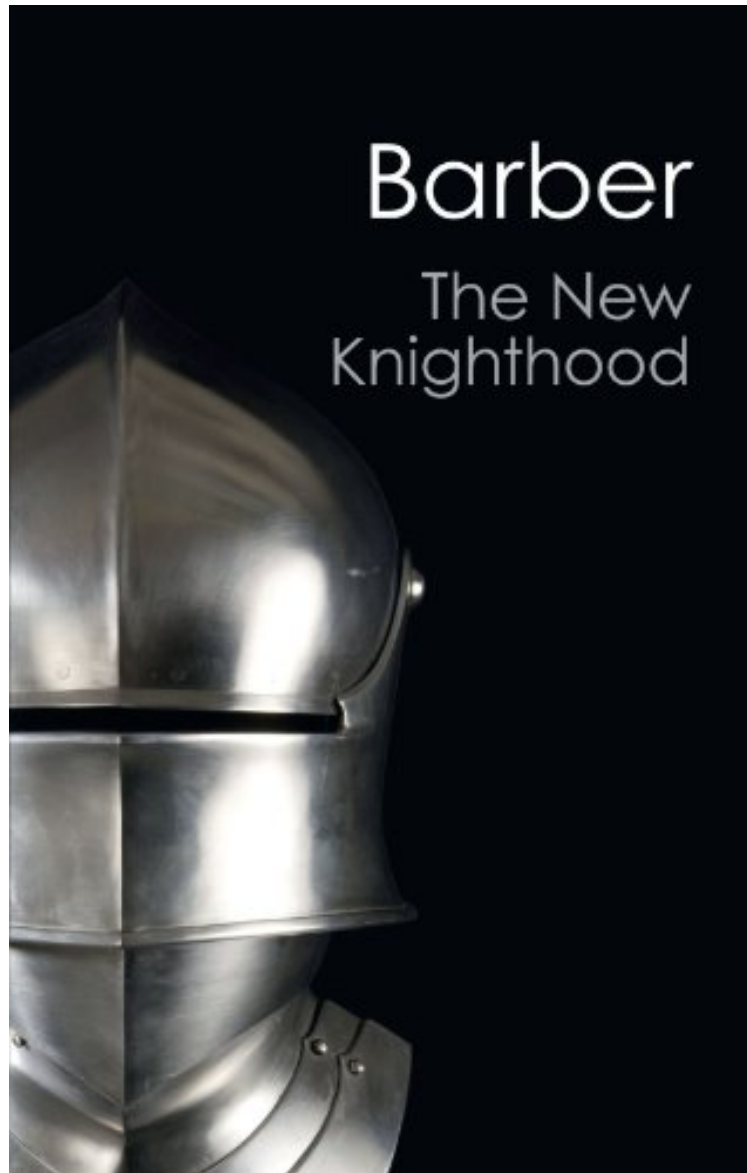


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The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple (Canto Classics)

Malcolm Barber

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Malcolm Barber : The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple (Canto Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple (Canto Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A true history of the warrior-monks who, for 200 years, defended the places where Christ was born, lived, died, and resurrected.

By Bibliophile
THE NEED TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS
In 1095, Pope Urban II urged Christians to take up arms to aid their brethren in the east, who were being harassed, tortured, and killed by the Seljuk Turks. Christians won the First Crusade by capturing Jerusalem in July 1099. Then most of the crusaders returned home, leaving Christians severely outnumbered. Travelers and pilgrims needed safe passage through the new Frankish territories of Antioch, Tripoli, Jerusalem, and Edessa. The formation of the Templars arose from the need to protect such pilgrims. In 1118, William, Archbishop of Tyre, says that certain noble men of knightly order, devoted to God, pious and God-fearing, the two most important of whom were Hugh of Payns and Godfrey of Saint-Omer, took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience at the hands of Warmund of Picquigny, Patriarch of Jerusalem. They promised to devote themselves to God's service. King Baldwin II of Jerusalem gave them a base in his palace, to the south side of the Temple of the Lord, which was the name given by the Franks to the Dome of the Rock. The Templars' distinction was to maintain the roads and highways against ambushes of thieves and attackers. In return, they would receive remission for their sins. The official date of their founding falls between 14 January and 13 September 1120.

