-55.



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the proposed union of the military orders may certainly have fueled latent feelings of hostility.⁵⁴

By 1307, the closeness that had long existed between the Temple and the Capetian monarchy had run its course. Many elements had come together so that a crisis occurred between Philip the Fair and the Order, but nothing could have predicted the violence that this conflict would take. In less than five years, the Temple was eliminated. Because of its brutal nature, the case even struck contemporaries.⁵⁵ As Julien Théry, a great specialist of the trial, noted, “the fate of the Temple was sealed within a history that was not the Temple’s, but that of the French monarchy, the history of confrontation between Philip the Fair and the papacy, and the history of the privileged bonds forged on that occasion between God, France, and its ‘most Christian king’”.⁵⁶

In France, the Templars were arrested on the morning of October 13, 1307, in defiance of the law, following an order issued a month earlier by Philip the Fair to all his bailiffs and seneschals. Moreover, it was under pressure from the Capetian sovereign that Pope Clement V, hoping to regain control of the situation, internationalized the affair by recommending that the brethren be arrested everywhere. It was in France, once again, and virtually nowhere else, that confessions of crimes as horrific as they were imaginary were extorted from the Templars, most often under torture. Once more, it was under pressure from the king that the Pope, in the bull *Vox in excelso* published April 3, 1312, decided to suppress the Order.⁵⁷

It is up to historians to repeatedly hammer home the truth: without Philip the Fair and his legal experts, the trial of the Templars would never have occurred.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁴ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 428-429.

⁵⁵ Malcolm Barber, “Le procès”, in *Templiers*, eds. Baudin et al., 130, 133.

⁵⁶ Julien Théry, “Procès des Templiers”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 743-750, at 743.

⁵⁷ Barber, *Le procès*, 59-115, 197-213 and 245-268; Karl Ubl, “Philipp IV. und die Vernichtung des Templerordens. Eine Neubewertung”, *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 39 (2012): 69-88.

⁵⁸ Julien Théry, “Une hérésie d’État. Philippe le Bel, le procès des ‘perfidés Templiers’ et la pontificalisation de la royauté française”, *Médiévales* 60 (2011): 157-186, especially 185-186, reprinted in *La fin de l’ordre du Temple*, ed. Marie-Anna Chevalier (Paris: Geuthner, 2012), pp. 63-100, in particular 99-100, has clearly shown this to be the case, contrary to what Jonathan Riley-Smith has recently argued in “Were the Templars Guilty?”, in *The Medieval Crusade*, ed. Susan Ridyard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 107-124, reprinted in *Crusaders and Settlers in the Latin East* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), XVIII.



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Order, while it needed to be reformed, was still entirely viable, and it died by assassination, two years before Jacques de Molay was burned alive on the banks of the Seine in March 1314. Thus ended the story of the Temple; the story of its material possessions continued in France, henceforth under the power of the Hospital.

II. The Considerable Establishment of the Temple

II.1. The Order's Territorial Organization

For the Temple, coming to the aid of the Holy Land, which its true *raison d'être*, very early on called for close interaction between the eastern front and the supply base.⁵⁹ Each year, a significant amount of resources needed to be transferred from the West to the East. Provisions, weapons, horses, and coinage formed an ensemble that Templar sources termed *responsio*. From the verb *respondere*, this noun, most often used in the plural, is difficult to translate and for lack of a better term, we talk of 'responsions'.⁶⁰ To respond is to meet one's commitments, to give one's consent, to accept responsibility. To honor its mission, the Temple developed a three-tier territorial organization connecting the central house in the East to each of its Western commanderies by means of an intermediate district, termed the 'province'.

Such an organization, in the twelfth century, was absolutely new, breaking with the customs of both traditional and reformed monasticism, norms that privileged the autonomy of abbeys and priories.⁶¹ In the Templar system, on the contrary, it was connection that prevailed, guaranteed by the provinces. Based on the French model, provinces were gradually created, but their origins can be traced back to Hugues de Payns' voyage in the West because once he returned to the Holy Land in 1129, the Master left behind Payen de Montdidier, who was charged with establishing the Order throughout the *oïl* lands of the kingdom.⁶²

This is probably the 'birth certificate' of the province of France, whose counterpart would soon be organized in the lands of the *langues d'oc*.⁶³ From these two groupings, on which all western possessions of the Temple initially depended, other provinces

⁵⁹ Philippe Josserand, "De l'arrière au front: perspectives croisées, perspectives comparées. Regards sur la logistique des ordres militaires au Moyen Âge", in *As ordens militares. Freires, guerreiros, cavaleiros. Actas do VI Encontro sobre ordens militares*, ed. Isabel Cristina F. Fernandes (Palmela: Gabinete de Estudos sobre a Ordem de Santiago, 2012), 2 vols, t. II, 683-703.

⁶⁰ Judith Bronstein, "Responsions", in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 785-786.

⁶¹ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 142.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶³ Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple*, 88-90.



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would be formed by subdividing existing provinces. After the last third of the twelfth century, the lands held by the brethren in the Capetian kingdom would be divided into four different regions: France, Provence, Auvergne and Aquitaine.⁶⁴

Within these four provinces, Templar organization broke down further into networks of commanderies, following what we know about usages outside of the Capetian kingdom. These commanderies often grouped together several houses, with the largest commanderies having nearly a dozen houses. In the Capetian kingdom, unlike in other lands, the houses might also be combined into a larger district that the sources term *baivulia/baillie*. This polysemous word is not easy to define. Should we, as Alain Demurger proposed in 2005, make it the equivalent of the word province?⁶⁵

The equivalence of these two terms, however, is far from certain. Sometimes referred to as *baillies*, Normandy, Ponthieu, and Champagne had never been ‘provinces’ separate from that of France; on the contrary, they functioned continuously as areas within France. At most, the term *baillie*, when used by the Temple, seems to designate a fraction of a province, referring to a group of commanderies within a region of varying size. Sometimes, at a more local level, the term could also refer to a particularly important commandery, such as Renneville in Normandy, or Bure or Coulours in Burgundy, which had a certain preeminence compared to its neighbors.⁶⁶ In the southern parts of the Capetian kingdom, the term *baillie* does not seem to have been part of Templar organization, but there again, groups of commanderies of different sizes were able to operate as a unit within the provinces, in particular in Provence and in Auvergne.

Rather, it was the word *conventus*, rich with multiple meanings in the Temple,⁶⁷ that served to name these groupings of commanderies. At the very least, this term was used at Montpellier, Aigues-Mortes, Saint-Gilles, and Le Puy, if we believe the brethren interrogated at the trials in Nîmes, Alès, and Uzès, some of whom understood the Order’s development within this kind of *conventus* framework.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 148-149.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

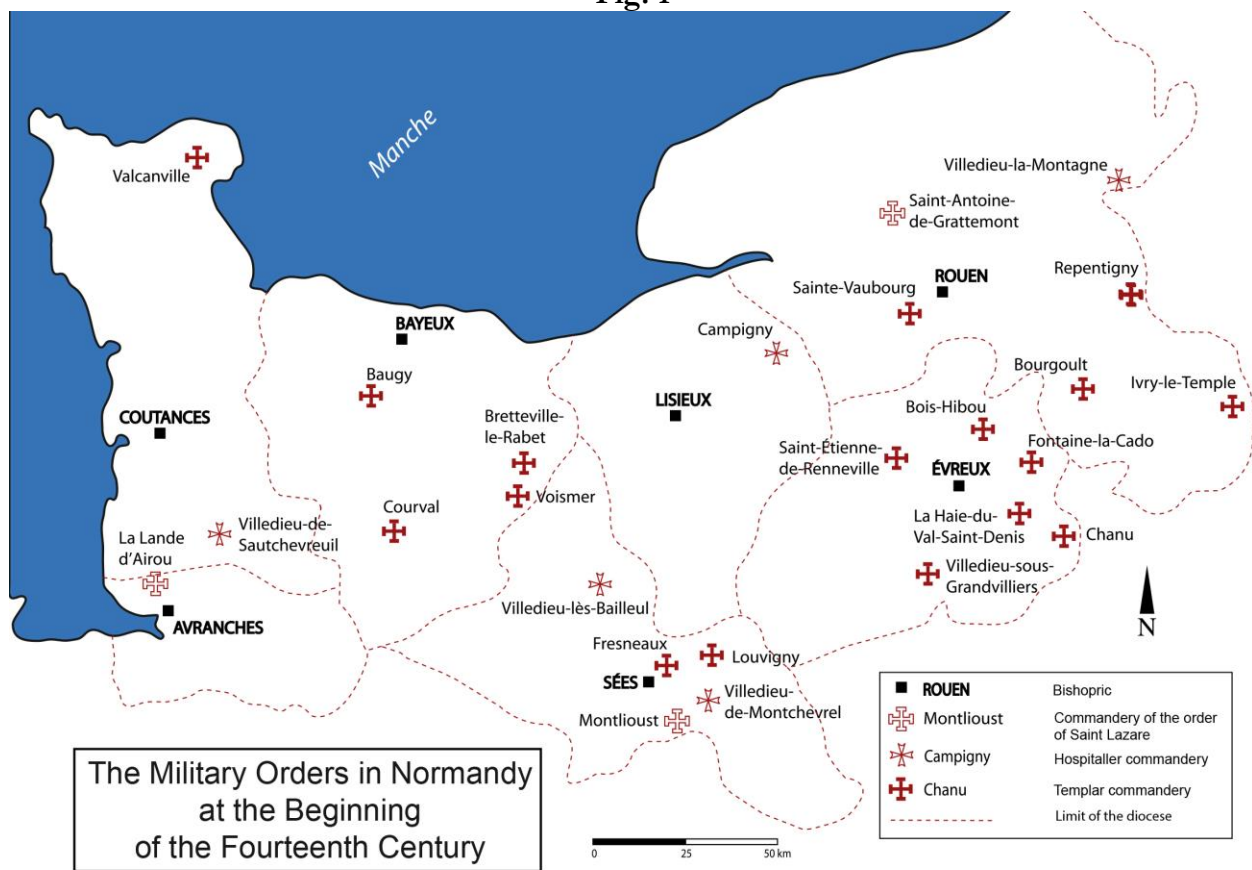
⁶⁶ Barber, *The New Knighthood*, 264; Michel Miguet, “La commanderie, cadre de vie et architecture”, in *Templiers*, eds. Baudin et al., 110.

