

The Templars

Historian Ralls has written an authoritative source book on the fascinating history behind the most famous military religious order of the Crusades--the Knights Templar. This encyclopedia also includes a wealth of information on the key Templar people, places, events, and more. Determined to avenge the deaths of his niece and her fiancé and finish their work by finding a long-lost Dead Sea Scroll, retired Army Ranger John "Doc" Holliday, in doing so, stumbles upon a conspiracy linking the Catholic Church to an illicit art forgery operation involving the Nazis. By the best-selling author of *Lost City of the Templars*. Original.

From the USA Today bestselling author of *The Aztec Heresy* A mystery that spans the past A conspiracy that lives on in the heart of an ancient order... Army Ranger Lt. Col. John Holliday had resigned himself to ending his career teaching at West Point. When his uncle passes away, Holliday discovers a medieval sword-wrapped in Adolf Hitler's personal battle standard. But when someone burns down his uncle's house in an attempt to retrieve the sword, Holliday realizes that he's being drawn into a war that has been fought for centuries--a war in which he may be the next casualty.

THE MOST CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET OF THE WESTERN WORLD IS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED -- AND YOU WILL NEVER SEE CHRISTIANITY IN THE SAME LIGHT AGAIN. In a remarkable achievement of historical detective work that is destined to become a classic, authors Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince delve into the mysterious world of the Freemasons, the Cathars, the Knights Templar, and the occult to discover the truth behind an underground religion with roots in the first century that survives even today. Chronicling their fascinating quest for truth through time and space, the authors reveal an astonishing new view of the real motives and character of the founder of Christianity, as well as the actual historical -- and revelatory -- roles of John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene. Painstakingly researched and thoroughly documented, *The Templar Revelation* presents a secret history, preserved through the centuries but encoded in works of art and even in the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, whose final chapter could shatter the foundation of the Christian Church.

In 1156, the sixth Grand Master of the Knights Templar brings a mysterious object from Jerusalem to his homeland in the South of France. "The Head of Wisdom," as the strange artifact is called, ensures that the Order achieves unprecedented wealth. But in October 1307, the French king fights against the Templars. All commanderies of the Templars are closed, all members arrested. Templar Commander Lieutenant Gero of Breydenbach is to flee to Germany with the "Head of Wisdom" to keep their secret. A truly fantastic journey begins. Suddenly he finds himself in 2004 - dependent on a fascinating young woman, who might help him to fulfill his mission ... Perfectly researched. Historically accurate. Based on a real Legend. "Mystery of the Templar" is an outstanding adventure!

James Becker, New York Times bestselling author of *The Templar Archive*, returns with a breakneck thriller whisking readers into the shadowy secret chambers of the Knights Templar. Having barely escaping the crosshairs of a deadly cult, Robin Jessop and David Mallory crisscross Europe, seeking to unlock the truth behind a conspiracy unresolved for seven hundred years—the mystery of what has given the enigmatic Templars their unwavering power. Infiltrating the group's vast archives, Jessop and Mallory make a startling find. An ancient Templar passport hints at a sacred mission: the transportation of a priceless treasure, an artifact of incomprehensible value. Delving through centuries of clues and deception, the two come face-to-face with a secret that could shake Christendom to its core—and cost their own lives along the way.

An order of warrior monks founded to protect pilgrims to Jerusalem, the Templars were among the wealthiest and most powerful bodies in the medieval world. Yet two centuries later, they were arrested, accused of blasphemy, heresy and orgies, and their leaders were burnt at the

stake. Part guide, part history, this book investigates the Templar legends and legacy - from the mysteries of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, via nineteenth century development of the Freemasons, through to Templar appearances in Dan Brown and Indiana Jones. This book explains the whole context of Templar history, including the recent evidence discovered by the Vatican that the Templars were not guilty of heresy. It also features a guide to Templar castles and sites.

