

# The Knights Templar

## The Cathar Connection

Abbreviated from an article by M D Magee  
Lightly edited by Corascendea, Modern Cathar Parfaite



Wolfram von Eschenbach and Alfred von Scharfenberg wrote of a body of knights all in the family of the Grail who watched over the Grail in a magnificent temple built specially for it. They were called the Templars. The Knights Templar were a historical association of warrior monks formed in the century before these writers set pen to paper and a century later were accused of witchcraft, and the leaders tortured, and burnt alive for recanting their confessions made under torture.



The military order of the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon was formed in 1118 AD in Jerusalem by some crusaders, led by a Burgundian from Champagne called Hugo de Payens, to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land after the First Crusade. These nine knights agreed to combine the functions of monk and knight in a new order, dedicating themselves to poverty, chastity and obedience under the patronage of "Our Lady", the "Sweet Mother of God", and the rules of S Augustine. Their aim was to fight the Saracens as knights with the sword and the Holy Spirit in guaranteeing safe passage to Christian pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land.

The Templars began so poor, they had to wear whatever clothes were given to them by the pious. Fulk, Count of Anjou, went to

Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, and joined as a married member, giving them an annual grant of thirty pounds of silver, only a year after their formation. Excommunicated knights who had become effectively bandits joined to forget their errors and seek salvation.

They had an introduction to S Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, an admirer of theirs and who was a cousin of Hugo de Payens. S Bernard of Clairvaux called them rogues, robbers, perjurers and adulterers, as well as other derogatory names (In Praise of the New Militia), but transformed by the purity of their lives and vocation, not to kill but to kill evil! So, when the Grand Master himself arrived in Europe, the Abbot eulogized them:

*They go not headlong into battle, but with care and foresight, peacefully, as true children of Israel. But as soon as the fight has begun, they rush without delay upon the foe... and know no fear... one has often put to flight a thousand, two, ten thousand... gentler than lambs, and grimmer than lions. Theirs is the mildness of monks and the valour of the knight.*

They recruited a lot in Languedoc and S Bernard actually said they would be in the company of "perfect" men. Did he have his tongue in his cheek?—did he know they were recruiting Cathars? Many noble Cathar families provided Templar knights, who offered no help to the pope, though nominally under his direct command, in the Cathar crusade. The Cathar Lords Bertrand de Blanchefort and Raymond-Roger Trencovel made donations to the Templars, and Bernard even joined them. The Counts of Toulouse held Tripoli and the Templars provided its security, and, at the beginning of the Cathar crusade, the Preceptor of the Toulouse Temple was a Cathar of the Trencovel family (Baigent, Lincoln and Lee, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*). Templars of Champagne and of Albedure sheltered fleeing Cathars.

Hugh de Payens took his delegation through France and England recruiting, Richard I of England being a fan. Gifts and grants were showered upon them. Lands, rents and arms came from everyone. In 1129, the Master, with three hundred knights from the noblest houses of Europe, led a huge pilgrimage to Jerusalem. By 1133, King Alfonso of Aragon and Navarre, who had fought the Spanish Moors in twenty nine battles, had willed his country to them, although they never received it when Alfonso died.



Pope Honorius chose for them a completely plain, white mantle. A red cross was added by pope Eugenius III in 1146. The Templars were released from all ties, except to the pope. They were granted their own burial grounds. They were allowed their own chaplains. They no longer paid tithes, but could receive them. Nobody, who entered the order could leave it, except to join a stricter one.

The order, when fully developed, was composed of several classes, chiefly knights, chaplains, serving brothers, and affiliates. Eventually the competition for admission was so great from eligible people, that a high fee was exacted to join. When a new knight was admitted to the order, the ceremony was held in secret, causing rumours that heretical practices were followed.

The power Templars gained might soon have caused them to devote their efforts as much to welfare of their own order, as to Christianity, though no one doubts their bravery in the Christian cause. As various gnostic or otherwise heterodox sects, magic and superstition all existed in the Holy Land, the Templars might have been influenced by them.

As the military might of the Templars increased, they acquired property throughout Europe and ran a lucrative banking system. Their annual income was vast. When Jerusalem fell to Muslim rule in 1244 and the Crusader kingdoms collapsed, they transferred their headquarters to Paris, to a building, like all their branch churches, known as the Temple.



But, after they had left the Middle East, rumours surfaced of corruption and blasphemy. Their power and secretive ways aroused the fear of European rulers and sparked accusations that they were heretics who worshipped idols in a secret initiation ceremony.

The Templars were rumoured to have found either the Holy Grail or the Ark of the Covenant at their home in Jerusalem. They were also documented as having a piece of the True Cross, which was captured by Saladin.



The Shroud of Turin was first publicly displayed by the grandson of Geoffrey de Charney, who was burned at the stake with Jacques de Molay. Contemporary Cathars believe it depicts de Molay. The order survived for 200 years becoming remarkably wealthy.