⁶⁷ Philippe Josserand, “Couvent”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 266-267.

⁶⁸ Alain Demurger, “Le personnel des commanderies d’après les interrogatoires du procès des Templiers”, in *La commanderie, institution des ordres militaires dans l’Occident médiéval*, eds. Anthony Luttrell and Léon Pressouyre (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2002), 141.

In France, as in the rest of the West, the commandery was dependent on a province and locally, depending on the situation, a *baillie* or a convent, and it constituted the physical locus of the Templars' existence. All establishments, even large ones, did not constitute a commandery— far from it. A commandery consisted first of all of an institutional organization whose management was delegated to a brother, the commander, who, for the benefit of the Order, had the responsibility of increasing resources to best defend the Latin East.⁶⁹ Thus, we must proceed with caution when talking about commanderies and trying to count them. Exaggeration, which seems to be the rule on this subject, has a long tradition behind it. In the mid-thirteenth century, the English monk Matthew Paris, in order to castigate the Temple for its wealth, attributed it with the possession of nine thousand manors.⁷⁰

Fig. 1

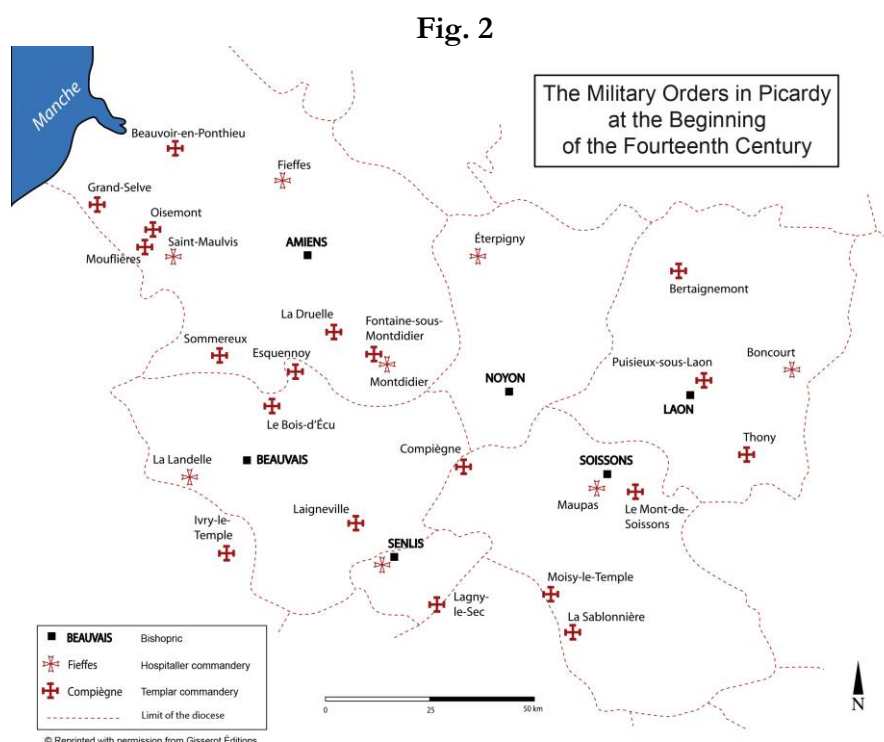


The Military Orders in Normandy at the Beginning of the Fourteenth century.

⁶⁹ Philippe Josserand, “Commanderie”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 245-246.

⁷⁰ Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, 1872-1884), 7 vols., t. IV, 291.

Far too often, this number is still taken to be true. What is meant by ‘manors’? If this means commanderies, the number does not make sense. Even if we think of houses, which would be better suited to the English use of the term, it is still quite excessive. For France, trying to quantify the number of Templar commanderies remains a considerable challenge: Laurent Dailliez has tried to count those existing in 1170;⁷¹ Malcolm Barber tried again in 1994 and Alain Demurger, in 2002, brought their number down to 660.⁷² In fact, in the absence of a synthesis of local studies, we can only cite regional figures with any certainty: 17 commanderies for the six Norman bishoprics (**Fig. 1**), 18 for the six dioceses in Picardy (**Fig. 2**), 24 for the vast diocese of Clermont extending to the upper and lower Auvergne (**Fig. 3**), and 34 for the former country of Champagne and Brie, which were so essential to the Temple’s growth.⁷³



The Military Orders in Picardy at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century.

⁷¹ Dailliez, *La France des Templiers*, 29.

⁷² Barber, *The New Knighthood*, 252-253; Alain Demurger, *Chevaliers du Christ. Les ordres religieux-militaires au Moyen Âge (XI^e-XV^e siècle)* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), 124.

⁷³ Michel Miguet, “Normandie;” Valérie Bessey, “Picardie;” and Laurent D’Agostino, “Auvergne”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 654-655, 717 and 129; Arnaud Baudin and Ghislain Brunel, “Les Templiers en Champagne”, in *Les Templiers dans l’Aube. Cycle de conférences organisé dans le cadre de l’exposition ‘Templiers. Une histoire, notre trésor’* (Troyes: Champagne historique, 2013), 37.



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All regions, unfortunately, have not benefitted from similar studies and, therefore, any claim to generalization is fraught with risk. In my opinion, there were between 300 and 350 Templar commanderies in France. Although the figure may appear small given what we usually read, it is in fact considerable, since the number of commanderies ranged between thirty and forty each for England, Aragon, Castile, and Portugal.⁷⁴

II.2. Between Town and Countryside

Throughout French lands, Templar commanderies formed an interlocking network, despite significant regional differences. They housed brethren that belonged to three categories of members of the Order: knights, clerics, and sergeants lived together in the everyday life of the commandery. For Saint-Jouan, in Brittany, they may have even been represented together as such, in the nine kneeling figures at the base of a large Calvary cross built at the end of the thirteenth century and moved into the cemetery of Saint-Maudez, west of Dinan in 1774.⁷⁵ Most often, however, the brethren in the commanderies did not constitute a community in the full sense of the term.

The existence of a cloister, known for the Temple in Paris, was exceptional and dormitories and refectories remained fairly rare.⁷⁶ Locally, the threshold of four brothers was not always reached, and even when it was, the commandery's *familia* and dependents outnumbered those who had taken vows in the Order.⁷⁷ In Normandy, the six establishments whose members are precisely known at the time of the trial had an average of three brothers, such as in Baugy, where some twenty-seven people lived with the brothers.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Demurger, *Chevaliers du Christ*, 124.

⁷⁵ Jossierand, "Les Templiers en Bretagne", 24-25.

⁷⁶ Damien Carraz, "Archéologie des commanderies de l'Hôpital et du Temple en France (1977-2007)", *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 15 (2008): 183.

