Hi Christiaan,

A good read overall. On thing, though: avoid adding a table of contents, sub headings, etc. It's certainly a well-organised approach, but it's not suitable for essays (to be used for longer tasks such as theses or 6-7000 word HUMS units).

88%

Essay Response

Introduction

The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon (Knights Templar) was the first religious order to embrace warfare as its vocation and between c.1120 and 1312, was the most influential of the military orders. In a society where violence in the name of chivalry was popular, the Church looked for a way to harness knightly culture for its own purposes. When a fledgling brotherhood of knights sought approval to defend the Holy Land, the Papacy had found the ideal way to build on the success of the First Crusade, combining 'martial action with spiritual contemplation'. This essay will examine the origin and function of the Templars. It asserts that their global influence began as a result of the appeal of militarised religious action, and grew courtesy of their military prowess and financial activities. As the first military order, they would act as a role model for future military orders and were influential in the militarisation of some hospital orders.

Who Were the Templars?

The Templars were founded for the defence of the Holy Land. Despite the success of the first crusade, pilgrimage to the Holy Land was a risky venture.² The Templars were established in c.1120 to protect pilgrims along 'the roads and routes against the attack of robbers and brigands'.³ Led by French nobleman Hugh of Payens, they swore oaths of chastity and obedience to Jerusalem's patriarch and king, and took the name 'Poor Knights of Christ and

¹ William J Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095 – c. 1187*, Woodbridge, 2008, p. 101

² Daniel, *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land 1106-1107 A. D.*, annotated. Charles William Wilson, London, 1895, reproduced in *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land 1106-1107 A. D. By C. W. Wilson. London, 1888*, http://www.holyfire.org/eng/doc_Daniil.htm, accessed January 22nd 2013.

William of Tyre, On the Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar in William of Tyre, Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum, XII, 7, Patrologia Latina 201, pp. 526-527, trans. James Brundage, The Crusades: A Documentary History, Milwaukee, 1962, pp. 70-73 reproduced in The Crusader Kingdoms, Military Orders, & The Second Crusade: Documents, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, p. 25.

the Temple of Solomon' after the Temple of Solomon thought to be buried beneath their lodgings in the al-Aqsa mosque.⁴ In 1127 Hugh travelled to Europe where he sought funding, recruits and support from nobles, and to petition for Papal approval. The Templars were officially recognised at the Council of Troyes in 1129.⁵ Their role expanded rapidly from the guarding of pilgrims between Jaffa and Jerusalem, to becoming the backbone of the Holy Land's defence. As secular knights became increasingly hard to amass, the kings and barons of Outremer relied on the military orders, whose professional soldiers were well funded.⁶ The Templars became the core of the defence of the Holy Land.

The Templars combined monasticism with violence. Their strongest advocate was Saint Bernard of Clairvaux who created the order's Rule. Bernard preached foremost the armed defence of the Church. Templar knights could 'kill the enemies of the cross without sinning' and they were required to sleep clothed in preparedness for battle at any moment. Alongside this vocation, Templars led a monastic lifestyle. For example knights were permitted to wear white habits signifying chastity and purity. Meals were eaten in silence allowing bible lessons to be read aloud. Above all, obedience to the master of the house was paramount and any commandment 'should be done without delay as though Christ himself had commanded it'. Some Templar brothers were not content with the order's religious practices and yearned for higher religious duties. In response to these concerns, Templars were reminded that true virtue lay within 'where God sees'. Likewise some Templars were apprehensive towards the use of violence. In response Bernard extolled the merits of armed activism in his 'In Praise of

⁴ Charles Phillips. *A Complete Illustrated History of the Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, consultant. Craig Taylor, London, 2010, p. 210.

⁵ Malcom Barber, 'The Knights Templar', *Historian*, vol. 60, 1998, p. 6.

⁶ Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c. 1071-1291*, trans. Jean Birrell, Cambridge, 1999, p. 120; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 3rd Edition, Hampshire, 2002, p. 84.

⁷ The Primitive Rule of the Templars, cl. 57 in Judith Upton-Ward, The Rule of the Templars, Woodbridge, 1992 reproduced in The Crusader Kingdoms, Military Orders, & The Second Crusade: Documents, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, p. 95; Ibid., cl. 21, pp. 89-90.

⁸ *Ibid.*, cl. 17, p. 89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, cl. 23–24, p. 90.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, cl. 39, p. 92.