The French King Philip Le Bel (the Fair) decided he wanted to rob them and in a plot with his puppet, the pope, Clement V, who recalled the leaders of the order to Paris, had them arrested, accusing them of heresy. Through the most pernicious tortures he got them to agree to incredible crimes and abuses. The Templars were accused of conspiring with the Assassins.

## The Fall of the Knights Templar

The crushing of the Order of the Templars is one of the grossest single exploits of the Inquisition. The king of France wanted their wealth, and the pope felt obliged to him, because the French king had helped him buy the papal tiara. This was Clement V, "the one pope in whom there was a semblance of humanity". Yet he lived a life of royal sensuality in the papal palace at Avignon and had the



Countess de Talleyrand-Perigord as a mistress. He died a billionaire in modern accounting. This was the good pope, the humane pope, who permitted the Templars to be robbed and murdered after one of the worst travesties of a trial in history. Large numbers of the knights died under the fearful torture, rather than lie about their own order. Arkon Daraul, in *Secret Societies*, tells the story.



In 1306, The French King, Philip the Fair, took refuge in the Paris Temple to escape riots. He was bankrupt and was astonished by the wealth and fabulous treasures of the Templars. It gave him the idea of how to solve his financial problems. He would say they were heretics. In 1305, Philip had been instrumental in securing the papacy for Clement, so he had the pope in his pocket. He was ready to bring the power of Church and state against the Templars. Clement, six months after his enthronement, wrote asking the



leaders of the Templars and the Hospitallers to visit him to make plans to help the kings of Armenia and Cyprus. The two knightly orders had been squabbling and the pope hoped to amalgamate them to strengthen his own position as their head. Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Temple, in Cyprus, accepted. He collected sixty knights, packed 150,000 gold florins and other treasures, and set off.

At Paris, the king welcomed de Molay with honours. At Poitiers, Clement met him and discussed a fresh crusade. De Molay advised that only the full power of a united Christendom could defeat the Moslems. He sought another audience with the pope to answer for the Templars. In the audience, about April 1307, the pope put the charges that had been made, but seemed satisfied by the replies. Two expelled Templars were said to have made the original



charges to secure their release from prison, where they had been languishing. But Cardinal Cantilupo, the Chamberlain to the pope, and brought up by the Templars from the age of eleven, also spoke of their alleged crimes.

Philip and his advisers plotted in secrecy for the night of the long knives. On 12 September 1307, sealed letters were sent to all governors in France, instructing them to arm themselves on the twelfth of the next month, open the sealed orders, and act upon them forthwith. All Templars were to be seized and interrogated by torture while being told pardon might be given if they confessed. All their goods were to be expropriated. By the morning of Friday, 13 October, almost every Templar in France was in the hands of the king's men. The Chancellor declared that the knights had been proceeded against for heresy. Two days later the university met in the Temple and the Grand Master was interrogated. He and other leaders allegedly confessed.



On 19 October, less than a week after they had been arrested, the Dominicans were torturing 140 prisoners in the Paris Temple. Thirty six of the victims died under torture. Clement seemed uncertain of the torturing, but Philip claimed he was doing God's work, and accounted to God alone. But he offered to give all the Templar wealth to the service of the Holy Land. Clement

hedged, then tried to escape to Bordeaux, but the king stopped him. He was really in Philip's pocket! Five hundred and forty six Templars ready to defend the order in court were brought to Paris. Then their numbers rose to nine hundred, and they clamoured for their Grand Master. An Act of Accusation in the name of the pope was drawn up, and seventy five Templars drew up the Defence. (See Thomas Wright on the Templars.) The accusation was that:

At the time of their reception they were made to deny God, Christ, the Virgin etc., and in particular, to declare that Christ was not the true God, but a false prophet, who had been crucified for his own crimes and not for the redemption of the world. They spat and trampled upon the cross, especially on Good Friday. They worshipped a cat, which sometimes appeared in their chapters. Those who at the time of their reception would not comply with these practices were put to death or imprisoned.

The Templars were believed to have worshipped the image of a head, about natural size, only shown in the more secret chapter meetings on particular occasions. Many Templars denied ever hearing of this head. It was variously described, but some said it had a fierce looking face and a beard.



The main charges against the Templars included:

1. Novices of the order, after taking the oath of obedience, were obliged to deny and otherwise blaspheme Christ, and to spit, and sometimes also to trample, upon the cross.
2. Each Templar on his admission swore never to quit the order, and to further its interests by right or wrong.
3. They then received the kiss of the Templar, who officiated as receiver, on the mouth, and afterwards were obliged to kiss him on the anus, on the navel, and sometimes on the penis.