⁷⁷ As, for example at Payns' commandery, studied by Mickaël Wilmart, "Salariés, journaliers et artisans au service d'une exploitation agricole templière. La commanderie de Payns au début du XIV^e siècle", in *L'économie templière en Occident. Patrimoines, commerce, finances. Actes du colloque international (Troyes – Abbaye de Clairvaux, 24-26 October 2012)*, eds. Arnaud Baudin, Ghislain Brunel and Nicolas Dohrmann (Langres: Guéniot, 2013), 279-286.

⁷⁸ Michel Miguet, "Le personnel des commanderies du Temple et de l'Hôpital en Normandie", in *La commanderie*, eds. Luttrell and Pressouyre, 94-96.

Fig. 3



The Military Orders in Auvergne at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century.



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Sparsely populated, especially in comparison with priories and abbeys, commanderies nevertheless played a crucial role in the Temple. It was within their framework that the brothers carried out their religious duties as prescribed by the rule. Commanderies also functioned as recruitment centers, provided hospitality, and, in certain cases, medical care, which also served to promote the Order.⁷⁹ Finally, through a group of very diverse economic activities, they collected funds, which enabled the Order to fulfill its military mission in the East. In France, as in the rest of the West, the commandery was thus truly at the heart of the Temple's organization—which is why commanderies still are a source of fascination for the general public, although many misconceptions about them still abound.

What were Templar commanderies in France like? What do we know about them before they passed into the hands of the Hospital in the early fourteenth century? For the most part, they were rural establishments with an agricultural vocation.⁸⁰ Often built on high ground that may have, in Targon-Montarouch in Guyenne, or at Carlat in Auvergne, had an actual strategic interest, commanderies were enclosed by walls that were high enough to withstand attacks by brigands, although there were not, properly speaking, fortified. The buildings were distributed around one rectangular courtyard, sometimes two or exceptionally three as at La Tourette in Auvergne.⁸¹ Wedded to the slope of the terrain, the residential buildings, the chapel, and the commander's residence and stables were built at the highest elevation, while below the common buildings were grouped together, sometimes with a dovecote and a pond.

The domain of the commandery would stretch out over several hundred hectares from the center of this nucleus of buildings.⁸² The Templars tried to unite their lands into a coherent whole, often through exchanges or purchases, and did not hesitate to invest hefty sums to do so. Until the turning point of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,⁸³ they would sometimes, as in Normandy and Picardy, develop the trades that earned the most money, becoming specialists of wine at Douzens and at Clisson, around Nantes, or of sheep at Payens and at Larzac,⁸⁴ and always doing so within the context of a seigniorial system. For unlike monks, from their very beginnings the

⁷⁹ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 155; Miguet, "La commanderie", 110.

⁸⁰ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 163-164.

⁸¹ Carraz, "Archéologie des commanderies", 179-180 and 182, especially note 32.

⁸² Miguet, "La commanderie", 110-111.

⁸³ Michel Miguet, *Templiers et Hospitaliers en Normandie* (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1995), 35, 296; Valérie Bessey, *Les commanderies de l'Hôpital au temps des chevaliers de Rhodes, 1309-1522* (Millau: Conservatoire du Larzac Templier et Hospitalier, 2005), 27-28.

⁸⁴ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 292-294; Josserand, "Les Templiers en Bretagne", 20-21.

brothers were to be present in the world. Despite the uncertain nature inherent in donations, rural areas commanderies were established near busy roads, waterways or major crossings, revealing therefore the central importance of having easy access to trade routes.⁸⁵

While most Templar establishments in France were rural, there were some exceptions. By economic necessity, the brothers were attracted to the city.⁸⁶ In Picardy, they had a house in every major town (except for Amiens) and at Compiègne, Montdidier, and Senlis, those houses were the seat of a commandery. This was not systematic, however, and at Beauvais, Laon, Noyon, Saint-Quentin and Soissons, the town house of the Temple was connected with a nearby rural settlement, just as in the Loire Valley, Tours depended on Ballan and Bourges depended on les Bordes.⁸⁷ In urban areas, the need for isolation that was essential to regular life generally led the Temple to create an enclosure around its church and cemetery, conventual spaces, lodgings, ovens, mills and gardens.⁸⁸

This area, termed in Latin texts the *claustrum*, was often located in contact with the town walls,⁸⁹ on the inside as at Beauvais and Toulon, where the brethren were given the privilege of opening a small door,⁹⁰ or on the outside of the city walls as in Arles and in Nantes, where the commandery on the right side bank of the Erdre River was incorporated into the city when in 1222, the town walls were extended beyond the Faubourg Saint-Nicolas, then in full expansion (**Fig. 4**).⁹¹ Associated with the urban dynamism of the thirteenth century, the Templars were also drivers of that dynamism, subdividing the vast spaces they held at the limits of some cities into lots for renting out to tenants. The quarter of Saint-Mathieu in Perpignan and the Marais in Paris (at

⁸⁵ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 295.

⁸⁶ Damien Carraz, “Les ordres militaires et la ville (XII^e-XIII^e siècles). L'exemple des commanderies urbaines de la basse vallée du Rhône”, *Annales du Midi* 114 (2002): 275-292; idem, *L'ordre du Temple*, 255-282; idem, “Expériences religieuses en contexte urbain. De l'ordo monasticus aux religiones novae : le jalon du monachisme militaire”, in *Les ordres militaires dans la ville médiévale (1100-1350)*, ed. Damien Carraz (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Balise-Pascal, 2014) 37-56.

⁸⁷ Bessey, “Picardie”, and Alain Demurger, “Pays de Loire”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 717, 698.

⁸⁸ Carraz, “Archéologie des commanderies”, 181.

⁸⁹ Demurger, *Les Templiers*, 50.

⁹⁰ Joseph-Antoine Durbec, *Templiers et Hospitaliers en Provence et dans les Alpes-Maritimes* (Grenoble: Le Mercure dauphinois, 2001), 171-173.

⁹¹ Josserand, “Les Templiers en Bretagne”, 31-32.

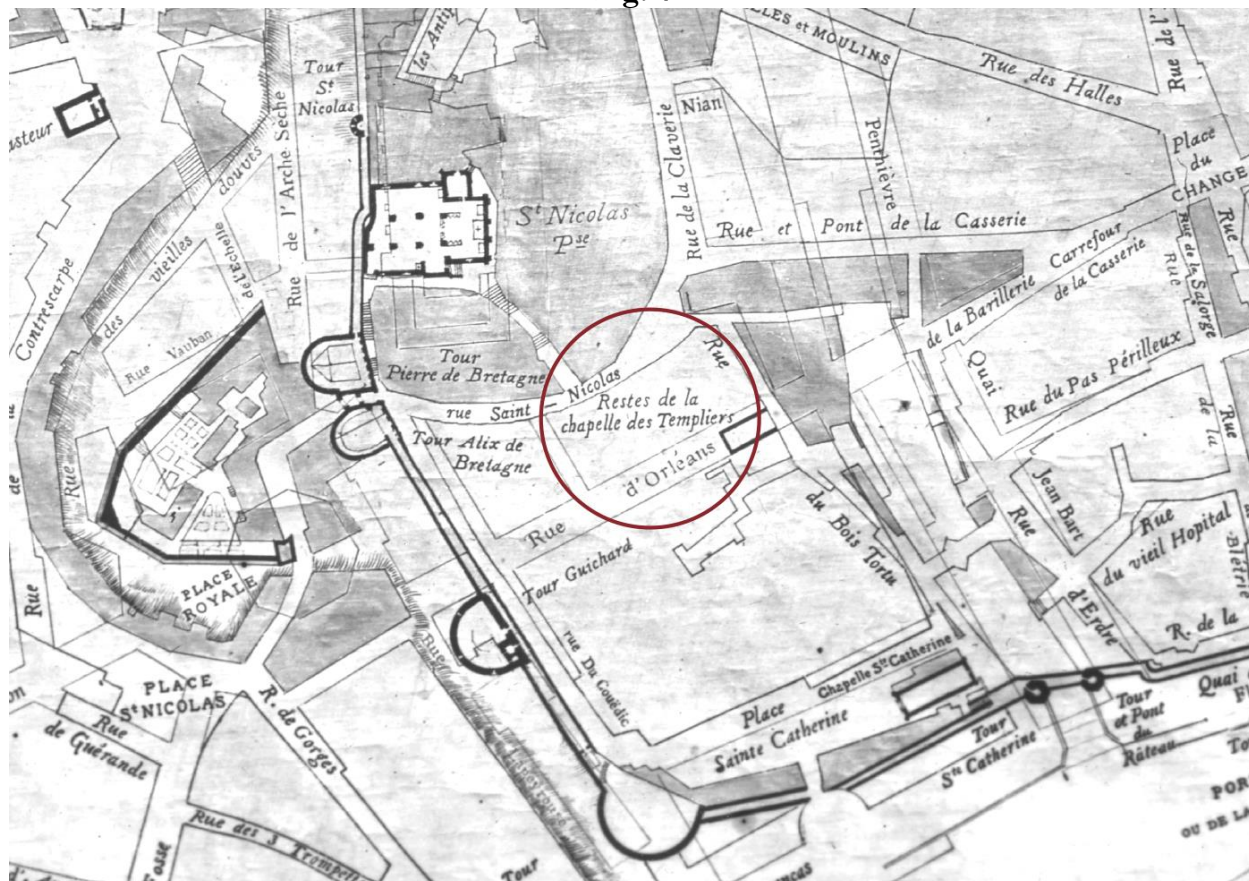
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the site of the former Villeneuve of the Temple) with their regular layouts still testify to the brothers' urbanism.⁹²

Fig. 4



Part of an Archeological Map of Nantes by Henri Soreau -

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Part of an Archeological Map of Nantes by Henri Soreau.

