



The Temple Rule of 1129 AD:

A Complete Study from the French and Latin Manuscripts

A Source Translation of the Primitive Latin Rule
of Saint Bernard de Clairvaux for the Knights Templar
Council of Troyes 1129 AD

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Introduction to the Temple Rule

Modern Relevance of the Temple Rule

The Temple Rule is essentially the “constitution” of the original Order of the Temple of Solomon, as the historical institution of the Knights Templar from 1118 AD. It served as a “charter”, mostly governing the monastic life of the Knights, and established the founding principles of the Order. Thus, it is perhaps the best evidence in the historical record of the authentic beliefs, philosophy and doctrines of the Knights Templar.

In the modern era, there persists a movement of “cultural Templarism” worldwide. However, modern Templarism still needs to be reconnected with the original and authentic doctrinal principles of the medieval Templar Order. For the Temple Rule to be fully understood so it can be applied in our daily lives, it requires an in-depth exploration of the original text.

Meticulous translation and careful analysis of the Temple Rule is necessary to look beyond popularized misconceptions of the Knights Templar, and to correct mistranslations which inevitably result from contemporary cultural biases:

Although many of the Rules superficially appear to be outdated, key details and nuances of their Old French and original Latin texts reveal that they hold more relevance in modern life than we might expect. Indeed, when brought back into the context of their more fundamental underlying principles, many of the Rules actually embody core concepts which are compatible with modern practice. Accordingly, much of what we would want to “modernize” in the Temple Rule is already found within its authentic medieval Rules.

For this purpose, the present academic study of the 12th century document is provided, for all those interested in cultural Templarism to benefit from its wisdom, and to achieve mastery of its doctrinal principles.

Origins of the Medieval Temple Rule

This is the authenticated text of the historical Temple Rule of the founding Knights Templar. It is considered to be based upon the Benedictine Rule, modified by the Cistercian Rule, as used by Saint Bernard for his own Cistercian Order. Consisting of the original 72 Rules, it is also known by historians as the “Latin Rule” or the “Primitive Rule”.

The Latin Rule is widely referred to as having "72 Rules", although the full text actually contains 76 numbered Rules. This is because Rule 73 is only an ending statement that the Grand Master administers the 72 preceding Rules, and because Rules 74-76 only list various religious holidays and feast dates, which are not really "rules".

This legacy version of the Temple Rule was developed by Saint Bernard de Clairvaux, together with the first Grand Master Hughes de Payens, from ca. 1120 AD. Historians attribute the year it was "written" to 1128 AD, confirming the fact that it existed and was used as the founding constitution and charter of the Order before it was endorsed by the Vatican at the Council of Troyes in 1129 AD.

As the historian Judith Upton-Ward pointed out, "it must not be forgotten that the Order had been in existence for several years and had built up its own traditions and customs before Hughes de Payens' appearance at the Council of Troyes. To a considerable extent, then, the Primitive Rule is based upon existing practices." [1]

Under the 2nd Grand Master Robert de Crayon, the Temple Rule was translated into Old French ca. 1138 AD, and then was expanded with additional "Hierarchical Rules" which increased it to 609 Rules by ca. 1149 AD. It was then further expanded up to 685 Rules during the 13th century. Nevertheless, the original 72 Rules always remained the core principles which the Knights Templar lived by.

Authoritative Translation of the Temple Rule

This edition contains the authoritative English translation of the Temple Rule by Prince Matthew of Thebes. It was translated directly from the scholarly translation from Latin into Old French by Henry de Curzon in 1886 AD. This translation was also made with reference to the original Latin manuscripts as preserved by La Société de L'Histoire de France in the Librairie Renouard in Paris.

It should be noted that the present translation addresses and clarifies several common mistranslations which have become somewhat popularized. In fairness to some excellent historians who have made valiant efforts, it must be said that such mistranslations are innocent, arising only from some practical realities:

Mistranslations typically occur because of the great difficulty in working with Old French, most of which cannot be referenced in any dictionaries of modern French, and can only be reconstructed by reverse etymology. Likewise, they arise from the difficulty in working with Vatican Latin, which requires extensive knowledge of its ecclesiastical and canonical context. These challenges are greatly exacerbated when faced with original calligraphic handwriting on faded parchments.

