

Legends and Conspiracy Theories Around the Knights Templar

Marie-Christine W. Koop – University of North Texas

Marie-Christine.Koop@unt.edu



I. Introduction

II. Brief Historical Survey

- 1095: At the request of the Byzantine Emperor, Pope Urban II preaches the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont.
- 1096: Beginning of the First Crusade.
- 1099: Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.
- 1119-1120: Foundation of the Order of the Temple in Jerusalem by Hughes de Payns.
- 1129: Drafted by Bernard of Clairvaux, the Rule of the Order is adopted at the Council of Troyes.
- 1139: The Order of the Temple is directly under the authority of the Pope, without going through civil and religious authorities.
- 1146: Beginning of the Second Crusade.
- 1187: Defeat at Hattin; Templars are beheaded. Saladin and the Muslim army retake Jerusalem.
- 1191: The port of Saint John of Acre becomes the administrative seat of the Knights Templar.
- 1202-1204: The city of Constantinople is sacked by the Crusaders.
- 1291: Saint John of Acre, the last bastion of the Latin states of the East, falls into the hands of the Muslims. The Knights Templar settle in Cyprus.
- 1293: Jacques de Molay becomes Grand Master of the Temple.
- 1307: On Friday, October 13, the Knights Templar are arrested in France by the men of King Philip IV the Fair. Accused of heresy and horrible crimes, they are viciously tortured.
- 1308: Under pressure from the Pope, King Edward II arrests the Knights Templar in England.
- 1310: 54 Knights Templar are burnt at the stake in France to force the other Templars to confess.
- 1312: The Order of the Temple is abolished. Its assets are turned over to the Hospitallers.
- 1314: Jacques de Molay and Geoffroy de Charney retract their confessions and are declared relapsed; they are burnt at the stake in Paris. Pope Clement V and Philip the Fair die in the same year.
- 1319: King Denis of Portugal founds the Order of Christ to welcome the surviving Knights Templar.

III. Common Legends and Conspiracy Theories Around the Knights Templar

1. The Knights Templar were monks in charge of defending the holy places
2. The Knights Templar worshipped an idol: the Baphomet
3. The Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail
4. The Templars' Treasure: Gisors and Rennes-le-Château
5. The Priory of Sion
6. The Curse of Jacques de Molay
7. The Curse of Friday the 13th
8. Templars and Druids
9. Knights Templar and Cathars
10. Templars and Assassins
11. The fate of the Templar fleet
12. The flight to Portugal
13. The flight to Scotland
14. Knights Templar in America
15. Knights Templar in Switzerland
16. Knights Templar and Freemasons