In France as in the rest of the West, the Templars had fully grasped that the city was a key element in the successful functioning of their logistics.

II.3. Complete Involvement in the Exchange Economy

By nature, the Templars' mission was to defend the Holy Land with all available means. From the outset, the West was their essential supply base. With the Latins'

⁹² Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 304-306.

difficulties in the East, recurrent from the late twelfth century, the West's role steadily increased and France, which was then the most populous area, was the main point of departure for resposions. Through the great river valleys of the Seine and the Loire in particular, and then the corridor of the Saone and the Rhone,⁹³ the brothers transported provisions, weapons, horses, and coinage from throughout the kingdom to the Mediterranean, to Languedocian or Provençal ports.⁹⁴ From the twelfth century, Marseilles was at the heart of the Templar's transportation organization for supporting the East. The commandery there opened onto the port, near the Place du Temple where goods were transferred and near a field, the Plan Fourmiguier, where ships were repaired (**Fig. 5**).

It was within the commandery's walls that the master of passage usually resided, the officer in charge of overseeing the storage, accommodation, and loading related to maritime transport.⁹⁵ After Marseilles, other ports also played an important role, such as Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. There, from the twelfth century, products from the East such incense and fine silver transited through the hands of the brethren, around whom a small community of Levantine merchants gravitated. In the following century, the town of Toulon opened to the Temple, which was granted the privilege of not paying duties on the products of its lands in 1224. At Aigues-Mortes, opposite the royal port on the island of Estel, the Templar establishment of Nega Romieu had warehouses that it leased to merchants.⁹⁶ Organized in this way, therefore, the Templars were indispensable actors in connecting France and the Latin East.

The transfers of goods from Marseilles and a few nearby ports, which were crucial for the states born from the Crusades, had an importance that extended beyond France because, although there were equivalents in Barcelona, Genoa, Venice and Brindisi, resposions from England or the Iberian Peninsula could transit through the Languedocian or Provençal coast.⁹⁷ To come to the aid of the Latin East, the

⁹³ For this latter corridor, see Alain Demurger, "Conclusions", in *L'économie templière*, eds. Baudin et al., 466, which mentions "a real Templar route" in the thirteenth century.

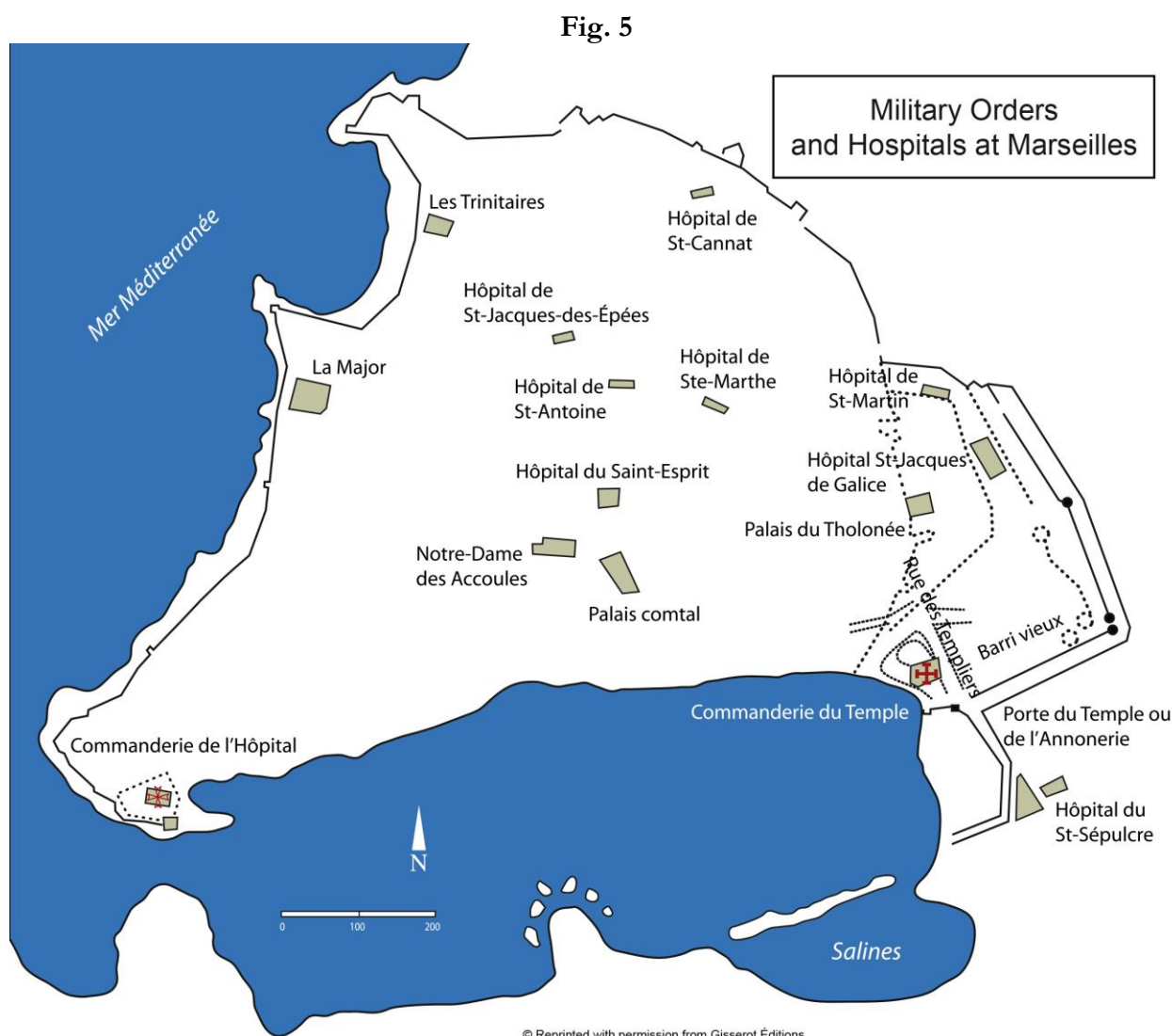
⁹⁴ Malcolm Barber, "Supplying the Crusader States: the Role of the Templars", in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. Benjamin Kedar (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 314-326; Barber, *The New Knighthood*, especially 250.

⁹⁵ Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple*, 245-246, 494-497, 501-504; "Marseille", in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 590-591, 753.

⁹⁶ Damien Carraz, "Templiers et négociants méditerranéens. Des intérêts convergents", *Histoire et images médiévales* 46 (2012): 25-32 at 28-29.

⁹⁷ Josserand, "De l'arrière au front", 688-689.

Templars had to overcome two problems that still cause a great deal of ink to be spilled today: they needed boats and money.



Military Orders and Hospitals in Marseilles.

From the early thirteenth century, the Order was able to equip a navy.⁹⁸ Its vessels have been identified for several French ports: at La Rochelle, where the

⁹⁸ Jürgen Sarnowsky, “The Military Orders and Their Navies”, in *The Military Orders*, vol. 4: *On Land and by Sea*, ed. Judi Upton-Ward (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 41-56, at 42-43; Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “La marine du Temple dans l’Orient des croisades”, in *Les ordres militaires et la mer*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2009), 47-59; Damien Carraz, *Les Templiers et la guerre* (Clermont-Ferrand: Éditions Lemme, 2012), 85-87.