Marie Luise Bulst-Thiele, 'The Influence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the Formation of the Order of the Knights Templar', in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers, New York, 1992, pp. 62-63

Hugh the Sinner, Letter to the Knights of Christ in the Temple at Jerusalem, par. 4, 1119-1135 in J. Leclerq, 'Un document sur les débuts des Templiers,' Revue de l'histoire ecclesiastique, vol. 52, 1957, pp. 86-89 reproduced in The Crusader Kingdoms, Military Orders, & The Second Crusade: Documents, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, p. 120.

the New Knighthood'. ¹³ The Templars were warrior monks, defending Christendom through prayer and the sword.

Knights were the head of the Templar hierarchy. The leader of the Templars was a knight known as the Grand Master who resided in Jerusalem. Dressed in a white robe with a red cross, knights were nobles of legitimate birth, free of debt and trained in warfare. ¹⁴ The order was designed with knights in mind as the expensive armaments they used were only affordable by nobility. This focus is also evident in the Templar Rule which prohibited certain activities typically practised by knights such as hunting and tournaments. 15 Despite this focus, only ten percent of the Templars comprised knights. 16 Clergymen became chaplains while the remainder joined lesser ranks of which sergeants where most common. Dressed in black with a red cross on the front and back, sergeants served the knights, fought in battle and in the west were predominantly administrators. Some even commanded high positions.¹⁷ Women and children were not permitted in the order and the average age of new recruits was the midtwenties. 18 Recruits could enlist for a fixed term of service and married brothers were allowed but were required to give up their estates and possessions to the order. If a Templar died before his wife she would receive part of his estates in order to support herself.¹⁹ The recruit's place in the Templar hierarchy was dependent on his secular status, with knights being the core of the order.

Chivalry and Military Prowess

The Templars exemplified and legitimised the ideals of medieval chivalry. The concept of chivalry was a moral dilemma. A knight's defence of society through the ideals of bravery and honour were juxtaposed against the guilt of warlike activities thus contradicting Christian ethics.²⁰ In order to legitimise violence Saint Bernard offered the Templars a just cause; 'to

¹³ St Bernard of Clairvaux, 'In Praise of the New Knighthood' in *Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatises Three*, Cistercian Fathers Series, Number Nineteen, Kalamazoo, 1977, pp. 127-145 reproduced in *The Crusader Kingdoms, Military Orders, & The Second Crusade: Documents*, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, pp. 26-32.

¹⁴ Gordon Napier, *The Rise and Fall of the Knights Templar*, Spellmount, 2003, p. 32.

¹⁵ Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 8; Derek Brewer, 'Chivalry' in *A Companion to Chaucer*, ed. P Brown, Oxford, 2008, p. 64.

¹⁶ James Wasserman, An Illustrated History of the Knights Templar, Rochester, 2006, p. 51.

¹⁷ Alan Forey, 'The Military Orders 1120-1312' in *The Oxford Ullustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith, Oxford, 1995, p. 208.

¹⁸ *Primitive Rule*, cl. 70, p. 97; *Ibid.*, cl. 14, p. 88; Alan Forey, 'Notes on Templar personnel and government at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 35, 2009, pp. 152-153. ¹⁹ *Primitive Rule*, cl. 66 & 69, p. 97.

²⁰ Brewer, 'Chivalry', pp. 58-59.

inflict death or to die for Christ is no sin, but rather, an abundant claim to glory.'²¹ Moreover, warriors were promised salvation. By killing for Christ, 'one gains for Christ' and through death 'one gains Christ himself.'²² The concept of fighting for Christ was not new. Pope Gregory VII had transformed the earlier meaning of *militia Christi* (warfare of Christ) from a spiritual war to armed conflict. Pope Urban II, through the first crusade, had successfully encouraged Christians to take up arms to 'destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends...' because 'Christ commands it.'²³ Saint Bernard developed the concept further by adding a monastic lifestyle. By living the life of a monk, Templars became true Christian Knights. The Templars institutionalised chivalry by adding a monastic lifestyle to chivalrous violence.²⁴

The Templars' dedication to military action was integral to their early growth. Nobles were attracted to the Templars. Barber notes that the instinct for warfare was ingrained within chivalrous nobility, and by offering purity of motive, 'the issue of his fight can never be evil'. The only other way to devote oneself to the service of God was monasticism and the Templars' adherence to warfare was more attractive than enclosure in a monastery. There were detractors to the advocation of warfare. In the mid twelfth century, Isaac, the Abbot of l'Etoile called the Templars the 'new monstrosity' while English chronicler Walter Map criticised the use of force to spread Christianity. However, the Templars had generally been accepted, especially as they had gained Papal approval. The order was an attractive proposition for those who wished to serve God in ways that reflected chivalry.