ST. BERNARD'S De LAUDE NOVAE MILITIAE
Around 1130, St. Bernard wrote *De laude novae militiae* (In praise of the new knighthood). The Templars were a new species of knighthood, pursuing a double conflict against flesh and blood and the invisible forces of evil. Because they fought with a clear and pure conscience, they had no fear of death. They were disciplined, ascetic, sober and hard-working. The Templars lived in the places where Christ had lived. Bernard wanted the knights to teach the pilgrims a deeper understanding of those places. Thus, in visiting the Holy Sepulchre, where the body of Christ achieved new life through resurrection, the pilgrim could also walk in new life. A favorite pilgrim destination was the River Jordan. Pilgrims wanted to bathe in the waters where Christ was baptized, and which the Trinity dedicated to itself by a manifest presence. Quoting Luke 3:22, Bernard explains that, The Father was heard, the Holy Spirit was seen, and the Son baptized.

PAPAL SANCTION FOR THE TEMPLARS
Pope Innocent II gave official sanction to the Templars in his papal bull *Omne datum optimum* on 29 March 1139. Taking his theme from the Epistle of James, he describes Every Perfect Gift as God transforming the knights from men who were by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), given over to secular pleasures, into true Israelites, who fought divine battles. In the words of St. John, No man has greater love, who lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13). While St. Bernard had seen the Templars as the instrument of God driving out the Saracens who had defiled the holy places, Saladin and his fellow Muslims were equally convinced that the real causes of pollution were the military religious brotherhoods of Christian warriors. I shall purify the land of these two impure races, he said, referring to captured Templars and Hospitallers after the Battle of Hattin. He ordered that they should be beheaded, choosing to have them dead rather than in prison. Contributions to the Templars were extensive. Alfonso I, the Battler (1104-1134), who had no heirs, wrote his famous will in 1131. Therefore, after my death I leave as heir and successor to me the Sepulchre of the Lord which is of Jerusalem and those who observe and guard and serve God there, and to the Hospital of the poor which is in Jerusalem, and to the Temple of Solomon with the knights who keep vigil there to defend the name of Christendom. To these three I concede my whole kingdom." Alfonso made this will for the love which I have in my heart for you [the Templars] and since I am a brother in your fraternity. He also made it for the safety of the souls of his father and mother and for the remission of his own sins, that I might merit a place in the life eternal." (Students of the Bible will disagree with the concept of doing good works in order to remit punishment for sin. God saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Titus 3:5,6)

HOW THE TEMPLARS LIVED
The Templars lived by the 72 clauses of the Latin Rule, mostly written by Bernard of Clairvaux. White vestments with a red cross were worn, symbolizing that knights have placed the dark life behind them and have entered a state of perpetual celibacy. They avoided all physical contact with women. They maintained a modest lifestyle: plain and undifferentiated clothing, tonsured heads, a pallet, blanket, and coverlet for bedding, communal and silent meals during which there was a holy reading. They shunned excessive hair, immoderately long clothes, and pointed, laced-up shoes. Knights slept in shirt and breeches. A light was always kept on during hours of darkness. Diet was closely regulated for their two main meals each day. Meat was allowed only 3 times per week. Vegetable dishes and cooked pottage were the main fare. After each meal thanks was rendered to the Lord. Leftovers were distributed to the servants and paupers. A tenth of all daily bread was given in alms, for to the poor is the first place in the Kingdom of God. Conversation was strictly limited to functional needs. Scurrilous and shameful words and laughter were prohibited. Displays of anger, malice, or grumbling were avoided, as were reminiscences about past sexual conquests, since every idle word is known to generate sin. Discipline was enforced by a system of penances. Allowances were made for those who were tired, ill, or aged. Each knight was allowed 3 horses and a squire, but his equipment could not be decorated with gold, silver, or elaborate coverings, for the splendor of the color and decoration should not be seen by others as arrogance.