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commandery's walls opened with a passage onto the dock, for the period 1230-1231 we know of the *Templère*, the *Buscart du Temple* and the *Busarde du Temple*,⁹⁹ whereas at Marseilles there is evidence of the *Bonne Aventure* in 1248 and the *Rose du Temple* between 1288 and 1290.¹⁰⁰ Although somewhat small, the Order's fleet was comparable to that of the Hospital and was complemented with ships chartered from the Italian republics. Together, vessels and galleys assured the brethren considerable shipments of equipment and coin.

It goes without saying that these transfers, as regards their monetary value, have prompted a number of wild imaginings; the Templars' relationship to money still sells. Dealing with this subject in detail is beyond the scope of this article; here I will limit myself to Alain Demurger's conclusion, who has analyzed this subject with all the scrupulousness of an excellent historian: "There was money in the commanderies, that is certain, but surely not enough to justify the fantasies of those seeking the 'Templar treasures!'"¹⁰¹ The brethren, in France and elsewhere, knew very well the value of money, but they were not men of money, and while they did not scorn wealth, they primarily sought resources to fulfill the Order's mission in the East.

Throughout their history, the Templars played a role as intercessors with the Holy Land and often in the West, therefore, they were privileged informants on the subject of the East.¹⁰² Mobility was indeed at the heart of the brothers' practice. All of them, naturally, did not cross the Mediterranean, and many of them, clerics and sergeants in particular, hardly moved at all other than locally. Yet, the ideal of stability that was so essential to monasticism was foreign to their vocation.¹⁰³ Although they moved more than others did, the leaders of the Order and their entourages were not alone in doing so. Joining the Temple in 1288, Sergeant Étienne du Cellier, from the diocese of Clermont, travelled four or five times to the East to represent the Order's authorities

⁹⁹ Jean-Claude Bonnin, "Les Templiers et la mer: l'exemple de La Rochelle", in *La commanderie*, eds. Luttrell and Pressouyre, 307-315, at 312.

¹⁰⁰ Louis Blancard, *Documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au Moyen Âge* (Marseilles: Barlatier, 1884-1885) 2 vols., t. 2, p. 272, doc. 952; p. 436, doc. 49; p. 446, doc. 79; Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple*, 244.

¹⁰¹ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 324.

¹⁰² Pierre-Vincent Claverie, "Les Templiers, informateurs de l'Occident à travers leur correspondance", in *As ordens militares*, ed. Fernandes, t. 2, 715-735.

¹⁰³ Alan Forey, "Introduction", and Christian Vogel, "The Mobility of Templars from Provence", in *International Mobility in the Military Orders (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries): Travelling on Christ's Business*, eds. Jochen Burgdorf, Helen Nicholson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), "Introduction" 1-7 at 2; "Mobility" 114-129 at 124.



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in Auvergne.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, until the end of the Order, any applicant when taking his vows declared himself ready to accept being sent from one shore to another of the Mediterranean according to the wishes of his superiors.¹⁰⁵ In France, as elsewhere, it was the knights directly involved in combat who travelled the most: 90% of the seventy-six Templars tried in Cyprus had joined the order in the West and 55% of them came from France.¹⁰⁶

Most originated from Burgundy and the Auvergne, although these two regions are sometimes too quickly described by scholars as being competitors.¹⁰⁷ This French supremacy in the Temple was not a novelty. Since the twelfth century, the kingdom and its margins of *oïl* culture had largely supplied the Order,¹⁰⁸ providing the bulk of its leaders and the vast majority of the masters who succeeded each other at the head of the institution. Between Hugues de Payns and Jacques de Molay, over 80% of the twenty-three grand masters of the institution came from areas within the current boundaries of France.¹⁰⁹

III. A Unique Heritage

III.1. Remnants of the Order's Buildings

More widely established in France than in the rest of the West, the Templars did not disappear without a trace. In the country today, different remnants of the memory of the Order exist; in some cases, they have been largely invented and are highly questionable. The most direct, physical remains are the brethren's buildings. The material legacy of the Temple has caused ink to be spilled in abundance and there are now countless itineraries that, on the regional or national level, pretend to help the public discover sites marked by the Order, without much concern for the truth.

¹⁰⁴ Pierre-Vincent Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple en Terre sainte et à Chypre au XIII^e siècle* (Nicosie: Centre de Recherche Scientifique, 2005) 3 vols., t. 1, 189, 191, and t. 2, 138.

¹⁰⁵ Barber, *Le procès des Templiers*, 159; Alain Demurger, "Outre-mer. Le passage des Templiers en Orient d'après les dépositions du procès", in *Chemins d'Outre-mer. Études d'histoire sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, eds. Damien Coulon et al. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004) 2 vols., t. 1, p. 218.

¹⁰⁶ Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, t. 1, 203-204; Jochen Burgdorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars. History, Organization, and Personnel (1099/ 1120-1310)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 139-140.

¹⁰⁷ Demurger, *Jacques de Molay*, 101-103.

¹⁰⁸ Burgdorf, *The Central Convent*, 707.

¹⁰⁹ Marie Luise Bulst-Thiele, *Sacra Domus Militiæ Templi Hierosolymitani magistri. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Templerordens, 1118/19-1314* (Göttingen: Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974).

Mapping the locations of imagined Templar buildings, even when restricted to the main sites as Julien Frizot has tried to do recently,¹¹⁰ leads us nowhere and is an egregious misuse of the facts, which historians must speak out against and challenge. In France, the commanderies with all their buildings extant are rare, and although local tradition may identify all sorts of buildings as ‘Templar’, their number has been grossly exaggerated and we must examine them more closely on a local level. In fact, the architectural evidence breaks down into two dichotomies: first, there are areas such as Flanders and Brittany, where the imprint of the Order today is limited and where entirely preserved commanderies no longer exist. Second, there were regions such as Burgundy where vestiges of Templar buildings are abundant and some are rather well-preserved.¹¹¹

This second group breaks down further into our second dichotomy, between town and countryside, since the establishments extant today in their complete former state were all built in rural areas.¹¹² However, in the Larzac, at La Couvertoirade and Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon, most Templar buildings were taken over and transformed by the Hospital.¹¹³ At Bourgoult in Normandy and at Nuits-sous-Ravières in Burgundy, today only the church reflects the original construction, which was sometimes preceded by other religious or civil buildings at the most famous sites such as Arville or Coulommiers.¹¹⁴

Chapels, which were spared from destruction more often than other buildings, are today the most iconic remains of Templar buildings. Sometimes alone in their village or in the open countryside, they have long attracted the attention of art historians.¹¹⁵ The myth of the primacy of round churches, so dear to Viollet-le-Duc, which has only been documented for the Temple in Paris, Laon and perhaps Metz in France, has now been disproved. The most recent regional studies have found that the brethren did not necessarily seek to develop their own architecture and used a style that Alain

¹¹⁰ Frizot, *Sur les pas des Templiers*, 6.

¹¹¹ Josserand, “Les Templiers en Bretagne”, 27-30; Michel Nuyttens, *Krijgers voor God. De orde van de Tempeliers in de Lage Landen (1120-1312)* (Louvain: Davidsfonds, 2007), 15-18; Michel Miguet, *Les Templiers en Bourgogne* (Précly-sous-Thil: Éditions de l’Armançon, 2009).

¹¹² Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 164.

¹¹³ Jacques Miquel, “Les fortifications de la commanderie de Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon pendant la guerre de Cent Ans et les guerres de Religion”, in *La commanderie*, eds. Luttrell and Pressouyre, 329-358.

¹¹⁴ Alain Demurger, “Arville”, and Hervé Baptiste, Alain Demurger, “Coulommiers”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Josserand and Bériou, 121, 263.

¹¹⁵ Carraz, “Archéologie des commanderies”, 188-189.

Demurger has rightly described as “simple and practical.”¹¹⁶ Most Templar chapels were rectangular buildings with a few bays and a single nave,¹¹⁷ although of course there were variations on this theme. For example, the chapels were not all the same size and, with a length from two to five bays, they could measure barely ten meters or more than thirty. The chapel choir, which was originally semicircular as at Arville and Jalès, or flat and pierced with a triplet at Coulommiers, Avalleur, and Fontenotte, became polygonal in the thirteenth century, in particular at Épailly and at Villedieu-lès-Maurepas.