Professional translators typically must be concerned with quickly revealing the general meaning of the document, often among large volumes of other documents. A translator thus cannot reasonably be expected to anticipate the profound importance of the most subtle nuances, and how they might have indirect and far-reaching implications for diverse highly specialized areas of historical, legal and ecclesiastical scholarship.

The present translation of the Temple Rule generally follows the sentence structures of the original manuscripts. Accordingly, some degree of wordiness is tolerated, in favor of preserving many linguistic nuances which substantially contribute to authenticity of the original meaning of the rules. Thus, some convenience of readability is sacrificed for the greater benefit of detailed accuracy.

This painstaking precision allows for the most reliable analysis, by quoting a translation which has best preserved the true intent of the medieval authors. It also brings out greater clarity of the philosophy and meaning of the historical words which were the foundations of the Knights Templar. Overall, this generally increases readability, as the clarity of meaning avoids distraction or confusion, allowing the text to flow in the reader's mind.

Many key parts of this translation include the original words [in brackets] from the source languages, indicating Old French ("Fr.") or Latin ("Lat."). This is used wherever the authenticated translation reveals a surprising or unexpected meaning, or where it significantly differs from other popularized translations. This provides full transparency to allow easy verification of the authenticity of this translation.

The original text of the Latin Rule is presented in colored font (dark red). Editorial emphasis (underline) is added for reference of significant parts. Annotations (in black font) are added for relevant explanations and academic commentary.

To the extent possible, the commentary includes summaries of cross-references between a Rule and other closely related Rules. This approach results in repetition of some sentences in different parts of this edition, but is done for the sake of convenience of reference. This provides a more complete understanding of each part, allowing the reader to see a brief overview of supporting Rules, when looking at any one Rule on a particular topic.

As a result of all of the above, the present edition is designed to be an exhaustive study of all important aspects and nuances of the Temple Rule which have relevance in modern times. This is intended to provide the most comprehensive guide to practical application of the authentic principles of the original Knights Templar in our daily lives.

“Lost History” as the Key to Unlock the Temple Rule

Several major themes are expressed and repeated throughout the Temple Rule, which have mostly gone unnoticed by historians and translators. Such themes can only be detected, and understood, in the context of an essential area of “lost history”, which goes to the core of the fundamental essence of the original Templar Order. Awareness of the relevant historical facts causes those major themes to be revealed, suddenly appearing as self-evident. Accordingly, this area of “lost history” serves as the “key” to “unlock” the richness of many surprising secrets which were buried within the Temple Rule.

Here is a brief summary and condensed overview of that “lost history”:

The Templar Order was originally founded as a Holy mission for the Cistercian Order, specifically to recover ancient scriptures from the historical Temple of Solomon [2] [3]. Archaeology has proven that the Temple contained a library of sacred scrolls [4], placed there by the 1st century Essenes [5], who had direct access to that Temple [6]. The Order was thus based upon recovering copies of the Gnostic scriptures of the Essenes [7].

Those sacred scriptures supported the Templar belief that Mary Magdalene was a “Gnostic Apostle” of Jesus, consistent with Saint Augustine having recognized her as “Apostle to the Apostles” [8].

As a result of this history, the Knights Templar were characterized by a strong emphasis on the role of women in the Church, such that Templar ecclesiastical practices often highlighted the feminine aspect of God.

The ancient Priesthood which the Knights recovered from the Temple of Solomon, which Jesus the Nazarene Essene had studied in Egypt, and of which Jesus was a High Priest, featured spiritual practices involving meditation [9]. That tradition of the Essenes originated from the Djedhi Priesthood of Pharaonic Egypt, which specialized in mastering the flow of Holy Spirit energies, primarily through intensive meditation [10].