The Templars were revered for their military prowess. They utilised knights and sergeants as heavy and light cavalry, supported by infantry who would provide cover before a cavalry charge.²⁸ The Templars perfected cavalry charges and turning on command, ensuring

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²² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Joshua Prawer, 'The Military Orders' in *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonisation in the Middle Ages*, London, 1972, p. 254.

Forey, 'The Military Orders', p. 204.

²¹ St Bernard of Clairvaux, 'In Praise', p. 81.

²³ I S Robinson. 'Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ', *History*, vol. 58, no. 193, June 1973, pp. 177–178; Fulcher of Chatres, 'Urban II's Speech' in Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 382 f., trans. in *A Source Book for Medieval History*, eds. Oliver J. Thatcher & Edgar Holmes McNeal, New York, 1905, pp. 513-17 reproduced in *The First Crusade: Documents (Study Resources)*, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, p. 6.

²⁵ Malcolm C Barber, 'The Social Context of the Templars', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series*, vol. 34, 1984, p. 30; St Bernard of Clairvaux, 'In Praise', p. 26.

²⁷ Piers Paul Read, *The Templars*, London, 2000, p. 180.

²⁸ Sean Martin, *The Knights Templar: The History and Myths of the Legendary Military Order*, New York, 2004, p. 88

discipline on the battlefield. This was a revolutionary concept in a time where many western armies lacked cohesion.²⁹ Templar composure in the heat of battle was paramount to the success when, led by Gilbert a Templar knight, they virtually saved the Second Crusade from disaster at the battle of Mount Cadmos.³⁰ Their reputation as warriors was well known to Christians and non-Christians alike.³¹ Such was the Muslim leader Saladin's attitude of fear and loathing towards the Templars that he had them and the members of the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem (Hospitallers) decapitated after the Battle of Hattin.³²

Their military skills brought them donations and political influence. The Templars were prominent in the Spanish Reconquista and as early as 1128 Countess Teresa promised the order land along the Portuguese frontier in exchange for driving out the Moors.³³ In the Holy Land as well as the Iberian peninsula, local lords would donate their castles, such as Baghras in northern Antioch, to the Templars when they could no longer afford to fund the manning or upkeep.³⁴ With a strong military presence throughout the Holy Land and Europe, the Templars became politically influential. Their support was instrumental in the crowning of Sibylla as Queen of Jerusalem over her rival Isabella in 1186.³⁵ In England, Matilda and Stephen both vied for Templar support during their civil war.³⁶ The Templars' military reputation granted them political influence and expanded their international presence.

Financial Practices, Political Influence and Downfall

The Templars pioneered new financial practices further enhancing their status. The concept of deposit banking became commonplace throughout the thirteenth century and can be attributed to the Templars.³⁷ Pilgrims would deposit their cash in one Templar Preceptory, receive a credit note, and present the note at another Preceptory to withdraw funds.³⁸ This proved

³⁸ Martin, *History and Myths*, p. 47.

²⁹ John J Robinson, *Dungeon, Fire and the Sword: The Knights Templar in the Crusades*, New York, 1999, p. 45

Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem: The journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry, New York, 1948, pp. 124-127.

³¹ John of Joinville, 'The Life of Saint Louis' in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. Caroline Smith, London, 2008, p. 198; Gregory Abu'l-Faraj in Helen Nicholson, *Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights: Images of the Military Orders*, Leicester, 1995, p. 77.

³² F Gabrielli. *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E J Costello, London, 1989, p. 99.

³³ Alan J Forey, *The Military Orders: From the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, London, 1992, p. 23.

³⁴ Thomas Asbridge, *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land*, New York, 2010, p. 170.

³⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *The Crusades: A Short History*. London, 1987, pp. 85-86.

³⁶ Forey, Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth, p. 102.

³⁷ Abbott Payson Usher, 'The Origins of Banking: The Primitive Bank of Deposit, 1200-1600', *The Economic History Review*, vol. 4, no. 4, April 1934, p. 409.

advantageous to pilgrims reluctant to carry their wealth on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Templars also contributed to the establishment of the cash based economy in Europe. Wasserman cites the raising of cash crops as one example. Typically farming provided sustenance to landowners and workers, however the Templars, with vast land assets, could afford to sell crops to raise funds for the order in the Holy Land.³⁹ Papal bulls, particularly Omne Datum Optimum in 1139, consolidated the Templars' financial influence by awarding privileges including exemptions from tithes and permission to collect tithes from their own properties. 40 Most importantly, the order became answerable to the Pope alone; no secular or local ecclesiastical institutions had any say in Templar matters. 41 The innovative systems of deposit banking and cash crops contributed significantly to medieval and modern financial systems, and Papal privileges allowed the order to expand their operations free from outside influence.