THE "MONK" SIDE OF THE TEMPLAR
Each day began with attendance at matins, which in summer was about 4:00am, where the brothers heard or recited 13 paternosters, followed by prime at 6:00am and the hearing of mass, terce at 8:00am, and sext at 11:30am. A brief sleep was permitted between matins and prime.

Sext was followed by the first meal of the day. A priest gave the blessing and during the meal a clerk read a holy lesson, while the brothers ate in silence. Afterwards they went to chapel and gave thanks. Nones were at 2:30pm and vespers at 6:00pm, and then supper. The final office was compline, where the brothers drank communally, either water or diluted wine. Sleep and silence followed. Idleness was discouraged. The Templar Rule said, The enemy assails more boldly and more willingly with evil desires and vain thoughts and mean words, a lazy man than he does one whom he finds busy in good work.

ARMOR AND WEAPONS

The knights' armor included a helmet and a mailed hauberk covering the head and body down to the iron hose and solerets which protected the legs and feet. The mail was reinforced by espaliers (metal shoulder protectors). The whole outfit was worn over a padded jacket made of leather. Weapons consisted of a sword, shield, lance, a Turkish mace (fixed metal head with spikes on a long haft), dagger, a bread-knife, and a pocket-knife. Basic clothing included 2 shirts, 2 pairs of breeches, 2 pairs of hose, a small belt to tie over the shirt, a jerkin, 2 white robes (one with fur for winter use), a heavy cloak like a cape, a short-sleeved tunic worn on top of the shirt, and a leather belt. Each knight was allowed 3 horses and a squire, horse blankets and barley. All knights had to carry portable bedding, including a straw-filled mattress, blankets, sheets, a rug, and storage bags. They also needed cooking and eating utensils. Drinking flasks and cups were essential in the hot climate.

THE COST OF A KNIGHT

Most Templars were non-fighting monks who manned the order's many preceptories in the West as administrators, craftsmen, and agricultural workers. In 1180, a Burgundian knight needed the income from 30 manes (300 hectares or 750 acres of land) to equip himself as a mounted warrior. By 1260, he needed 3,700 acres! Large areas of pasture and vast quantities of fodder were needed for horses and pack-animals. Because of their expense to maintain, the Order learned the hard way not to risk Templar knights unnecessarily in battle. At La Forbie in 1244, 267 knights were lost from 300. At the time of Louis IX's first crusade, the average annual income of the French monarchy was 250,000 livres tournois. In 1267, the cost of maintaining one knight for the defense of Acre for one year was 90 livres tournois. So the cost of the 267 knights killed at La Forbie was just less than one-ninth of the annual income of the French monarchy!

A Frankish knight on horseback was so well-protected by his armor that he was difficult to defeat. Turkish archers knew this. Once his horse had been killed he was relatively easy to capture. Horses required a daily ration of 25 pounds of hay and grain and 6 gallons of water. In the Holy Land, there was seldom sufficient pasture within easy reach. The Templar houses in the West were essential in supplying horses, wheat, vegetables, barley, armaments, and cloth.

PITCHING CAMP AND CALVARY CHARGES

With squires, horses, and equipment, each knight placed his tent in relation to the chapel, which acted as the assembly point if the alarm was raised. No movement away from the camp was allowed without permission. Once assembled, they were divided into squadrons from which no brother was allowed to leave. When the time came for a cavalry charge, the Marshal took up the banner. No Templar could leave the field as long as the banner was still visible. If the banner was brought down, Templars were to first rally to the Hospitallers, and then to any Christian banner.