As a result of discovering that esoteric heritage of early Christianity, the Knights Templar adopted a tradition of combining frequent intensive meditation with their routines of religious prayer.

Authoritative historians have confirmed that the Temple of Solomon was in fact the archaeological site of the Temple of the Biblical King Solomon [11], and that it was actually an ancient Pharaonic Egyptian Temple [12] [13] [14]. It is also established as a historical fact that the founding Knights Templar stayed mostly underground in the Temple Mount, conducting archaeological excavation of the Temple of Solomon for nine full years [15] [16].

The Vatican has always recognized that such archaeology is of primary importance to the underlying roots of Christianity, leading to creating the Gregorian Egyptian Museum in the Vatican in 1837 AD, to facilitate deeper understanding of Catholicism [17].

As a result of these foundations, the Knights Templar had fully recovered, and eventually fully restored, the ancient Priesthood of Solomon, consisting of the underlying origins of Christianity which became Catholicism. This unique religious heritage, possessed exclusively by the Templar Order, became the Templar Priesthood.

The Temple Rule, which is also a Vatican Papal Decree by its ratification at the Council of Troyes in 1129 AD, contains key phrases which evidence recognition of the inherent ecclesiastical authority of the Templar Priesthood, treating it as its own denomination within Catholicism.

In addition, 3 Papal Bulls – by 3 separate Popes – recognized the sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as having its own independent Pontifical authority as a denomination of Catholicism: Omne Datum Optimum of 1139 AD [18], confirmed by Milites Templi of 1144 AD [19], and Militia Dei of 1145 AD [20].

With this awareness and deeper understanding as the authentic context of the Templar Order, we now turn to an overview of the primary themes which are revealed in this academic translation of the Temple Rule.

Summary of Doctrines Established by the Temple Rule

Many essential themes emerge from a detailed study of the Temple Rule, which are developed throughout this historic document. Such themes evidence certain doctrines and principles, which are established by different aspects contained within various Rules. When their parts are simply combined, each theme is revealed with full clarity of its substance.

The predominant themes are presented in this section, as a summary of each key topic of related Rules. This can be used as a form of "Index" of cross-references between interrelated Rules, to facilitate deeper scholarship. Otherwise, the summary itself provides a brief and simplified overview of these themes which were most important to the founding Knights Templar.

Chivalric Order of Full Legitimacy in Nobility

Since its inception in 1118 AD, the Templar Order was founded under the sovereign royal patronage of the Kings of Jerusalem, thus possessing titled Knighthood in nobility. Accordingly, it was never a mere fraternity, was never a self-proclaimed force, and never used Knighthood merely as a self-styled title, but rather was an official chivalric Order in full legitimacy under customary law and canon law:

This is evidenced by Rule 1 that the Knights Templar "serve in chivalry with the sovereign King", and Rule 9 that they are "servants of the sovereign King... according to canonical law and the customs of the... City of Jerusalem."

Templars Different from Crusades and Not Against Muslims

Authentically, the original Templars rejected the idea of the "Crusades" as being to kill Muslims or eradicate Islam, but rather understood that Muslims were not necessarily enemies, and that the real "enemies of Christ" could be even evil-doers pretending to be Christians:

This is confirmed by Rule 2 criticizing that the Crusades "did not do what it should, that is to defend... but strove to plunder, despoil and kill", Rule 14 that the only real purpose of Templar warfare was to "remove from the land enemies of Christ", not to kill Muslims, and Rule 57 which in the original Latin says only to "strike" enemies, proving no specific intent to kill. This is further supported by the later Rule 630 (added during the 13th century), which specifically allows Templar Knights to "enter into another religion", declaring a principle of no-conflict and non-competition with Islam.

Recognition of the Templar Priesthood as a Religion

As a Papal Decree ratified by the Vatican Council of Troyes, the Temple Rule recognized the Knights Templar as being founded within and based upon its own religion:

This is established by Rule 2 calling the Order a "Holy Communion" in its own right, describing it as "this Religion" which gave rise to its "knighthood", Rule 14 calling it "the Religion of Knighthood", and Rule 57 calling it a "type of new Religion", a "Religion of Knights" and also "Religion by armed Knighthood", and Rule 71 using the phrase "in every religion" as including the Templar Order.