Finally, broken barrel vaulting was long used, as at Clisson or in the Angoumois group analyzed by Charles Daras,¹¹⁸ and later integrated sharp edges or lierne vaults as in the Limousin, at Paulhac, Blaudeix and Chamberaud. Rarely as richly decorated as at Cressac or at Montsaunès,¹¹⁹ Templar chapels participated in a Romanesque style that was rather sober. Yet in several cases, the brethren showed that they knew how to innovate by employing the Gothic style,¹²⁰ first probably in an urban context at La Rochelle and at Avignon in the mid-thirteenth century, then in more prosperous rural areas at Baugy, Renneville and Saint-Vaubourg in Normandy, and at Saulce d’Island in Burgundy.¹²¹

Civilian buildings in the Templar commanderies, such as residences, barns, and other outbuildings, have survived less often than their churches. Poorly protected, they were sometimes destroyed at relatively close dates, such as the lodgings at Bure in Burgundy, or Mont-de-Soissons in Picardy, both torn down in the early 1950s.¹²² Prior to that date, the latter had been preserved on both levels and was one of two still in its

¹¹⁶ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chrétienne*, 168-169, 172.

¹¹⁷ Miguet, “La commanderie”, 111-114.

¹¹⁸ Charles Daras, *Les Templiers en Charente. Les commanderies et leurs chapelles* (Poitiers: Oudin-Beaulu, 1981).

¹¹⁹ Gaetano Curzi, *La pittura dei Templari in Europa* (Milan: Silvana, 2002).

¹²⁰ Claude Andrault-Schmitt, “Les églises des Templiers de la Creuse et l’architecture du XIII^e siècle en Limousin”, *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l’Ouest* 10.2 (1996): 73-141; Damien Carraz, “Les ordres militaires, le comte et les débuts de l’architecture gothique en Provence”, *Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire et du patrimoine de l’ordre de Malte* 13 (2003): 45-55; Christophe Balagna, “L’influence des ordres hospitaliers et militaires dans l’émergence de l’architecture gothique en Gascogne et Toulousain”, in *Les ordres religieux militaires dans le Midi (XII^e-XIV^e siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux, 41 (Toulouse, 2006), 213-238.

¹²¹ Carraz, “Archéologie des commanderies”, at 189-190.

¹²² Michel Miguet, *Templiers et Hospitaliers de Bure. Histoire et rayonnement d’une commanderie bourguignonne* (Langres: Guéniot, 2012), 82; Bessey, *Les commanderies*, 291.



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original state, along with Richerenches in Provence.¹²³ For the most part, the commanderies' lodgings were modified from the late Middle Ages; only in very few sites such as Uncey-le-Franc and Villemoison in Burgundy can elements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries be discerned, in particular with certain windows.¹²⁴ In addition to the lodgings, which were probably reserved for the commander, there were residential areas for the brethren. Of these residences, practically nothing remains and archeological studies have not been able to confirm the fairly detailed subdivisions suggested in the written sources of the visitation of the Temple at Arles in 1308.¹²⁵

Common areas juxtaposed all these buildings in which the brethren and their dependents lived. A few have stood the test of time, in particular large barns, such as at Beauvais-sur-Matha in Saintonge,¹²⁶ and Sainte-Vaubourg where the Templar barn, built in the early thirteenth century with carved stone and rubble, is divided into three aisles, by means of three columns in two rows supporting an original and complex structure.¹²⁷ In this latter commandery, a cellar built at the time of the Temple also remains. Consisting of two vaulted bays spanned by diagonal ribs, with five niches opening off the bays, it was designed to house wine barrels— a rare example of this kind of utilitarian building, along with other examples at Épailly and Jalès.¹²⁸ This was, therefore, a storage cellar, and not the beginnings of some secret underground passageway such as the lovers of Templar legends want to believe.

III.2. The Metamorphoses of the Templar Legend

Another deep imprint of the Templars' heritage concerns the myths surrounding the Order. As with the remains of the buildings they left behind, and probably even more so, the legends about the Order are today still a large part of the many people's

¹²³ Jean-Marc Mignon and Damien Carraz, "La maison templière de Richerenches (Vaucluse): premiers résultats de l'étude architecturale et archéologique", *Archéologie du Midi médiéval* 26 (2008): 131-143.

¹²⁴ Miguet, *Les Templiers*, 55, 62.

¹²⁵ Carraz, "Archéologie des commanderies", 185.

¹²⁶ Anne-Marie Legras, *Les commanderies des Templiers et des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem en Saintonge et en Aunis* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1983), 41-42.

¹²⁷ Miguet, *Templiers et Hospitaliers*, 419-421; Christiane Naud-Lereboullet (ed.), *Sainte-Vaubourg au Val de la Haye. Mille ans d'histoire. La commanderie de Sainte-Vaubourg, présentation historique et archéologique* (Veneux-les-Sablons: self-published, 1999), 71-78.

¹²⁸ Miguet, "La commanderie", 114.

interest.¹²⁹ Anyone reading these lines has inevitably heard the stories of treasures, occult knowledge, or fabulous wealth; indeed, perhaps the reader still has them in mind. The “sottisier Templier,” or collection of Templar absurdities, to use Alain Demurger’s excellent expression, is limitless.¹³⁰ At first glance, historians do not seem to have much to learn from these wild imaginings, but we should not disdain them as an object of study and we must examine the creation of these myths that have made the brethren the keepers of secret power. Honoré de Balzac, very aware of the ideas of his time, wrote of a belief that was then widespread, that the knowledge of Antiquity had never been lost but continued to exist in an occult way, transmitted in particular by the Templars:

La Chaldée, l’Inde, la Perse, l’Égypte, la Grèce, les Maures se sont transmis le magisme, la science la plus haute parmi les sciences occultes, et qui tient en dépôt le fruit des veilles de chaque génération. Là était le lien de la grande et majestueuse institution de l’ordre du Temple. En brûlant les Templiers, Sire, un de vos prédécesseurs n’a brûlé que des hommes, les secrets nous sont restés.¹³¹

In his *Études philosophiques sur Catherine de Médicis*, published in 1836, Balzac placed these words in the mouth of the character Lorenzo Ruggieri, a supposed adept of esotericism, when speaking to the king of France, Charles IX, in 1573. It would be useless to seek evidence of this infatuation for the so-called secrets of the Temple during the Renaissance, and even more so the late Middle Ages, because no one before the eighteenth century had ever claimed to uncover them.¹³²

This spiritualist-Templarist current of thought, according to which the Order had not disappeared despite the trial and the verdict of dissolution that followed, emerged at the same time as Freemasonry: the Temple was supposed to have survived, underground, within the Freemasons, which may have been a real guild of tradesmen in the Middle Ages but by the Early Modern Era, had kept only the symbolism and imagery of masons.¹³³ However, this idea of continuity with Jacques de Molay’s fellow

¹²⁹ Dohrmann, “Un Temple fantasmé?”, 174-179; Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “Essai sur l’historiographie templière et ses déclinaisons culturelles depuis le XIV^e siècle”, *Le Moyen Âge* 118 (2012): 661-674.

¹³⁰ Demurger, “L’étude des ordres religieux-militaires en France: la fin de la marginalité ?” *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 15 (2008): 169-173, at 169.

¹³¹ Honoré de Balzac, *Études philosophiques sur Catherine de Médicis* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1924), 375-376.

¹³² Nicole Bériou, “Ésotérisme”, in *Prier et combattre*, eds. Jossierand and Bériou, 337.

¹³³ René Le Forestier, *La franc-maçonnerie templière et occultiste aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles*, ed. posthumously by Antoine Faivre (Paris: Aubier, 1970); Franco Cardini, *Templari e templarismo. Storia, mito, menzogna*

brethren did not come from the first Freemasons, who, until the mid-eighteenth century, only attributed the Crusader Knights with transmitting the wisdom of the Temple of Solomon's builders. Once this myth had been created, the temptation was strong to associate it with the Templars as it was thought that the Temple of Solomon had been their headquarters, a building at the heart of the architectural metaphors of Freemason lodges.¹³⁴ The threshold was crossed in France in about 1750,¹³⁵ but it was in Germany that the Freemasons decided to use Templar hierarchies in order to establish a system of rank, a clear shift away from their original egalitarianism.¹³⁶

Several of the creators of this German Templarism, such as Karl Gotthelf von Hund and Johann August Starck, were very familiar with France, where these ideas spread rapidly.¹³⁷ At the end of the Ancien Régime, and even more so at the beginning of the Revolution, Templar Freemasonry gained ground in Paris and in the provinces, particularly in eastern France. Yet, it also attracted enemies, such as Charles-Louis Cadet de Gassicourt and Abbot Augustin Barruel, who held Freemasonry along with the Order to be guilty of social and political subversion.¹³⁸ Many Freemasons nevertheless continued to claim the Templar legacy and some of them even had a project to recreate the Order. Coming from the *Loge des chevaliers de la Croix*, a new Order of the Temple took shape.