Free to run their own affairs, the Templars expanded their financial activities. Once established in an area, the Templars would expand to surrounding areas, establishing provinces from which they drew revenue and recruits.⁴² Templar offices around the world would send one third of revenues to the head office in Jerusalem ensuring a constant flow of funds to support the fight in the Holy Land. 43 By the mid twelfth century the Templars had a presence in every major location in Europe from Portugal to Germany and England. 44 They proved popular with locals by hosting agricultural markets and annual fairs. These boosted local economies, and generated Templar revenue via dues from market stall owners. 45 Their reputation meant they were asked to act as witnesses to payment of debts between private citizens, and were entrusted with pensions of citizens who donated land in return for a regular income. 46 The order was a trusted safeguard of funds and valuables. For example, King Henry III of England moved the Crown Jewels to the Paris Temple in 1261 for safekeeping and in 1220, Pope Honorius III entrusted the protection of crusading funds bound for Palestine to a Templar armed guard.⁴⁷ The order's probity ensured they were popular among all levels of society.

³⁹ Wasserman, An Illustrated History, p. 54.

⁴⁰ Michael Haag, *The Templars: History and Myth*, London, 2009, p. 104.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁴² Read, The Templars, p. 181.

⁴³ Forey, 'The Military Orders', p. 206. ⁴⁴ Barber, *New Knighthood*, p. 22.

⁴⁵ Haag, *The Templars*, p. 142.

⁴⁶ Napier, Rise and Fall, p. 49.

⁴⁷ Martin, *History and Myths*, p. 51; Read, *The Templars*, p. 184.

With significant global assets the Knights Templar increased its influence through money lending. For example, French king Louis VII relied heavily on Templar loans for his crusade, and King Alfonso II of Aragón took out four loans between 1165 and 1175. 48 Often these loans were secured against land, with the Templars taking approximately ten percent of the income. The order was a more inviting institution with which to do business compared to others such as Jewish lenders who charged double the rate. 49 The Templars helped change the Church's attitude towards usury. 50 Christians were prohibited from charging interest on loans, so the Templars redefined interest as 'rent', linking the practice of money lending to that of a landlord.⁵¹ The Templars' became highly sought after financial advisors. Capetian France particularly relied on them. They took charge of the household finances of Henry III of England and were instrumental in saving King Louis VII of France from financial ruin following the second crusade.⁵² Louis' successor Philip II utilised the Templars to reorganise the royal finances and by 1180 had increased revenues from royal estates by 120%.⁵³ The Templars' financial experience ensured they became a dominant financial institution.

Their financial position within royal circles invariably led to political influence. Their role in Capetian finances meant they became close advisors to French royalty and by the thirteenth century the king was instrumental in selecting the head of the Paris Temple.⁵⁴ In England Henry II used the Templars to impose his Constitution on the English Church, and Richard I's need for their services ensured he had a say in the leadership of the English Temple.⁵⁵ However, the Templars' dominance in the affairs of Christendom led to their downfall. King Phillip IV of France, heavily in financial debt to the order, called for the general arrest of all Templars in October 1307. Accusations of 'heretical depravity' led to numerous trials after which the Pope dissolved the order in 1312.56 Historians disagree as to the Templars guilt, but it is generally accepted that with no presence in the Holy Land after the fall of Acre in 1291,

⁴⁸ Alan J Forey, *Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, London, 1973, pp. 349-351 reproduced in The Library of Iberian Resources Online, Templars in the Corona de Aragón, 2003, http://libro.uca.edu/forey/templar9.pdf, accessed 13th January 2013.

⁴⁹ Forey, *Templars in the Corona*, p. 351.

⁵⁰ Napier, *Rise and Fall*, p. 49.

⁵¹ Phillips, A Complete Illustrated History, p. 215.

⁵² Peter Partner. 'The Origins and Functions of the Templars' in *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and* their Myth, Oxford, 1982, p. 16.
Martin, History and Myths, p. 48.

⁵⁴ Barber, *New Knighthood*, p. 274.

⁵⁵ Partner, 'The Origins and Functions of the Templars', p. 16. ⁵⁶ Barber. 'Templars', p. 8.

the Templars reason for existence was questioned and coupled with their immense influence, they had become too powerful.⁵⁷ The order's political role in European affairs gave them significant influence, however it also contributed to their downfall.