Recognition of the Templar Priesthood as a Denomination

By this Papal Decree ratified by the Vatican, the Templar Priesthood was recognized as its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism:

This is confirmed by Rule 7 describing the Templars under the Grand Master as "Disciples" confirming its own religious tradition, Rule 8 which in Old Latin actually mentions the "Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon" indicating its own Pontifical authority, Rule 9 describing ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as "divine service.. being dressed with the crown", Rule 62 declaring the Grand Mastery to be exercising its own ecclesiastical authority, and Rule 64 describing "servants of the Church" as under command of the Grand Master, confirming independent Pontifical authority of the Templar Order.

The Council of Troyes recognized that the Templar Order was founded upon its own ecclesiastical authority, considering it to be founded by direct Holy authority from God, and not by the Vatican:

This is expressed in Rule 1 which describes the Templars as "whom God has chosen... and has ordained", Rule 3 that the Order "was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit", and Rule 41 which refers to the Order as "ordained by God".

As a result of these key provisions of the Temple Rule, under the modern Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law, the Templar Order can be understood as a major ecclesiastical institution, very different from being a mere chivalric Order of Knights:

The Templar Grand Mastery constitutes a “competent ecclesiastical authority” as a Holy Synod of Bishops (Canon 114, §§1-3, Canon 115, §2, Canon 116, §1); The Templar Priesthood is a “public juridical subject of canon law” (Canon 113, §2, Canon 116, §§1-2), possessing its own Pontifical authority (Canon 215) for its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism; The Temple Rule serves as the original ecclesiastical Charter ratifying the inherent Pontifical authority of the Templar denomination of Christianity (Canon 116, §2, Canon 118); The Templar Order is inherently and canonically “perpetual” (Canon 120, §1) as a permanent historical institution, fully exercising its own ecclesiastical “power of jurisdiction” (Canon 129, §1).

All of the above described official proclamations, ratified by Papal authority of the Vatican, establish that the Templar Order was primarily formed as its own ancient Priesthood of Solomon. This means that the Knights were essentially dedicated to preserving that Templar Priesthood as a denomination of Ancient Catholicism:

This is confirmed by Rule 2 that the Templar Priesthood must be “guarded purely and durably”, and Rule 8 that the foundations of the Templar Priesthood “must not be forgotten, and... must be guarded firmly”.

Vatican Recognition Based Upon Full Disclosure

Vatican recognition of the “religion”, and of the independent ecclesiastical authority of the Templar Priesthood as a denomination, was based upon a full and transparent presentation of the ancient priestly foundations of the Order:

This is witnessed by Rule 3 that “the manner and establishment of the Order of Knighthood we heard”, Rule 7 that the Templars “presented... the customs and observances of their humble beginnings... to make all known”, and Rule 8 that the priestly origins were fully “considered and examined through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures.

Emphasis of the Feminine Aspect of God in Templar Spirituality

As a historic document, the Temple Rule also proves that the Knights Templar were dedicated to honoring the spiritual feminine aspect of God, and that this was accepted and supported by the Vatican:

This is evidenced by Rule 2 emphasizing “Our Lady of God” in equal balance with Jesus, using the unique Old French word “Damedieu”, which specifically represents the feminine aspect of God, Rule 16 referring to all prayer times as “the hours of Our Lady of God”, in the original Latin identifying “Our Lady” as the “Saint” Mary (and not the “Virgin” or “Mother”), emphasizing Saint Mary Magdalene as a Gnostic Apostle of Jesus, and Rule 64 declaring that the Templar Priests serve by “the authority of Our Lady of God”.