Founded by doctor Bernard-Raymond Fabr e-Palapat, who was proclaimed Grand Master in November 1804, this new order enjoyed a certain prosperity thanks to Imperial benevolence, openly celebrating the anniversary of Jacques de Molay's death

(Rimini: Il Cerchio, 2005); Jean-Vincent Bacquart, *Myst rieux Templiers. Id es re ues sur l'ordre du Temple* (Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2013), 167-175.

¹³⁴ Peter Partner, *Templiers, francs-ma ons et soci t s secr tes*, trans. Marie-Louise Navarro (Paris: Pygmalion, 1992), 154-158.

¹³⁵ Claude-Antoine Thory, *Acta latomorum ou chronologie de l'histoire de la Franche-Ma onnerie fran aise et  trang re* (Paris: Dufart, 1815), 68, 71-72, 300.

¹³⁶ Demurger, *Une chevalerie chr tienne*, 9-10; Laurent Dailliez, *Les Templiers, ces inconnus* (Paris: Perrin, 1972), 382-384.

¹³⁷ Nicolas de Bonneville, *Les J suites chass s de la Ma onnerie et leur poignard bris  par les Ma ons* (London: Orient de Londres, 1788), t. 1: *La Ma onnerie  cossoise compar e avec les trois professions et le secret des Templiers du XIV  si cle*, 44-45, and t. 2: *M met  des quatre v ux de la Compagnie de S. Ignace et des quatre grades de la Ma onnerie de S. Jean*, 86-87; Alice Joly, *Un mystique lyonnais et les secrets de la franc-ma onnerie (1730-1824)* (Macon: Protat, 1938), 10-11, 45-55; Partner, *Templiers, francs-ma ons*, 174, 178.

¹³⁸ Partner, *Templiers, francs-ma ons*, 192-196; Demurger, *Une chevalerie chr tienne*, 10.



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in 1808 with great fanfare. From the Restoration, however, the institution was weakened by repeated schisms, became less visible, and in 1870, it disappeared.¹³⁹

In nineteenth-century France, the tradition of Templar Freemasonry seeped into the country's collective memory. Romantic writers, in particular novelists and poets, played a crucial role in this movement, but we can also perceive traces of its influence in the *Histoire des croisades* by Michaud and Violet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire d'architecture*, which attributed a decidedly mystical dimension to Templar churches. Esotericism thus spread everywhere, and the Templar myth, now out of the hands of avowed Freemasons, was used in a way that was often fanciful and confused.¹⁴⁰ Although many of the speculations about the Temple seemed suspicious and even, for some, dangerous, twentieth-century readers gradually became convinced that the Order was a fascinating subject. Taken to the extreme, this esotericism has encouraged highly questionable reconstructions of the history of the Templars.

More than once, the Templar dream has fallen into madness. For example, in two books with very large print runs, Louis Charpentier argued that the Templars were able to bring the Arc of the Covenant back from the Holy Land, finding enough money in it to finance the construction of Gothic cathedrals, as well as using gold from alchemy and the gold that they unloaded from America at La Rochelle.¹⁴¹ Published in the late 1960s, *Le Mystère de la cathédrale de Chartres* and *Les Mystères templiers* proved right Umberto Eco's editor in *Foucault's Pendulum* when he says that, "The lunatic is all *idée fixe*, and whatever he comes across confirms his lunacy. You can tell him by the liberties he takes with common sense, by his flashes of inspiration, and by the fact that sooner or later he brings up the Templars".¹⁴²

Yet, these books have been regularly reprinted and remain read by many, reflecting the fact that, like many similar publications, it is the myths and legends that have aggregated around the Temple mainly since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, more than the Order itself, that have made its reputation and its success. Moreover, it is the often the most outlandish theories, particularly survivalist ones, that still have a large number of followers today.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Ghislain Brunel, "Mythes et légendes", in *Templiers*, eds. Baudin et. al., 185 (see also the book's catalogue, 304-311); Élizé de Montagnac, *Histoire des chevaliers templiers et de leurs prétendus successeurs* (Paris: Pillet, 1864, reprint Apremont: MCOR Christianne, 2006), 208-268.

¹⁴⁰ Partner, *Templiers, francs-maçon*, 222.

¹⁴¹ Bériou, "Ésotérisme", 338.

¹⁴² Umberto Eco, *Foucault's Pendulum*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1989), 65.

¹⁴³ Dohrmann, "Un Temple fantasmé ?", 174, 178-179.



III.3. The Growth of Historical Interest

The legacy of the Temple in France is not limited to the buildings that the brethren have left or the myths they continue to generate; the historical discourse that has built up around the order is also part of this heritage. Historians' strong interest in the Temple was accentuated in the Early Modern period, and they gradually offered more information about the brothers who followed in the wake of Hugues de Payns. From the end of the Middle Ages, the Templars began a great historiographical career. Until the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, this work was mainly limited to the trial.

Historians throughout the Ancien Régime were split, as Alain Demurger noted, between “*culpabilistes* [those who thought the Templars guilty]” and “*innocentistes* [those who thought them innocent].”¹⁴⁴ The former followed the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, supporting Philip the Fair's attack against a Temple held to be criminal and heretical; the latter group favored Boccaccio's *De casibus*, which from the 1360s, had called into question the rightness of the king's actions. Historians in the service of the monarchy or keen to enter its graces were walking on thin ice, because defending the innocence of the Order amounted to charging the crown. Humanists, with Jean Bodin,¹⁴⁵ and Protestants, fighting against the Roman Church, tried to contest the trial, but the monarchy's reaction in the mid-seventeenth century, orchestrated by the Dupuy brothers, was sharp and final: the Temple was guilty because it had conspired against the king.

This vision was naturally biased, but for the first time, it was based on archival materials. For a long time, the monarchy's opponents hardly made use of this kind of scientific method and, until François-Just-Marie Raynouard, they all preferred the moral high ground following Voltaire.¹⁴⁶ At the turn of the nineteenth century, the question of the guilt or innocence of the Templars thus remained open, but the terms of the debate had become more historical, making it possible to move beyond merely examining the trial and to begin to study the two centuries of the Order's establishment in France.

¹⁴⁴ Demurger, “Histoire de l'historiographie”, 26.

¹⁴⁵ Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, book 3, chap. 7: “Des corps de collèges, estats et communautés” (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 205: “La mesme accusation fut inventee contre les Templiers sous le regne de Philippe le Bel, qui fut cause d'en faire brusler grand nombre, et abolir tous leurs colleges : mais les Allemans ont laissé par escrit que c'estoit une pure calomnie, pour avoir leurs grands biens et richesses.”

¹⁴⁶ Demurger, “Histoire de l'historiographie”, 27.

In the nineteenth century, the curiosity movement that led French *érudits* to study the most varied problems of the national past could not ignore the Templars. In the scientific logic of the time, these *érudits* paved the way for historians by gathering together the documents needed for establishing the facts. Following Jules Michelet, who published the main part of the interrogations from the Templar trial in France,¹⁴⁷ and Henri de Curzon, to whom we owe the oldest edition of the Rule and Statutes of the Order,¹⁴⁸ the Marquis d'Albon planned to gather all the acts involving the brethren into a cartulary of his own creation.¹⁴⁹

Although he intended to include texts from beyond France, he never completed the work. It did however contain sources that had been published locally, whose number had steadily increased since the mid-nineteenth century. These sources provided new knowledge about the Temple, moving beyond the trial and enabling the development of a regional perspective. Elites and notable people were involved in this project, sometimes *chartistes* such as Anatole de Barthélemy and Paul de Berthou in Brittany and Amédée Trudon des Ormes in Picardy, or ecclesiastics, such as Amédée Guillotin de Corson, an honorary canon of the Cathedral of Rennes and Auguste Pétel, priest of Saint-Julien-les-Villas, near Troyes.¹⁵⁰

Similar studies at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries generally sought to touch a patriotic chord,¹⁵¹ but despite their number and quality, these mainly descriptive monographs did not enable the history of the Templars to progress at the national level. After the Second World War, Templar history was also affected by the general discredit that fell upon the study of the crusades and the military orders.¹⁵² Until 1980, French historians kept their distance from the Templars, except for local specialists.¹⁵³ The brethren's medieval past was thus left to authors who write on all

¹⁴⁷ Jules Michelet, *Le procès des Templiers* (Paris: Imprimerie royale puis nationale, 1841-1851) 2 vols., reprinted with a foreword by Jean Favier (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1987) 2 vols.

¹⁴⁸ Henri de Curzon, *La règle du Temple* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1886).