HOW THE TEMPLARS FOUGHT

The Templars were conservative in their approach to warfare. They were neither rash nor fanatical. Their patience was often rewarded when the uneasy coalitions that comprised most Muslim armies broke up. Prior to 1187, an unknown pilgrim to Jerusalem observed: The Templars are most excellent soldiers. They wear white mantels with a red cross. They go in silence. Their first attack is the most terrible. In going they are first, in returning, last. They await the orders of their Master. When they think fit to make war and the trumpet has sounded, they sing in chorus the Psalm of David, 'Not unto us, O Lord', kneeling on the blood and necks of the enemy, unless they have forced the troops of the enemy to retire altogether, or utterly broken them to pieces. Should any of them turn his back to the enemy, or come forth alive from a defeat, or bear arms against the Christians, he is severely punished; the white mantle with the red cross, which is his sign of knighthood, is taken away with ignominy, he is cast from the society of the brethren, and eats his food on the floor without a napkin for one year. But at the end of the year, if the Master and brethren think his penance to have been sufficient, they restore him the belt of his former knighthood. These Templars live under a strict religious rule, obeying humbly, having no private property, eating sparingly, dressing meanly, and dwelling in tents.

22 AUG 1153 (THE FALL OF ASCALON)

Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem, besieged the one coastal city that had held out the longest against the Christians, Ascalon. So stubborn was its resistance that the Franks had built forts around it to hem it in. Particular damage was inflicted by a movable wooden assault tower which the Franks had constructed. On the night of 15 August, the defenders attempted to set fire to it, but a strong easterly wind blew the flames back against the city, causing part of the wall to collapse. The whole army was awoken by the noise and rushed to that breach, only to find that the Templars had already reached it, led by Bernard of Temelay, who subsequently was killed in battle.

7 JUNE 1154 (CAPTURE OF NASIR-AL-DIN)

In 1154, the Templars captured Nasir-al-Din, the son of the vizier of Egypt. They sold him to the Egyptians for 60,000 gold pieces. Once back in Egypt, he was torn to pieces by the mob because, during his capture, he had asked most eagerly to be reborn in Christ, and was being instructed in the rudiments of the Christian faith. Nasir had come to the conclusion that his own religion had no stability or faith. The Egyptians condemned him as an apostate, tied him to a stake, and shot him with arrows.

CASTLE NETWORK

The Templars constructed a series of castles by which they defended pilgrims in the region, and to conduct chevauchees (raids) into Muslim territory. They also held many villages, mills, and adjoining agricultural lands. Baghras was the key northern fortress with towers and 3 lines of very strong walls. The castle at

Tortosa protected pilgrims visiting the cathedral of Notre-Dame, revered as the place of St. Peter's first mass, and as the keeper of a painting of the Virgin believed to have been made by St. Luke. After visiting Jerusalem, most pilgrims wanted to bathe in the Jordan River and see Mount Quarantene, the Mount of Temptation, where the Devil offered Christ the material riches of the world. Halfway along this route the Templars held the castle of Maldoim above the Jericho Road. The Templars also had a castle near the Jordan at the place where Christ was baptized, to protect pilgrims, and to prevent a repetition of the massacre by Zengi of the 6 monks who had lived at a church there.

TEMPLAR HEADQUARTERS IN JERUSALEMThe Templar headquarters, the Palace of Solomon, looks like a church, oblong and supported by pillars. At the end of the sanctuary it rises up to a large, circular roof. The knights are garrisoned here and in the surrounding buildings, storing arms, clothing, and food. Below them are the stables built by King Solomon. They have vaults, arches, and roofs, and could hold thousands of horses. Above the stables, the area is full of walking-places, lawns, council-chambers, porches, consistories, and supplies of water in splendid cisterns. Below it is full of wash-rooms, stores, grain rooms, stores for wood and other domestic stores. Here in Jerusalem, the Templars could house 300 knights and 1000 sergeants or serving brothers.