Intensive Spiritual Meditation as a Templar Tradition

A Templar discipline of intensive prayerful meditation is evidenced by the Temple Rule, which establishes a Templar tradition to engage in daily spiritual meditation at every opportunity:

This is evident in Rule 29 to “all times... give thanks to God in silence” every day, Rule 31 to “go silently and quietly” every evening, Rule 32 prohibiting “idle words” and favoring quiet at every opportunity, Rule 49 to avoid “idle words” and generally “refrain from speaking... and observe silence”, and Rule 63 encouraging focused prayers “day and night” as frequent meditation. This is further supported by Rules 26-27 establishing the Templar diet to be 85% vegetarian (which facilitates meditation), in the context of Rule 9 that the Templars should be nourished by the spiritual “meat from God”.

It is interesting that the medieval concept of “heresy”, as was used to criticize Templar practices such as Gnosticism, meditation and emphasis on the feminine face of God, has been effectively eliminated by the modern Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law:

The recognition by Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome in 418 AD that ancient religion as “true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian” [21], which “established anew the ancient Faith” [22], make the Templar Priesthood canonically part of Catholicism as the “common and constant opinion of learned authors” (Canon 19);

Ancient “immemorial customs” from the origins of Christianity and related “centennial customs” of the Templar Priesthood are incorporated into modern Catholicism (Canon 26), and cannot be revoked (Canon 28) as long as they are “reasonable” (Canon 24, §2); Freedom of liturgy and “the right to follow their own form of spiritual life” is required (Canon 214).

Scholarly Studies for Pursuit of the Truth

Apart from its chivalric and ecclesiastical aspects, the Templar Order was also a major center for teaching and learning, of diverse areas of knowledge, thereby providing many functions of a "university". Despite the prevailing illiteracy of the medieval era, the Templars strongly encouraged and promoted scholarly studies:

This is supported by Rule 1 presenting "studious purification" by learning as a path to developing spiritual merits of Knighthood, Rule 6 praising the work of the Council of Troyes "by refined and studious hearts", describing "lovers of Truth" seeking purification through scholarship, Rule 8 that the Council "considered" all matters "through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures", and Rule 9 commanding "during periods of time, [to] study universally", specifically by scholarly studies, "that you forego the deceiving world and despise it".

Accordingly, the tradition of authentic Templarism is deeply rooted in scholarly studies as a path to spiritual purification, through the active pursuit of Truth. This evidences that upholding the principle and value of Truth itself is an essential part of Templar chivalry.

Wisdom as the Essential Principle of Templar Values

It was an important part of Templar culture, that all knightly activities should be pursued in the context of wisdom. All Knights were expected to seek out, and to strive to embody and visibly represent, the values of wisdom:

This tradition is expressed in Rule 8 which highlights that the Council of Troyes made all decisions by "advices which were sought... with the wisdom of... [the] Pope" together with the Templars. That is supported by Rule 14 requiring new Knights to "be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master", Rule 36 that only "those who the Master knows to have wisdom" can be called to advise the Grand Mastery, and Rule 37 instructing to always "set an example of good works and wisdom".

Justice as the Essential Principle of Templar Missions

Underpinning all Templar missions and quests was a fundamental commitment to the principles of Justice. All Knights were required to be Defenders of Justice, and were commanded to uphold and represent Justice:

This is established in Rule 2 which dedicates the Order to “the love of Justice which constitutes its duties”, Rule 47 requiring that all wrongdoing must be punished “for the love of Justice” to protect the innocent, Rule 57 to “govern Justly” and “take your rights” only as “specifically established” by law, and Rule 59 commanding “for love of Truth... to Judge the matter” by serving as Judges over disputes whenever requested.

Strength Used Only to Protect and Uphold the Weak

One of the essential principles of Templarism is the doctrine that one’s strength must never be used to interfere with nor take advantage of the weak:

This is featured in Rule 15 commanding “as much to the strong as to the weak” to “not disturb” others, Rule 34 declaring that “no person shall be elevated” and the strong must “give thanks to God” for it and care for the weak, Rule 38 that “God holds both the strong and the weak equal” such that the strong must never abuse the weak, and prohibiting to “incite another... to wrath or anger”, thus never to use one’s strength to be an aggressor nor instigate provocation, and Rule 46 that no person “strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually... remain unpunished”.