¹⁴⁹ d'Albon, *Cartulaire général*; Damien Carraz and Marie-Anna Chevalier, "Le marquis d'Albon (1866-1912) et son *Cartulaire général de l'ordre du Temple*", *Hereditas Monasteriorum* 1 (2012): 107-128.

¹⁵⁰ Josserand, "Les Templiers en Bretagne", 7-8; Valérie Alanièce and François Gilet, "Les historiens du Temple en Champagne", in *Templiers*, eds. Baudin et al., 186.

¹⁵¹ Victor Carrière, "Les débuts de l'ordre du Temple en France", *Le Moyen Âge* 18 (1914) : 308-355.

¹⁵² Demurger, "L'étude des ordres", 169.

¹⁵³ The main exceptions were Charles Higounet and Léon Pressouyre who later respectively edited *Les ordres militaires, la vie rurale et le peuplement en Europe occidentale (XII^e-XVIII^e siècles)*. *Sixièmes journées internationales d'histoire de Flaran, 21-23 septembre 1984* (Auch: Comité départemental du tourisme du



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sorts of subjects and amateurs who were not models of academic rigor, such as Laurent Dailliez who, although he sometimes passes for someone uncovering new documents, in general fails to understand the sources, invents a great many things, and deceives his readership.¹⁵⁴

Today, the history of the Temple in France and, more broadly, the military orders has radically changed from what it was thirty years ago.¹⁵⁵ While certainly France is not one of those countries, such as Poland, the United Kingdom and Portugal, in which international symposia meet at regular dates to study the history of the military orders,¹⁵⁶ and even though journals devoted to this subject are from elsewhere,¹⁵⁷ things in France have changed. It is no longer the time of “pitying smiles” that Alain Demurger received in response to his choice to work on the Temple in 1980.¹⁵⁸

Gers, 1986) et *La commanderie, institution des ordres militaires dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2002).

¹⁵⁴ Cerrini, *La révolution des Templiers*, 39-40.

¹⁵⁵ Demurger, “Histoire de l’historiographie”, 35-45.

¹⁵⁶ Since 1983, sixteen conferences have been held at Torun, Poland. The proceedings of the 2011 session have been published in two volumes of the collection, which has now been turned into a yearly review, *Ordines Militares Colloquia Torunensia Historica. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders* 17 (2012) and 18 (2013). The seventeenth, entitled *The Military Orders in the Social, Political and Religious Networks in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time / Die Ritterorden in sozialen, politischen und religiösen Netzwerken in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, was held September 26-29, 2013. For the conferences at Palmela and London, there are, respectively, five and six volumes, the most recent being *As ordens militares. Freires, guerreiros, cavaleiros*, ed. Fernandes and *The Military Orders*, vol. 5: *Politics and Power*, ed. Peter Edbury (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). An international conference, “The Military Orders: Culture and Conflict”, took place in the United Kingdom on September 5-8, 2013; its proceedings are in the process of being published. The next colloquium in Portugal will be held mid-October, 2015, four weeks after the eighteenth congress at Torun, scheduled for September 17-20 of that year.

¹⁵⁷ The first journal devoted exclusively to the military orders, *Militarium Ordinum Analecta*, was published in 1997 in Porto, directed by Luís Adão da Fonseca. Having now evolved into a collection, it has just published its seventeenth issue. Two other publications on this field also began in the early 2000s: *Sacra Militia. Rivista di storia degli ordini militari*, created at Perugia by Franco Cardini and Francesco Tommasi, and in Spain, the *Revista de las Órdenes Militares*, headed by the Real Consejo de las Órdenes Militares started in 2001. The former of these two journals was unfortunately abandoned after its third issue in 2003, despite the excellent quality of the research it published. Recently, two new publications have been created: *Militiae Christi. Handelingen van de Vereniging voor de Studie over de Tempeliers en de Hospitaalridders* in Belgium in 2010 and *Deus vult. Miscellanea di studi sugli ordini militari*, in Italy the following year, which published its second issue in 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Demurger, “L’étude des ordres religieux-militaires”, 169.



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A real historiographical revolution has occurred in the space of a generation. A specialist on the Capetian kingdom in the late Middle Ages, in particular its bailiffs and seneschals, Alain Demurger has made the Templars acceptable and, in many respects, has driven this change.¹⁵⁹ His *Vie et mort de l'ordre du Temple* [*Life and Death of the Order of the Temple*], which he completed in 1985, has been reprinted several times, translated into many languages, and then completely reworked in 2005.¹⁶⁰

This book, at once accessible and innovative, has become a reference in the field, and in its wake, excellent monographs combining evidence from archeology, architecture, aerial photography, and cadastral studies have transformed our knowledge of the Templars at the regional level. Damien Carraz for Provence, Michel Miguet in Normandy and Burgundy, and Valérie Bessey for Picardy stand out as exemplary in this particular movement.¹⁶¹ I have tried to do my part for Brittany,¹⁶² and it is hoped that other regions will follow in turn.¹⁶³ The Temple has also attracted French historians who work on areas outside France, such as Pierre-Vincent Claverie on the Holy Land and Cyprus and Marie-Anna Chevalier on Armenia.¹⁶⁴

I have also long been committed to this effort, with studies on the Iberian Peninsula and the Latin East¹⁶⁵ and editing with Nicole Bériou the *Dictionnaire européen des ordres*

¹⁵⁹ Philippe Josserand, "Introduction. Élités et ordres militaires: quelques pistes pour une rencontre", in *Élités et ordres militaires au Moyen Âge. Rencontre autour d'Alain Demurger* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2015), 2.

¹⁶⁰ Alain Demurger, *Vie et mort de l'ordre du Temple, 1118-1314* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), which was reworked and republished as *Une chevalerie chrétienne*.

¹⁶¹ Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple*; Miguet, *Templiers et Hospitaliers* and *Les Templiers en Bourgogne*; Bessey, *Les commanderies*.

¹⁶² Philippe Josserand, *Les Templiers en Bretagne* (Paris: Gisserot, 2011) republished with new material as "Les Templiers en Bretagne."

¹⁶³ A process is in course and an example is given by Yoan Mattalia, *Les établissements des ordres religieux militaires aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles dans les diocèses de Cahors, Rodez et Albi. Approche archéologique et historique* (Ph. D., 4 vol., University of Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 2013).

¹⁶⁴ Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*; Marie-Anna Chevalier, *Les ordres religieux-militaires en Arménie cilicienne. Templiers, Hospitaliers, Teutoniques et Arméniens à l'époque des croisades* (Paris: Geuthner, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Philippe Josserand, "Entre Orient et Occident : l'ordre du Temple dans le contexte castillan du règne d'Alphonse X", *Alcanate. Revista de Estudios Alfonsíes* 2 (2000-2001): 131-150; idem, "In servitio Dei et domini regis. Les ordres militaires du royaume de Castille et la défense de la chrétienté latine : frontière et enjeux de pouvoir (XII^e-XIV^e siècles)", in *Identidad y representación de la frontera en la España medieval (siglos XI-XIV)*, eds. Carlos de Ayala Martínez et al. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez-Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2001), 89-111; idem, "Et succurere Terre sancte pro posse : les Templiers castillans et la défense de l'Orient latin au tournant des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles", *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 15 (2008): 217-235; idem, "Entre dos frentes: aproximación a las empresas



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militaires au Moyen Âge, which mobilized the energies of some two hundred and forty authors from twenty-five countries for its publication in 2009.¹⁶⁶ In France, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, the historiography of military orders is doing well, and, of course, the Temple benefits. Jacques de Molay's fellow brethren from seven hundred years ago have not disappeared from the current national territory without a trace. An entire patrimony of buildings has survived them and above all, the myths surrounding them have gradually taken root, which an avid public still craves endlessly.

Conclusion

The legacy of the Temple, however, is not only limited to stones and legends—historical knowledge is now fully part of this heritage. From its inception, the Order has been deeply linked to France, where the majority of the brethren originated. For two centuries, the Order used the Capetian kingdom as its main supply base to support the struggle in the East and to provide recruits for this singular vocation that led it to cultivate prayer and combat in the same spiritual approach. Perhaps it is precisely this history, revolutionary in the Middle Ages and still captivating today, that constitutes the real treasure of the Temple. This may explain why, from Gisors to Rennes-le-Château, we have always sought this treasure in vain.

militares de los Templarios del Occidente peninsular (siglos XII-XIV)", in *Hacedores de frontera. Estudios sobre el contexto social de la frontera en la España medieval*, ed. Manuel Alejandro Rodríguez de la Peña (Madrid: CEU Ediciones, 2009), 179-201.

¹⁶⁶ *Prier et combattre*, eds. Jossierand and Bériou.