1 MAY 1187 (BATTLE AT THE SPRINGS OF CRESSON)In spring 1187, Saladin's son, al-Afdal, asked Raymond, the count of Tripoli, for permission to send a scouting party into the country. Raymond agreed for a one-day passage as long as they harmed neither property nor inhabitants. Raymond then informed Gerard of Ridefort, Grand Master of the Templars, of the Muslim presence. Immediately Gerard asked for reinforcements from the nearest Templar garrison at Caco. On 1 May, he set off for Nazareth. North of the Springs of Cresson they found the Muslim scouting force to be much larger than expected, about 7,000, in contrast to the Christian force of 140, of which 90 were Templars. James of Mailly, marshal of the temple, and Roger des Moulins, urged retreat. However, Gerard foolishly taunted them with cowardice. The charge upon the Mamluks resulted in a near massacre of the Christians. Only Gerard and two other Templars escaped.

BATTLE OF HATTIN (4 JULY 1187)Saladin assembled his forces for a great onslaught upon the Christians who had assembled at Acre in a defensive position at the well-watered site of Sephoria. They intended to sit out the invasion as they had successfully done before. Raymond of Tripoli advised the Christians to stay put, for Saladin's forces were too great. But once again, Gerard of Ridefort foolishly urged King Guy to take the offense. The Christian army ventured forth into waterless country to recapture Tiberias. Having to make camp at nightfall, they were surrounded by the Muslim army, which prevented the Christians from reaching the Springs of Kafr Hattin. The Muslims set fire to the dry grass, making their throats even more parched. Being despondent and tired by thirst, the Christians were utterly defeated. This Muslim victory created a chain reaction. Acre fell less than a week later. Jerusalem fell in October, including the Templar headquarters. Tripoli and Antioch survived, as did the Templar and Hospitaller enclaves around Tortosa and Krak des Chevaliers. The only important city left was Tyre, saved by the chance arrival of a fleet under a German crusader, Conrad of Monferrat, who captured 11 Muslim galleys. After Saladin had defeated Jerusalem, he had the relic of the True Cross taken down from the Temple of the Lord and, beating it with clubs, had it carried on display throughout the city. Gerard of Ridefort was captured. The Grand Commander, Brother Terricus, survived and assumed command of the remaining Templars. He attributed their great loss at Hattin to the anger of God which has permitted us to be scourged at this present time, as a consequence of our sins, we can explain neither by letters nor by tearful voice.

THIRD CRUSADE (1189-1192)**7 SEPTEMBER 1191 (BATTLE OF ARSUF)**The loss at Hattin so shocked Christian opinion that a third crusade was organized two years later. The French king, Philip II, and the Angevin king, Richard I, retook Acre on 12 July 1190. Three weeks later Philip departed for France, while Richard fought Saladin in a great battle at Arsuf in September. Richard formed up 12 squadrons into 5 battle-lines. The Templars were to hold the front rank and the Hospitallers the rear. At one point, the Hospitallers were pressed to the breaking point. Their crossbowmen in the rear had to load and fire walking backwards. Beginning to be overwhelmed by the enemy, the Hospitallers thrust their way through their own infantry and charged into the Saracen ranks with the cry of St. George! Saladin was defeated. However, the Christians failed to retake Jerusalem.

OCTOBER 1242 (NEGOTIATION FOR NABLUS)In revenge for a previous massacre of Christian pilgrims by al-Nasir, the Templars led an attack on Nablus. The Sultan of Egypt could not be trusted to keep the terms of any truce, for he had not returned Gaza, Hebron, Nablus, and Daron. Instead of fighting, the Muslim leaders negotiated with the Templars who gained all the land west of the River Jordan except Hebron, Nablus, and Baisan. Safe access to these places was now possible for everybody.

17 OCTOBER 1244 (DEFEAT AT La FORBIE)On 11 July 1244, the Khorezmian Turks and Egyptians sacked Jerusalem, treating the population in a far more brutal fashion than any other Muslim ruler. A large Christian army gathered at La Forbie, led by the King of Cyprus, the Prince of Antioch, and their Muslim allies, led by al-Nasir. Because the opposing forces were greater, al-Nasir deserted the Christian army. The Egyptians won an overwhelming victory. Grand Master Armand was either killed or died in captivity. Only 33 Templars, 26 Hospitallers, and 3 Teutonic Knights survived.