4. The order works to deliver the Holy Land to the Saracens, and favours them more than Christians.

5. The heads of the order are addicted to debauchery, heretical, cruel and sacrilegious men. They kill any novice who discovers the iniquity of the order, and tries to leave it, and bury the body secretly by night. Anyone objecting to it is punished by perpetual captivity.

6. They are infected with the errors of the Fratricelli. They despise the pope and the authority of the Church. They scorn the sacraments, especially those of penance, and confession. They pretend to comply with the rites of the Church simply to avoid detection.

7. They practised homosexual acts together, refusing normal sexual intercourse.

8. They had idols in their different provinces, in the form of a head, having sometimes three faces, sometimes two, or only one, and sometimes a bare skull, which they called their saviour, and believed its influence to be exerted in making them rich, and in making flowers grow and the earth germinate.

9. They always wore, bound about their bodies next to their skins or about their shirts, a cord which had been rubbed against the head, and which served for their protection.

Where these are not plain denigration, they match the patterns of behaviour of the Cathar heretics.

Many Templars denied every charge; again the typical ones used by the Church against heretics, and stated that they had been subjected to every kind of illegality since their arrest. Aimery de Villiers de Duc, tortured by the king's knights, Guillaume de Moreilly and Hugues de la Celle, said after the torture:

*I would confess to anything. I would confess I had killed God, if they had asked me.*



Some did not deny the accusations but pleaded extenuating circumstances such as that they did not deny Christ in their hearts but knew the denial had to be done as a test of their obedience. Thus, Etienne de Dijon refused to deny his Saviour, but the preceptor told him that he must do it because he had sworn to obey his orders. So, "he denied with his mouth", he said, "but not with his heart, and he did

this with great grief". They claimed they deliberately spat beside the cross not on it, and so on. They thus confirmed the accusations as being true.

Hearings followed in the protracted period from 1307 to 1312. After confessing various sins their leader, Jacques de Molay, was burnt at the stake. Unable to oppose the will of the King of France, who had ordered the elimination of the Templars, the Pope heard the opinion of the Council Fathers and decided to abolish the order on 22 March 1312. Philip the Fair destroyed the Templars for his own profit. Pope Clement V then dissolved the order in 1314 and issued arrest warrants for all remaining members.

**In 1312, 54 Templars, knights who had volunteered to defend the order were declared relapsed heretics and burnt alive on a "slow" fire before the trials had even started.**

**The Master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay, and one of his chiefs, Guy of Auvergne, were to have their sentence announced in public on 19 May, 1314, but took the chance of publicly proclaiming their innocence by recanting their forced confessions. The king ordered them to be burnt at the stake before they could say more.**

Since, the Templars have been thought of as heretics. Some of the Templars' properties in London were rented to lawyers, leading to the names of Temple Bar gate and Temple Tube station.

Not all of the world's churchmen had supported Clement in his craven subordination to Philip of France. At a congress of 114 bishops called by Clement four years after the first arrests, the bishops of Spain, England, Germany, Denmark, Ireland and Scotland wanted the Templars to be allowed to defend themselves. Only one Italian prelate and three French ones voted against. The pope closed the session.

Clement seems to have been trying to mitigate the hatred of Philip, but was a weak pope and a hostage in France just as Avignon became the center of the Catholic Church instead of Rome. On 2 May, 1313, Clement published a bull abolishing the Templars. Most of the knights still alive were released to live and die in poverty.

Jacques de Molay, last Grand Master of the Templars, was burned at the stake in 1314 along with his aides. Surviving monks fled, some to be absorbed by other orders. In later centuries, various groups claimed to have descended from the Templars, and the Templars' initiation ritual was widely copied, notably by the Freemasons, who have a degree called "Order of the Knights Templar".



## **Edward II and the English Templars**

In connexion with the trial of the Templars, the Inquisition had its one experience on English soil. Not that there was religious toleration in medieval England. The fearful persecution of the followers of Wycliffe and the later hanging, burning, beheading and quartering of Protestant and Catholic rivals are well known. The death sentence was decreed in 1400.

But England dealt with its own heretics. Edward II (1307-1327) was the son in law of Philip, and a priest was sent to him to invite him to act at once against the Templars in Britain. He bluntly refused to believe the charges, declaring them to be incredible, but pope Clement wrote on 22 November assuring him that the knights had confessed these things—omitting to describe the tortures—that de Molay had freely confessed that his knights denied Christ, while others had admitted idolatry. The king of England was to arrest all Templars within his domains, and to





place their lands and goods in custody until their guilt or innocence should be ascertained.



Edward was troubled by the allegations. He wrote, on 26 November, to the Seneschal of Agen, asking about the charges. On the 4 December, he wrote to the kings of Portugal, Castile, Aragon and Sicily, asking what they had heard, and that he could not credit it. He wrote to the pope himself, on 10 December, expressing disbelief of what the French king said, and begging for an enquiry. By 15 December, the papal bull arrived and Edward felt obliged to act upon it. On 26 December, he wrote to the pope that he would comply.