In 1099, the city of Jerusalem, a possession of the Islamic Caliphate for over four-hundred years, fell to an army of European knights intent on restoring the Cross to the Holy Lands. From the ranks of these holy warriors emerged an order of monks trained in both scripture and the military arts, an order that would protect and administer Christendom's prized conquest for almost a century: the Knights of the Temple of Solomon, or the Templars. In this articulate and engaging history, Piers Paul Read explores the rise, the catastrophic fall, and the far-reaching legacy of these knights who took, and briefly held, the most bitterly contested citadel in the monotheistic West. Drawing on the most recent scholarship, and writing with authority and candor, Read chronicles the history of the blood-splattered monks who still infiltrate modernity in literature, as the inspiration for secret societies, and in the backyard fantasies of any child with access to a stick and a garbage can lid. More than armed holy men, the Templars also represented the first uniformed standing army in the Western world. Sustaining their military order required vast sums of money, and, to that end, a powerful multinational corporation formed. The prosperity that European financiers enjoyed, from the efficient management of Levantine possessions and from pioneering developments in the field of international banking, would help jump-start Europe's long-slumbering Dark Age economy. In 1307, the French king, Philip IV, expropriated Templar lands, unleashing a wave of repression that would crest five years later. After Templar leaders broke down and confessed, under torture, to blasphemy, heresy, and sodomy, Pope Clement V suppressed the Order in 1312. Was it guilty as charged? And what relevance has the story to our own times? In this remarkable history, Piers Paul Read explores the Crusades and the individual biographies of the many colorful characters that fought them.

A history of the powerful medieval military order, based on the author's discovery of the long-lost Inquisition transcript of their trial, traces their rise and fall against centuries of war, religious fervor, and power struggles.

Arguably one of the most provocative, puzzling, and misunderstood organizations of medieval times, the legendary Knights Templar have always been shrouded in a veil of mystery, while inspiring popular culture from Indiana Jones to Dan Brown. In *The Templars*, author Michael Haag offers a definitive history of these loyal Christian soldiers of the Crusades—sworn to defend the Holy Land and Jerusalem, but ultimately damned and destroyed by the Pope and his church. A bestseller in the United Kingdom—the first history of the enigmatic warriors to include findings from the Chinon Parchment, the long-lost Vatican document absolving the Knights of heresy—*The Templars* by Michael Haag is fascinating reading.

“Dan Jones is an entertainer, but also a bona fide historian. Seldom does one find serious scholarship so easy to read.” – *The Times*, Book of the Year
A New York Times bestseller, this major new history of the knights Templar is “a fresh, muscular and compelling history of the ultimate military-religious crusading order, combining sensible scholarship with narrative swagger” – Simon Sebag Montefiore, author of *Jerusalem A faltering war in the middle east*.
A band of elite warriors determined to fight to the death to protect Christianity's holiest sites. A global financial network unaccountable to any government. A sinister plot founded on a web of lies.
Jerusalem 1119. A small group of knights seeking a purpose in the violent aftermath of the First Crusade decides to set up a new order. These are the first Knights Templar, a band of elite warriors prepared to give their lives to protect Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Over the next two hundred years, the Templars would become the most powerful religious order of the

medieval world. Their legend has inspired fervent speculation ever since. In this groundbreaking narrative history, Dan Jones tells the true story of the Templars for the first time in a generation, drawing on extensive original sources to build a gripping account of these Christian holy warriors whose heroism and alleged depravity have been shrouded in myth. The Templars were protected by the pope and sworn to strict vows of celibacy. They fought the forces of Islam in hand-to-hand combat on the sun-baked hills where Jesus lived and died, finding their nemesis in Saladin, who vowed to drive all Christians from the lands of Islam. Experts at channeling money across borders, they established the medieval world's largest and most innovative banking network and waged private wars against anyone who threatened their interests. Then, as they faced setbacks at the hands of the ruthless Mamluk sultan Baybars and were forced to retreat to their stronghold in Cyprus, a vindictive and cash-strapped King of France set his sights on their fortune. His administrators quietly mounted a damning case against the Templars, built on deliberate lies and false testimony. On Friday October 13, 1307, hundreds of brothers were arrested, imprisoned and tortured, and the order was disbanded amid lurid accusations of sexual misconduct and heresy. They were tried by the Pope in secret proceedings and their last master was brutally tortured and burned at the stake. But were they heretics or victims of a ruthlessly repressive state? Dan Jones goes back to the sources to bring their dramatic tale, so relevant to our own times, to life in a book that is at once authoritative and compulsively readable.

The age of the Crusades encompassed the rise and fall of a singular Order of fighting men, equally devoted to God, war and the defense of Palestine. After the Crusades the Templars obeyed no one except the Pope and acquired land and castles by gift, conquest and purchase, becoming a church within the Church. They were bankers, merchants, diplomats and tax gatherers, and though they themselves were poor, the wealth of their Order was legendary. As the nation states arose the Templars were accused of heresy, treachery, sodomy, usury, blasphemy and idolatry. The author assesses the faults and fine qualities of the brotherhood, examining the reasons for its initial allure and eventual, ignominious obliteration.