8 FEBRUARY 1250 (ATTACK ON MANSURAH)Christians in the King Louis IX crusade advanced toward Cairo and began to ford a branch of the Nile. This took time. The Templars, along with Robert of Artois, the king's brother, and William Longespee, Earl of Salisbury, reached the other side before the rest of the army. To the surprise of the cautious Templars, the Count of Artois attacked the Turks, pursuing them into the town of Mansurah. The Templars charged after him. The Christian

knights became trapped in the narrow streets when great beams were flung into the streets by the inhabitants, blocking their retreat. Their losses were huge, about 300 knights and 280 Templars. Only 2 Templars and one Hospitaller escaped the massacre.

BAYBARS, SULTAN OF EGYPTIn 1265, Baybars, Sultan of Egypt, took Caesarea, Haifa, and the Hospitaller fortress of Arsuf; in 1266, the Templar castle at Safad; in 1268, Jaffa. In April 1268, Baybars employed as many as 26 siege engines to subdue another Templar castle, Beaufort. Antioch fell on 18 May. Thereafter, Grand Master Thomas Berard decided the following castles were not defensible: Baghras, La Roche de Roussel, and Port Bonnel. In 1271, Chastel-Blanc, Krak des Chevaliers and Akkar crumbled. Montfort fell in June. Reduced to coastal defenses, the Franks were finally given a respite in April 1272 when the crusade of Prince Edward of England persuaded Baybars to agree to a 10-year truce. But in 6 years Baybars had dismantled the Templar defenses in the east which they had painstakingly built up since 1187.

FORTRESS AT DESTROIT, ATLIT, or PILGRIMS' CASTLE HELD BY TEMPLARS FROM 1218 UNTIL 1291 AFTER THE FALL OF ACREThe castle at the foot of Mount Carmel, near Haifa, was built on land that projected into the sea, so that it was protected on 3 sides by water. Next to it was a road, a town, fisheries, salt-pans, woods, pastures, vines, and orchards. While digging the foundation, they found a source of fresh water. The land-side was protected by two strong walls. Between the outer wall and the mainland was a moat that could be flooded. It had a natural harbor. Two lines of archers would have been deployed to cover the area in front of the moat, firing through the casements (windows) on the gallery (roofed balcony) and from the top of the wall, amounting to between 120 and 140 men in all. Each of the 3 towers along the outer wall had its own portcullis (iron gate) and machicolation (a masonry projection from a tower with opening in the floor through which rocks or boiling oil could be poured).

CASTLE SAFADSafad had a double line of walls shaped in an ellipse. The castle was enclosed on every side by mountains and hills and steep precipices and crags and rocks. It was 330 meters by 170 meters with a circumference of 850 meters, making it the largest castle in the kingdom. Cylindrical (round) towers stood along the outer wall, with rectangular towers along the inner wall. There was a large round keep in the inner court. The castle was stocked with a full range of war machines and crossbows. It kept a peacetime complement of 1,700 men, increased to 2,220 during war. Fifty of these were Templar knights. They were reinforced by fifty turcoples (light-mounted troops) and 300 crossbowmen. Food was drawn from the surrounding farm lands, including 12,000 mule loads of barley and grain annually, and from the castle's own hunters and fishermen. Fish were brought in fresh daily and salted from the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan. For food processing, the castle had wind, water, and animal-powered mills.

Castle Safad brought safety to the region. The famous places of Galilee with which the faithful had become familiar through the Bible could now be again accessible. These included the cistern where Joseph was sold by his brothers; Capernaum, where Jesus preached and Peter found the tribute money in the mouth of the fish and where Matthew left the custom-house to join the apostles; the hillside where Jesus manifested Himself to the disciples after His resurrection. Next to the Sea of Galilee itself was Bethsaida, the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, Philip, and James the Less, and Magdalon, which was said to be the birthplace of Mary Magdalene. Moreover, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, and Cana of Galilee were now safe to visit again.