Edward sent to Wales, Scotland and Ireland that the Templars were to be seized, as in England, but were to be treated with kindness. The Templars of Garway, examined without the assistance of torture, freely confessed to some of the practices such as the use of the cord next to their skin.

In 1309 two inquisitors were admitted into England to conduct a trial. They were refused the right to torture, and, as they could find no proof of guilt without it, they complained to the pope. Clement the Humane angrily demanded that the king should permit torture. When King Edward II protested that torture was opposed to English law, pope Clement told the king that Church law was higher than English civil law:

*We hear that you forbid torture as contrary to the laws of your land... I command you at once to submit those men to torture.*

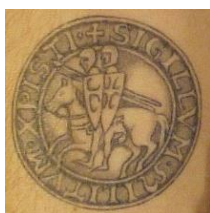
In the end he bribed the king, in the customary papal manner, and the Templars were tortured and destroyed. The pope gave orders to the king of England, and the king obeyed. The nation of England took a giant step backwards and started torturing people again. This is Clement "checking the zeal of the inquisitors".



## **The Chinon Parchment and other 21<sup>st</sup> century discoveries**

In October 2007, the Vatican announced that it would release a crucial document, not seen for 700 years, which "restores the reputation of the Knights Templar", finding them to have been innocent of heresy.

The Parchment of Chinon dated 17-20 August, 1308, alleges that Pope Clement decided through his legates in 1308 to save the Templars and their order. It claims that Pope Clement V absolved the knights of heresy, but the order was still disbanded for "the good of the Church" in 1312, under pressure from King Philip IV of France.



The document was alleged to be a record of the trial of the Templars before Pope Clement in the castle of Chinon in the diocese of Tours. Under inquisition were Brother Jacques de Molay, Grandmaster of the Order of Knights Templar, Brother Raymbaud de Caron, Preceptor of the commandaries of Templar Knights in Outremer, Brother Hugo de Pérraud, Preceptor of France, Brother Geoffroy de Gonneville, Preceptor

of Aquitania and Poitou, and Geoffroy de Charney, Preceptor of Normandy. Among the accusations were sodomy, denouncing God, illicit kisses, spitting on the cross, and worshipping an idol.

The Church claimed in 2007 that Jacques de Molay will have been absolved, restored to unity with the Church, and his excommunication will have been lifted. After the formal

abjuration, which is compelling for all those who were even only suspected of heretical crimes, the leading members of the Templar Order will have been reinstated in the Catholic Communion and readmitted to receive the sacraments.

[We believe that the Chinon Parchment is a forgery connected to a man called Étienne Baluze, who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; he accepted financial rewards from clergy for publishing other forgeries as “proofs” for which he came into disgrace and was exiled from Paris to Tours. The appearance of this document “not seen for 700 years” is connected to the same Vatican researcher Barbara Frale, who was central to the discovery of the discredited burial certificate of Jesus Christ. Ms Frale claims that she found the document in the “wrong file”.

Wikipedia entry about Frale (02.10.2013), after naming de Molay, carries the following sentence: “Consequently, having the chiefs of the Templars begged the Church’s forgiveness, the Pope granted them the absolution.” We believe this statement to be a fabrication made without any reasonable grounds. As a man of honour, de Molay chose to be burnt alive, rather than beg anything at all from a coward Pope who betrayed him and the Order.

The same entry further states that “In June 2009, Frale published another essay dedicated to the Templars, *I Templari e la sindone di Cristo*, where she debates some documents concerning the mysterious idol, which was used during the process as charge against the order to accuse the order itself of idolatry, being actually a particular image of Christ dead, which has similar characteristics to the Shroud of Turin.” ... And this was based on yet another document about the Templars/Shroud of Turin “just found”.

We believe that these “finds” by Ms Frale, her interpretations, and the Church organised “dinner and dance” over the Shroud of Turin constitute grave insults to a man whose murder was avenged by God as visibly as no-one else’s in history.

In Jacques de Molay the Church not only condemned to death the Second Messiah, but also the incarnation of the third Divine Soul, in Christianity known as the Holy Ghost. The scriptures make it clear that an insult of the Holy Ghost is unforgivable. Text in brackets by Corascendea, 2011, version of 04.05.2014.]

Abbreviated from Dr M D Magee article:

<http://www.askwhy.co.uk/christianheresy/08291KnightsTemplar.php>

Further reading on de Molay in “The Shroud of Turin”:

[http://www.dhaxem.com/data/handt/The\\_Shroud\\_of\\_Turin.pdf](http://www.dhaxem.com/data/handt/The_Shroud_of_Turin.pdf)

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