The first thrilling novel in Raymond Khoury's New York Times bestselling Templar series. In 1291, a young Templar knight flees the fallen holy land in a hail of fire and flashing sword, setting out to sea with a mysterious chest entrusted to him by the Order's dying grand master. The ship vanishes without a trace. In present day Manhattan, four masked horsemen dressed as Templar Knights stage a bloody raid on the Metropolitan Museum of Art during an exhibit of Vatican treasures. Emerging with a strange geared device, they disappear into the night. The investigation that follows draws archaeologist Tess Chaykin and FBI agent Sean Reilly into the dark, hidden history of the crusading knights—and into a deadly game of cat and mouse with ruthless killers—as they race across three continents to recover the lost secret of the Templars. Why do the powerful medieval Knights Templar, the famed warriors of the Crusades, still intrigue many today? A secret society long shrouded in mystery, the Templars were believed to conduct mystical rituals, to guard the Holy Grail, and to possess the priceless treasures of the Temple of Jerusalem. Did they bring their treasure to North America, as some legends say? This definitive work about the Templars and their presumed hidden knowledge addresses many such fascinating questions, with rare photos from the Rosslyn Chapel Museum (Scotland) included.

Shrouded in myth and conspiracy, the history of the Knights Templar is little understood. Geordie Torr pulls fact from fiction, revealing the astonishing tale of this military-religious order that dominated the politics of the medieval Middle East. Initially created to protect Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land in the wake of the First Crusade, the Templars soon became an institution of incredible power, possessing wealth and influence throughout the courts of Europe. Yet just two centuries later they dramatically fell as its members were accused of heresy and burned at the stake. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the wars between

Christians and Muslims, this illustrated book brings to life the legacy of this secretive order and the characters who defined the era.

Barber's classic account endeavours to tackle the unresolved controversies surrounding the consequences of the trial.

"When a woman's body is found at the foot of a cliff near the idyllic French town of St. Denis, chief of police Bruno Courrèges suspects a connection to the great ruin that stands above: a long-ago Knights Templar stronghold. With the help of Amélie, a young newcomer to the Dordogne, Bruno learns that the dead woman was an archaeologist searching for a religious artifact of incredible importance. And her ties to Islamic terrorists—not to mention the return of an old flame of Bruno's, who is assigned to work with him on the case—only heightens the pressure to unravel the centuries-old mystery. As Bruno works to connect the tangled threads of past and present, he nonetheless finds time, naturellement, to enjoy the wine, food, and beauty of the Périgord region."--

An ancient sect. A modern mystery. The most dangerous secret ever unearthed. Antiquarian bookseller Robin Jessop has acquired a strange medieval volume. What appears to be a book is a cleverly disguised safe, in which she finds a single rolled parchment, written in code. For encryption expert David Mallory, the text is impenetrable. Until an invaluable clue opens the door to a conspiracy, stretching back seven centuries. Now Jessop and Mallory find themselves on a desperate hunt that could change history, topple an empire and bury them both alive. Because soon they're not only the hunters. They're also the hunted. An absolutely gripping Templar conspiracy thriller, perfect for fans of Mario Reading, Dan Brown and Scott Mariani. Praise for *The Lost Treasure of the Templars* 'Once you start it is impossible to stop!' Eurocrime 'A thrilling historical mystery full of ingenious clues and unexpected twists' Good Book Guide 'Superbly crafted ... it breaks new ground ... a tightly worded, sharply written thriller' CrimeSquad.com

The Templars were members of a medieval monastic order, later accused of denying Christ and other heresies. The Order was subject to a torturous inquisition period during the 14th century and ultimately dissolved. This is a unique collection of translated sources, which in addition to documenting the origins of the Order and the circumstances of its suppression and dissolution, examines the many and varied facets of its activities during the 12th and 13th centuries. It will be of interest to anyone interested in the medieval period, and is an invaluable source for those wanting to find out more about this most fascinating and enigmatic of institutions.

The definitive account of history's most infamous trial, following the doomed Order of the Knights Templar from scandal to suppression. The trial of the Knights Templar is one of the most infamous in history. Accused of heresy by the king of France, the Templars were arrested and imprisoned, had their goods seized and their monasteries ransacked. Under brutal interrogation and torture, many made shocking confessions: denial of Christ, desecration of the Cross, sex

acts, and more. This narrative follows the everyday reality of the trial, from the early days of scandal and scheming in 1305, via torture, imprisonment and the dissolution of the order, to 1314, when leaders Jacques de Molay and Geoffroy de Charnay were burned at the stake. Through first-hand testimony and written records of the interrogations of 231 French Templars, this book illuminates the stories of hundreds of ordinary members, some of whom testified at the trial, as well as the many others who denied the charges or retracted their confessions. This is a deeply researched and immersive account that gives a striking vision of the relentless persecution, and the oft-underestimated resistance, of the once-mighty Knights Templar.