Women Included with Respect and Balance

Certain facts in the historical record, and several key parts of the Temple Rule, reveal that women were included in significant participation with the Templar Order. Women were accommodated by means of a reasonable degree of separation, to ensure respect for modesty of the women, respect for avoiding temptation of the men, and to provide for balance in harmony:

This is supported by Rule 70 that women should not be actively recruited as a “practice” and “custom”, and should not live in Templar premises together with the men, while allowing them to be admitted as an exception. While Rule 71 instructs the Knights only to “avoid... to kiss any women”, it does not exclude women from membership in the Order.

Proving that some women were admitted to the Order as Dames, Rule 72 requires Templars to “refuse to be godfathers or godmothers”, and the later Rule 679 allows Knights to receive services of a woman for care during illness, but also for any other reason if permission is granted.

Evidencing that Templar Knights were allowed to freely marry women as their wives and thus Templar Dames, the later Rule 630 provides that if one goes out and “takes a woman as a wife”, it would “do no harm if he returns” to the Templar monastery. Once married, Rule 69 only requires the Knight to modestly avoid flaunting the comforts of one’s marriage, and to be seen making major contributions unhindered by the worldly demands of marriage.

Simplicity, Modesty and Humility as Purity

In the medieval tradition of monastic orders, the Knights Templar were required to live a life of simplicity, modesty and humility, as a form of purity. Such purity of simplicity was the necessary style and manner of all aspects of their behavior, appearance and self-expression:

This is established by Rule 15 requiring “restraint” and “moderation”, and to behave “simply and without loudness”, Rule 17 that “simplicity” of one’s clothing and appearance “signifies purity”, Rule 23 to eat “with all humility and submission of reverence”, and Rule 55 commanding to “go simply and humbly”.

Avoiding Excess to Focus on Discipline

In the culture of authentic Templarism, “excess” in one’s behavior and appearance is considered an undesirable sign of some sinful vice, usually assumed to be that of pride. The disciplined focus of reasonableness was desirable at all times, to avoid distraction from one’s sacred knightly missions. Accordingly, it was required to avoid any and all forms or expressions of excess, as an essential cultural value:

This is confirmed by Rule 21 to keep one’s appearance “so that no excess of vice could be noted”, Rule 22 prohibiting “nor to have excess of hair nor robes of length”, Rule 30 that wine must be given “reasonably” and “should not be taken in excess”, and Rule 37 requiring “to live without excess of food and drink”.

Pride Must be Shunned as the Instrument of Evil

One of the greatest sins detested by the Knights Templar is that of pride, as pride only inflates the ego, which is the primary manifestation of the Devil. The Templar Order always strictly required that all forms of pride, and all manners of any such egotism, must be shunned and vehemently rejected as the instruments of evil.

This is required by Rule 18 that Knights must be “without any arrogance and without any show of pride”, Rule 19 forbidding any “pride or arrogance”, and Rule 34 that “no person shall be elevated among you” and to “not become proud” even in one’s expressions of apparent humility. This is further confirmed by Rule 46 that the only thing worse than committing an offense is to “become proud and defend” it, or “to pride himself in it”, requiring a “harsher punishment”, Rule 49 that “idle words” spoken in “self pride” are “sinfulness” incurring “the harsh judgment of Jesus Christ”, and Rule 52 forbidding to have “an ornate bridle” or “gold or silver on his bridle” or equipment, nor any “resplendent beauty... seen by others, nor pride”.

Defamation Must be Opposed as the Wickedness of the Devil

Perhaps the most egregious sin most despised by the Knights Templar is that of defamation, essentially the devious practice traditionally known as “character assassination”. Attacking another by defamatory accusations and inflammatory rumours is inherently driven by the sin of pride, from immoral puffing of the ego, and is the worst possible form of it.