Three times during July 1266 Baybars attempted to take Safad without success. He decided to sow dissent between the Templars and the Syrian Christians inside the castle. He promised the Syrians if they deserted the castle they would be granted free passage. The Templars sent out a Syrian sergeant called Leon Cazelier to negotiate, since he knew Arabic. When the gates were opened, Baybars sent the women and children into slavery and had the Templars decapitated. The Syrians thought they had been betrayed by the Templars, which they were not. Baybars had lied.

1291 (THE FALL OF ACRE)In spite of a 10 year truce made in 1277, Kalavun resumed his attacks in 1285, capturing Latakia and the very strong Hospitaller fortress of al-Marqab. Tripoli fell in April, and Botron and Nephin soon after. On 5 April, the Muslim army advanced to the walls of Acre. On 15 April, William of Beaujeu led a night attack on the Muslim camp. Surprise seemed to give them the advantage, but the Christians became entangled in the tent ropes in the darkness and were beaten back, losing 18 dead. On 18 May, the Muslim's broke in at the Accursed Tower, and street-fighting began. William of Beaujeu was resting at the time, but he rushed out, lightly armed. Badly wounded, he was carried back to the Templar complex where he later died that evening, about 60 years old. The Mamluks had captured most of the city. Only the Templar fortress remained in Christian hands, filled with refugees. On 25 May, Peter of Sevrey, Marshal of the Templars, agreed to surrender in exchange for safe-conduct of the refugees, but as they entered, some Muslim troops began to pillage and molest women and children, provoking an attack from the Templars. That night the commander, Theobald Gaudin, was sent out of the fortress with the Templars' treasure and sailed to Sidon. The Templar building fell 3 days later and everyone inside was slaughtered. Not able to defend their 3 remaining castles, the Templars left Sidon on 14 July, Tortosa on 3 August, and Atlit on 14 August.

The Templars established their new headquarters on Cyprus and a small garrison on Ruad, two miles off Tortosa. The Templars had intended to regain a foothold in Syria, but Ruad was wiped out in 1302.

EXPERTS IN BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICESPilgrims to the Holy Land deposited their valuables with the western Templars so they would be less-vulnerable to thieves. They were given cheques for the amount of their deposits. After arriving in Jerusalem, they could cash in their cheques for money. Templar houses also protected important documents such as treaties, charters, and wills. Soon the Templars were called upon to lend money, especially to the kings of France and the Popes. Between 1236 and 1242, the Templars distributed almost

24,500 livres for one of their most eminent clients, Queen Mother, Blanche of Castille, for the building of the monastery of Maubuisson. How quickly the Templars profited is evident when, in August 1274, Edward I of England reimbursed them 27,974 livres tournois borrowed during his 1272 crusade, along with 5,333 livres, 6 sous, 8 deniers for administration, expenses, and interest. The Templars had a reputation for honesty and for punishing wrongdoers. Any brother found with unauthorized money on his person when he died was denied a Christian burial.

THE END OF THE TEMPLARS

The fall of Acre in 1291 created a climate of criticism against the Templars for failing to defend the Holy Land. They had already suffered major defeats at Hattin in 1187, La Forbie in 1244, and Mansurah in 1250. How could vast sums of money be spent this way? How could they defend the Holy land after their (wise) decision to abandon the fortresses at Atlit and Tortosa in August 1291? On 13 Friday 1307, King Philip IV of France had the Templars arrested. There was no resistance because most of the Templars were either unarmed, or middle-aged or elderly. They were charged with heresy in which, during their initiation rites into the Templars, they had denied Christ, spat on a crucifix, and were obscenely kissed by their receptor on the base of the spine, the navel, and the lips. There were also charges of simony, idol worship, and homosexuality. After being imprisoned and tortured, the leaders made confessions. But one month later, after Pope Clement V intervened, they revoked the confessions they had made under torture. In February 1310, 32 Templars from the Auvergne province committed themselves to the defense of the Order. This defense so alarmed Philip that an attempt was made to suppress it in May 1310 by executing a small group of Templars as relapsed heretics, using their former confessions against them. Indeed, Philip threatened military action against the Pope unless he agreed to his wishes. So in March 1312, the Pope abolished (but did not condemn) the Templars as an Order, and their property transferred to the Hospitallers so it could be used for the Holy Land. As for the Templars, some were reconciled to the Church, some were declared innocent, others considered relapsed or impenitent. Their Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake on 18 March 1314. Many believed the charges against the Templars were false, and were driven by King Philip's greed to seize their assets as he was deeply indebt from war with England. But the central archives of the Templars, which detailed all its history, was destroyed by the Turks in 1571 on the island of Cyprus, opening the door to endless speculation about the truth regarding Templar activities.