Third in the Hooked X series, this book explores new scientific findings and recently discovered documents that show a vastly different story of North American history than the current narrative. The revelations in the Cryptic Code are sure to generate new discussion around the medieval Knights Templar, their role in the European exploration of North America, and of the origins of the Hooked X. In Wolter's continued pursuit to understand and authenticate the Kensington Rune Stone, found in Minnesota in 1898, and the important role the Knights Templar had within history, he uncovers the layers of cryptic code that authenticates the Rune Stone once and for all.

- An examination of the interactions of the Christian Knights Templar and their Muslim counterparts, the Assassins, and of the profound changes in Western society that resulted.
- Restores the reputation of the secret Muslim order of the Assassins, disparaged as the world's first terrorist group.
- Dispels many myths about the Knights Templar and provides the most incisive portrait of them to date.

A thousand years ago Christian battled Muslim for possession of a strip of land upon which both their religions were founded. These Crusades changed the course of Western history, but less known is the fact that they also were the meeting ground for two legendary secret societies: The Knights Templar and their Muslim counterparts, the Assassins. In *The Templars and the Assassins: The Militia of Heaven*, occult scholar and secret society member James Wasserman provides compelling evidence that the interaction of the Knights Templar and the Assassins in the Holy Land transformed the Templars from the Pope's private army into a true occult society, from which they would sow the seeds of the Renaissance and the Western Mystery Tradition. Both orders were destroyed as heretical some seven hundred years ago, but Templar survivors are believed to have carried the secret teachings of the East into an occult underground, from which sprang both Rosicrucianism and Masonry. Assassin survivors, known as Nizari Ismailis, flourish to this day under the spiritual leadership of the Aga Khan. Wasserman strips the myths from both groups and penetrates to the heart of their enlightened beliefs and rigorous practices, delivering the most probing picture yet of these holy warriors.

Overturns the long-established historical narrative about the origins and purpose of the Knights Templar • Explains how and why the Templars created Europe's

first nation-state, Portugal, with one of their own as king • Reveals the Portuguese roots of key founding members, their relationship with the Order of Sion, the Templars' devotion to Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist, and the meaning and exact location of the Grail • Provides evidence of Templar holy sites and hidden chambers throughout Portugal • Includes over 700 references, many from new and rare sources

Conventional history claims that nine men formed a brotherhood called the Knights Templar in Jerusalem in 1118 to provide protection for pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land. Overturning this long-established historical narrative, Freddy Silva shows that the Order of the Temple existed a decade earlier on the opposite side of Europe, that the protection of pilgrims was entrusted to a separate organization, and that, in league with the Cistercian monks and the equally mysterious Order of Sion, the Templars executed one of history's most daring and covert plans: the creation of Europe's first nation-state, Portugal, with one of their own as king. Including over 700 references, many from new and rare sources, Silva reveals Portugal, not Jerusalem, as the first Templar stronghold. He shows how there were eleven founding members and how the first king of Portugal, a secret Templar, was related to Bernard de Clairvaux, head of the Cistercians. The author explains the Templars' motivation to create a country far from the grasp of Rome, where they could conduct their living resurrection initiation--whose candidates were declared "risen from the dead"--a secret for which the Church silenced millions and which the Templars protected to the death. Placing the intrepid Knights in a previously unknown time and place, Silva's historical narrative reveals the Portuguese roots of key founding members, their relationship with the Order of Sion, the Templars' unshakeable devotion to Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist, and how they protected a holy bloodline in Portugal. He also provides evidence of secret Templar holy sites, initiation chambers, and hidden passageways throughout Portugal, often coinciding with pagan and Neolithic temples, and explains how their most important site forms a perfect triangle with the Abbey of Mont Sion in Jerusalem and the Osirion temple in Egypt. The author also reappraises the meaning of the Grail and reveals its exact location, hidden in plain sight to this very day.

Both monastic rule and military manual, the Rule is a unique document and an important historical source.