⁵⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Were the Templars Guilty?' in *The Medieval Crusade*, Woodbridge, 2004, p. 107.

The Templars and Other Orders

The Templars' global presence inspired nationally based military orders. Knowing full well that Templar revenue and recruits were sent to the Holy Land, the Spanish in particular wanted funds and manpower in their own country, and orders such as Calatrava in 1158 and Santiago in 1170 were created with this in mind. These orders were usually based on the model of militia of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem'. Modelled in part according to the Templar Rule, the Hospital of St. Mary of the German House of Jerusalem (Teutonic Knights) was formed in 1192 mainly for German pilgrims. Founded as a hospital order, it soon realised that the Templars and other military orders were the dominant institutions in the Holy Land. Following the Templars lead, the order militarised in 1198 and looked to Germany and the Baltic where it flourished, creating a 'quasi-sovereign' state in Prussia. This worked well for the Teutonic Knights for whom donations relied more on nationality than their hospital or military activities. The Templars' example was followed by other military orders whose focus became one of local dominance rather than rivalling the Templars' global presence.

The Templars' greatest rivals were the Hospitallers, a hospital order established in the eleventh century devoted to the care of the poor and sick. They expanded officially into militarisation c.1136 and Nicholson asserts that donations to the Hospitallers increased after their militarisation suggesting one possible reason for the move. In terms of privileges, donations and political influence the Hospitallers were equal to the Templars in most respects. Militarily, the Hospitallers were strong yet despite significant contributions to various battles such as Ascalon in 1153, they were not as active in proclaiming their militarism and their

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⁵⁸ Forey, 'The Military Orders', p. 206; Forey, *Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth*, pp. 23-24, 98.

Count of Barcelona, Colección de documentos inéditos del Archivo general de la Corona de Aragón, doc. 43, ed. P de Bofarull y Mascaro, IV, Barcelona, 1849, p. 93 in Forey, Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth, p. 24; Ibid., pp. 23-24.
 Indrikis Sterns. 'The Rule and Statutes of the Teutonic Knights' in The Statutes of the Teutonic Knights: a

⁶⁰ Indrikis Sterns. 'The Rule and Statutes of the Teutonic Knights' in *The Statutes of the Teutonic Knights: a study of religious chivalry*, Pennsylvania, 1969 reproduced in *The Crusader Kingdoms, Military Orders, & The Second Crusade: Documents*, HIST308 Trimester 3, Armidale, 2012, p. 99; Alfred J Andrea, *Encyclopedia of the Crusades*, London, 2003, p. 314.

⁶¹ Riley-Smith, What Were the Crusades?, p. 84.

⁶² Nicholson, Images of the Military Orders, p. 64.

Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers at Rhodes, 1306-1421' in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. III, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Harry W. Hazard, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969-89 p. 278

⁶⁴ Helen Nicholson, 'Saints or Sinners? The Knights Templar in Medieval Europe', *History Today*, vol. 44, no. 12, December 1994, p. 31.

primary role was as a hospital.⁶⁵ Tensions sometimes arose within the order over the allocation of resources towards militarism as opposed to their intended nursing role.⁶⁶ Due to their far-reaching presence and dedication to militarism, the Templars were the first military order in peoples' thoughts.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon was created to protect pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, yet their role evolved rapidly into defenders of the entire Holy Land. They were the dominant military order of the period and remained so until their dissolution in 1312. Their early influence came courtesy of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and his advocation of religion and warfare. They appealed to the imagination of western society and in particular, chivalrous nobility. The Templars reputation for military prowess meant their services were in demand. In Europe and the Holy Land they fought against the infidels and their armed vocation ensured they were politically influential. The Templars pioneered new financial practices and increased their global financial standing. The development of deposit banking, which is still in use today, was integral to pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land, and their reputation for integrity and monetary security saw them used in varying financial transactions. Further bolstered by Papal privileges, they expanded to new financial avenues including money lending, which increased their financial dominance and entrenched them as political advisors, particularly in Europe. Seeing their success, other military orders followed their example and though the Hospitallers in particular matched them in many ways, the Templars were always accepted as the first and foremost military order.

⁶⁵ Baldwin, Marshall W. 'The Latin States Under Baldwin III and Amalric I, 1143-1174' in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K M Setting, Vol I, *The First Hundred Years*, ed. Marshall W Baldwin, Madison, 1969-1989, p. 537

⁶⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c. 1070-1309*, Hampshire, 2012, pp. 31-32. 67 Nicholson, 'Saints or Sinners?', p. 36.

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