IV. Neo-Templar Orders

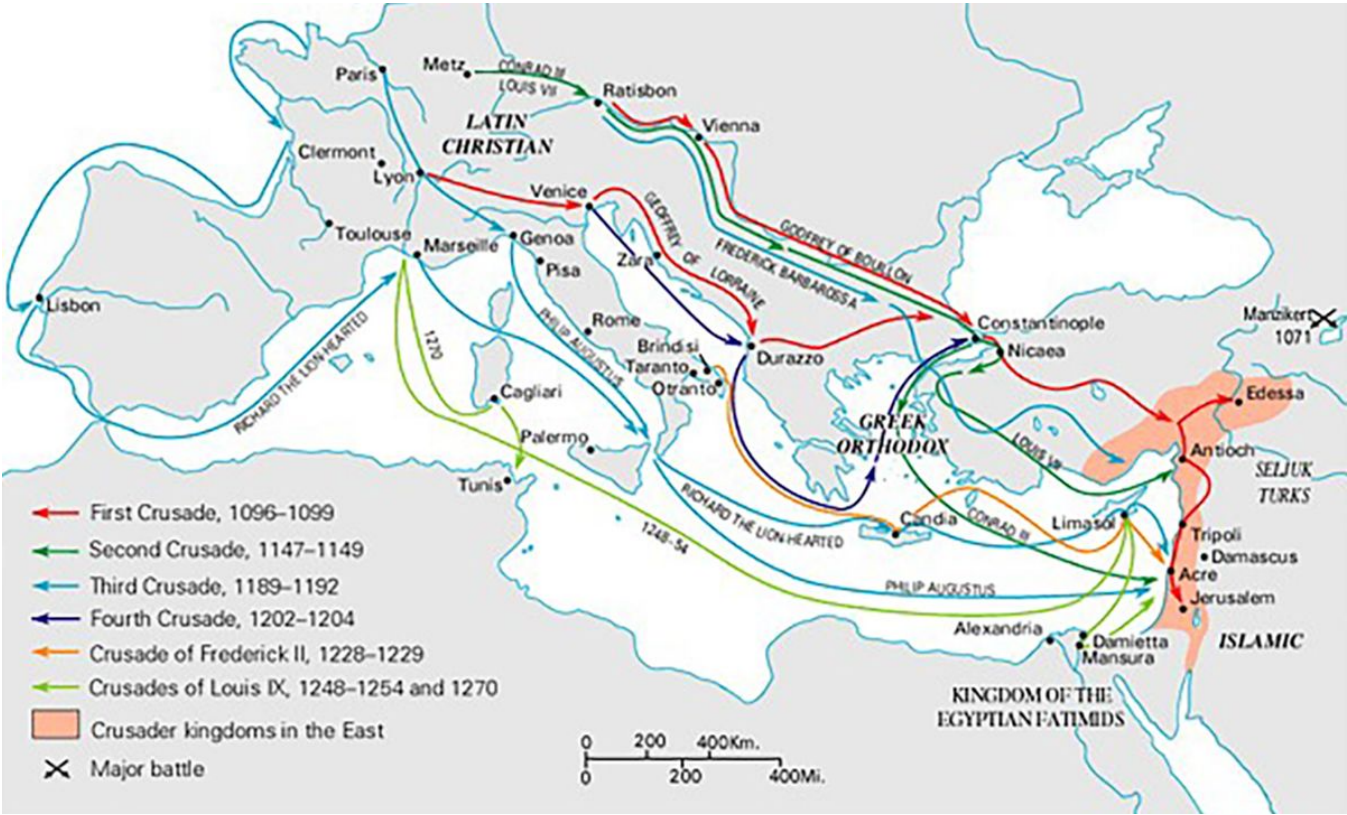
V. Conclusion

1. Can we say that the Knights Templar formed a secret society?
2. Legacy of the Knights Templar

Suggested Readings

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Routes Followed by Crusaders (1096-1270)



The Crusades were a series of military expeditions and religious wars between Christians and Muslims over the control of Jerusalem (the "Holy Land") where Jesus had lived and died.



Hugues de Payns (first Grand Master)

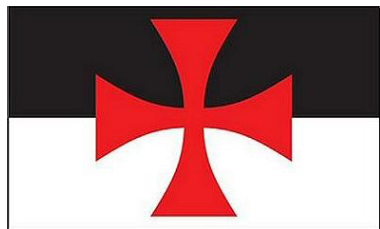


Jacques de Molay (last Grand Master)

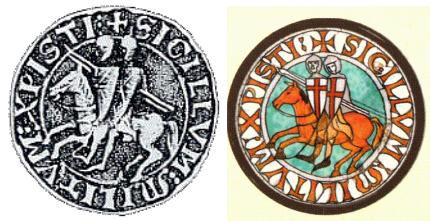
Templar Symbols



The Templar cross
(cross *pattée*)