The second volume of the Swedish crusades trilogy, this novel is an atmospheric and colourful journey into the heart of the Middle East, weaving romance and brutal medieval history into a compelling tale.

Barbara Frale gives us an explosive, exhaustively researched history of the medieval world's most powerful military order, the Templars. At its height, the Order of the Knights Templar rivaled the kingdoms of Europe in military might, economic power, and political influence. For 700 years, the tragic demise of this society of warrior-monks amid accusations of heresy has been plagued by controversy, in part because the transcript of their trial by the Inquisition—which

held the key to the truth—had vanished. Templar historian Barbara Frale happened to be studying a document at the Vatican Secret Archives when she suddenly realized that it was none other than the long-lost transcript! It revealed that Pope Clement V had absolved the order of all charges of heresy. The Templars chronicles the spectacular rise and fall of the organization against a sweeping backdrop of war, religious fervor, and the struggle for dominance, and finally lifts the centuries-old cloak of mystery surrounding one of the world's most intriguing secret societies.

A medieval history and author of *The Real History Behind the Da Vinci Code* analyzes the myths, misconceptions, and mysteries of the legendary warrior monks, examining their role in the Crusades, their association with the Holy Grail, accusations of heresy within the order, the truth about a possible treasure, their history and fate, and more. Original.

The dramatic, ultimately tragic history of the Knights Templar, the largest and most powerful military order of the Crusades. Sifting myth from history, Piers Paul Read reveals the Templars - the multinational force of warrior monks, in their white tunics with red crosses over chainmail. They were not only unique among Christian institutions but constituted the first uniformed standing army in the western world and became pioneers of international banking. Expropriated by Philip IV of France in 1307, and confessing under torture to blasphemy, heresy and sodomy, the Order was finally suppressed by Pope Clement V in 1312. In a narrative that incorporates the story of the crusades and the many colourful characters who had links with the Templars, Piers Paul Read examines the question of their guilt and identifies their relevance to our own times.

A Templar legend is revealed as one man's obsession takes him on a globe-spanning quest into the jungles of the Amazon in the new novel from New York Times bestselling author Paul Christopher... Retired Army Ranger John Holliday has thwarted the plots of Rex Deus, the twenty-first-century incarnation of the Templars, all over the world. Now, the lost journal of explorer Percy Fawcett leads Holliday into the South American jungles—and a Templar mystery... Trailed by an infamous tomb raider and menaced by a tribe of hostile natives, Holliday and his crew uncover a five-hundred-year-old society hidden in the cauldron of the Amazon. Descendants of the Templar Knights, they exist for one reason: to hide and protect the holy artifact taken from the original Temple of Jerusalem by the first Templars: the legendary Ark of the Covenant.

On 18 March 1314, Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, was burned at the stake. For almost two centuries, the knights of the Order of the Temple had flourished during the Crusades in Palestine and Syria, and in the West, notably in France. But in 1307, the Templars in France were arrested by King Philip IV's officials in the name of the Inquisition, their property seized and the men charged with serious heresies, including the denial of Christ, homosexuality and idol worship. Confessions, extracted under torture, were brought before royal and papal tribunals, but in 1310 a number of Templar

brothers mounted a defence of their Order, refuelling the controversies which continued for a further four years before the final executions. Malcolm Barber's fascinating account, assessing the charges brought against the Order, once again puts the Templars on trial.

The deadliest weapon is the truth After a life on the front lines, Army Ranger John Holliday is now teaching at West Point Military Academy. But when his uncle passes away, Holliday discovers a medieval sword among his things - sinisterly wrapped in Adolf Hitler's personal battle standard. Then someone viciously burns down his uncle's house and Holliday's secret fears about the mysterious sword ring alarmingly true. Holliday must delve into the past and piece together the puzzle that was his uncle's life - his involvement with the enigmatic warriors known as the Knight's Templar. But his search for answers soon becomes a race against a ruthless and cunning opponent, willing to die for their cause. Can Holliday live long enough to reveal the treacherous but critical truth?

Even 700 years after the suppression of the Order of the Temple and the execution of the last grandmaster, Jacques de Molay, there is no shortage of publications on this influential military order. Yet unlike other medieval institutions the Templars are subject to speculative fiction and popular myth which threaten to swamp the fruits of scholarly endeavour. Fortunately, recent years have produced a thriving academic scholarship which is challenging these myths. More and more sources are currently being edited, particularly those for the trial of the Templars (1307–1312). Others are still awaiting indepth study, among them, surprisingly, the greater part of the charters that cover more than 150 years of the Order's history. The papers in this volume step into this gap and critically evaluate new directions in Templar studies on the basis of as-yet unedited source material. Open issues and desiderata regarding the sources are discussed and from a range of inspiring results a new status quaestionis is proposed that will not only provide a better understanding of the Order's archaeological, economical, religious, administrative and military history, but also set new points of departure for the editing of charters and administrative documents. The papers here are grouped into six sections, focusing on the headquarters of the Order, its charters, manpower and finance, religious life and finally the suppression and the Order's afterlife.