James of Vitry, Bishop of Acre between 1216 and 1228, said of the Templars: Lions in war, mild as lambs at home; in the field fierce knights, in church like hermits or monks; unyielding and savage to the enemies of Christ, benevolent and mild to Christian. The Templars, he said, were beloved by all because of their piety and humility.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative. Poorly written. If you are conspiracy sleuth and looking for proof that Templars were Satanists, stay away. By Urmuz Great wealth of information and detail but the structure and narrative are terrible. It is one of the least legible history books Ive read in many years. Gives the feel of copy and paste, had the information been available on the Internet and not painstakingly collected in archives. A pity for the effort.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Extremely Detailed. Painstaking research w/ references By Billy Stewart Barber has proven that he has a gift for at least 2 things: research and writing based on research. This is probably the most concise history of the Knights Templar ever written. Barber has an extensive bibliography and footnote reference section at the end of the book that covers writings I, a long-time Templar lore lover, had not yet stumbled upon. The list provides even more topics for me to cover, which is great in itself. Barber has presented a detailed, historical outline, with explanations of the political and religious influences of the times. He is candid and unbiased in his presentation of the material which results in a book of exceptional quality and quantity. A must read for any history lover, Knights Templar history lover, medieval history lover, crusades lover, or even conspiracy theory lover. Barber also penned an extensive study of the trial of the Templars by the catholic church and I highly recommend that as well; The Trial of the Templars. Fantastic reading for people who want the straight facts without a lot of "hollywood" crap surrounding it. Move past "The Da Vinci Code" and get the real details about these intriguing knights from the late middle ages.

The Order of the Temple, founded in 1119 to protect pilgrims around Jerusalem, developed into one of the most influential corporations in the medieval world. It has retained its hold on the modern imagination thanks to the dramatic events of the Templars' trial and abolition two hundred years later, and has been invoked in historical mysteries from masonic conspiracy to the survival of the Turin shroud. Malcolm Barber's lucid narrative separates myth from history in this full and detailed account of the Order, from its origins, flourishing and suppression to the Templars' historic afterlife.

'... the Templars evolved into one of the most powerful military forces of the Middle Ages. The story of their rise and sensational fall is the subject of this splendid book.' The Observer

From the Back Cover The Order of the Temple was founded in 1119 with the limited aim of protecting pilgrims around Jerusalem. It developed into one of the most powerful corporations in the medieval world which lasted for nearly two centuries until its suppression in 1312. Despite the loss of its central archive in the sixteenth century, the Order left many records of its existence as the spearhead of crusading activity in Palestine and Syria, as the administrator of a great network of preceptories and lands in the Latin west, and as a banker and ship-owner. Because of the dramatic nature of its abolition, it has retained its

grip on the imagination and consequently there has developed an entirely fictional 'after-history' in which its secret presence has been evoked to explain mysteries which range from masonic conspiracy to the survival of the Turin Shroud. This book offers a concise and up-to-date introduction to the reality and the myth of this extraordinary institution.

About the Author Malcolm Barber taught European medieval history at the University of Reading between 1966 and 2005. His special interests are the Templars, the Cathars and the crusades. He is the author or co-author of nine books.