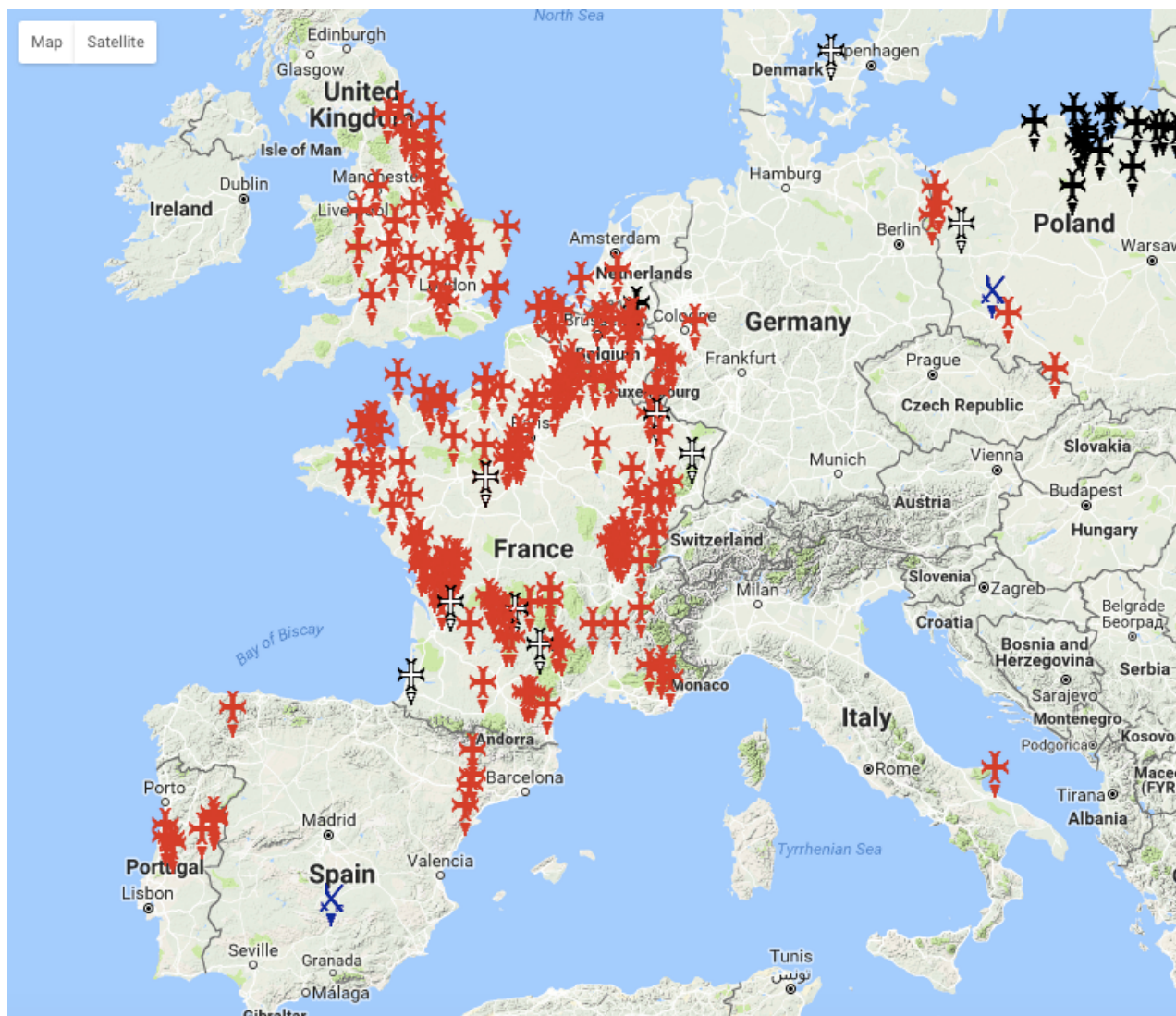


The "gonfalon beaucent" (flag)



The Templar seal

Templar Possessions in Europe



The Crusader States in the Holy Land



Major Religious Orders Present in the Holy Land During the Crusades

Holy
Sepulchre

Hospitallers

Knights
Templar

St. Jack of
the Sword

Teutonic
Knights