As the oldest of the military religious orders and the one with an unexpected and dramatic downfall, the knighthood of the Templars continues to fascinate academics and students as well as the public at large. A collection of fifteen chapters accompanied by a historical introduction, *The Templars: The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of a Military Religious Order* recounts and analyzes this community's rise and establishment in both the crusader states of the eastern Mediterranean and the countries of western Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reflects on the proceedings launched against it and its subsequent fall (1307–1314), and explores its medieval and post-medieval legacy, including an

assessment of current research pertaining to the Templars and suggestions for future explorations. Showcasing a wide range of methodological approaches and primary source materials, this volume unites historical, art-historical, theological, archaeological, and historiographical perspectives, and it features the work and voices of scholars from various academic generations who reside in eight different countries (Israel, France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, and the United States of America).

An order of warrior monks founded after the First Crusade to protect pilgrims to Jerusalem, the Templars developed into one of the wealthiest and most powerful bodies in the medieval world. Yet two centuries later, the Knights were suddenly arrested and accused of blasphemy, heresy and orgies, their order was abolished, and their leaders burnt at the stake. Their dramatic end shocked their contemporaries and has gripped peoples' imaginations ever since. This new book explains the whole context of Templar history, including, for the first time, the new evidence discovered by the Vatican that the Templars were not guilty of heresy. It covers the whole swathe of Templar history, from its origins in the mysteries of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem through to the nineteenth century development of the Freemasons. The book also features a guide to Templar castles and sites, and coverage of the Templars in books, movies and popular culture, from Indiana Jones to the Xbox360 game Assassin's Creed.

The Knights Templar were the wealthiest, most powerful – and most secretive – of the military orders that flourished in the crusading era. Their story – encompassing as it does the greatest international conflict of the Middle Ages, a network of international finance, a swift rise in wealth and influence followed by a bloody and humiliating fall – has left a comet's tail of mystery that continues to fascinate and inspire historians, novelists and conspiracy theorists.

The most powerful military religious order of the Middle Ages and their sacred treasure. For a certain period in history, the Knights Templar—the most powerful military religious order of the Middle Ages—secretly guarded the Shroud of Turin. Worshipped in a relentlessly secret manner, and known in its intimate nature by only a handful of the order's officials, the swathe of fabric was kept in the central treasury of the Knights Templar, who were known for their expertise in the field of relics. The precious cloth's history and whereabouts were known only to the highest dignitaries of the secretive order. In an era of widespread doctrinal confusion in much of the Church, the Templars considered the Shroud to be a powerful antidote against the proliferation of heresies. Easy to read and thoroughly researched, this book tracks the Templars from their inception as warrior-monks protecting religious pilgrims to the later fascination with their secret rituals and incredible wealth, which ultimately led to their dissolution and the seizing of their assets. Following the Shroud's pathway through the Middle Ages, Vatican historian Barbara Frale has gone back in time, to the dawn of the Christian era, to provide a new perspective on the controversial relic. The author also includes several photos of the Shroud itself that reveal in startling detail a

human face, mysterious writing, and marks of a crucifixion that many have claimed identify it as the true burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth.

From Michael Haag, bestselling author of *The Templars: The History and the Myth*, comes *The Tragedy of the Templars*, an exciting new look at the rise of Templar power and the saga of their destruction. Founded on Christmas Day 1119 in Jerusalem, the Knights Templar was a religious order dedicated to defending the Holy Land and its Christian pilgrims in the decades after the First Crusade. Legendary for their bravery and dedication, the Templars became one of the wealthiest and most powerful bodies of the medieval world—and the chief defenders of Christian society against growing Muslim forces. In *The Tragedy of the Templars: The Rise and Fall of the Crusader States*, Haag masterfully details the conflicts and betrayals that sent this faction of powerful knights spiraling from domination to condemnation. This stirring and thoroughly researched work of historical investigation includes maps and full-color photographs of important cultural sites, many of which doubled as battlefields during the Crusades.

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