This doctrine is proclaimed in Rule 48 strictly prohibiting “rumour”, “slander”, to “malign” or “disparage others” as being the “wickedness of the Devil”. That is supported by Rule 32 forbidding “idle words” as being “not without sin”, as they often lead to rumour and defamation, Rule 38 prohibiting to “incite another... to wrath or anger”, which is the primary effect of defamation as a wrongfully aggressive provocation, and Rule 49 forbidding “speaking evil” which by definition includes defamation.

The Templar Order always taught that speaking evil by disparaging others is the direct manifestation of the Devil itself, and that people who engaged in such offense are themselves the “enemies of Christ” whom the Templars were sworn to fight against.

Now, with the perspective of this overview of major themes and doctrines which characterize the Templar Order, we turn to a thorough and detailed analysis of the translation of the Temple Rule, based upon the original Latin text, supported by the Old French manuscripts.

Here begins the Prologue to the Rule of the Temple

Rule 1. We speak firstly to all those who despising the isolation [Fr. segre, Lat. summo] of their own wills and desiring with a pure heart to serve in chivalry with the sovereign King, and by studious purification [Fr. cure] desiring to fill in [Fr. aemplir] and fulfilling [Fr. aemplissent] permanently the very noble armour of obedience. And therefore we admonish you, you who have led lives of secular knighthood until now, in which Jesus Christ was not the cause, but only for human favor you had embraced it, that you follow those whom God has chosen from the mass of perdition and has ordained [Fr. a ordenés] by his gracious compassion for the defense of the Holy Church, and that you hasten to join unto them perpetually.

From this famous first Rule, some translations have popularized the phrase “despise their own will”. However, such a concept was not part of authentic Templarism, as the Knights Templar were defenders of free will, exercising great will power as individuals.

It is interesting to discover that the original text actually says “despising the isolation of their own wills”. The Old French word is “segre”, which later became the root word for “segregation” meaning “separation”, and the original Latin word used was “summo” meaning the highest point, as in the “isolation” of the peak of a mountain.

This concept of “despising the isolation of their own wills” is most revealing of the personal motivation of the early Knights Templar: They were frustrated with the social isolation of being rare individuals of strong will, and therefore desired to unite in the companionship and strength of their collective wills, channeling their individual wills into a common cause.

Another common mistranslation has been the phrase “desiring to wear the armor of obedience”. Despite this being a metaphorical armor of “obedience”, the implication of “desiring to wear” armor would still appear (albeit symbolically) to violate the spirit of Rule 18, Rule 19, Rule 52 and Rule 68 prohibiting “pride” in robes and accessories.

It is interesting that in the original text, instead of “to wear”, the Old French words used were “aemplir” meaning to “fill in”, and “aemplissent” meaning “fulfilling”. This is given deeper context by the word “cure”, as in curing leather (which became the modern French word “cuir” for leather), meaning cleansing or “purification”.

Therefore, the original phrase is “by studious purification desiring to fill in and fulfilling... the noble armor of obedience.” This is highly revealing of the authentic spiritual philosophy of the founding Knights Templar:

Their metaphorical “noble armor” is not simply “worn” as just something to put on, but rather the Knight must “fill in” its high expectations, as something to live up to, and must “fulfill” its noble ideals. That is accomplished by a process of “studious” spiritual “purification”, by which the Knight must make himself worthy of the Holy Order of Knighthood.

This theme of “studious” learning, as a path to developing spiritual merits of a Knight, is supported by Rule 6 praising the work of the Council of Troyes “by refined and studious hearts”, and Rule 9 commanding “during periods of time, [to] study universally”, specifically by academic scholarly studies to develop new knowledge and skills.

On another topic, the reference to “desiring... to serve in chivalry with the sovereign King”, in the context of previously being in “secular knighthood”, is very revealing of a historical fact of the foundations of legal legitimacy of the Templar Order. This clearly specifies an arrangement of knightly service under the secular Kingdom of Jerusalem. Indeed, this Rule says “sovereign King”, and not “divine” or “heavenly” King, confirming that this means a temporal King of secular royalty.

This is further supported by Rule 9 that the Templars are “servants of the sovereign King... according to canonical law and the customs of the... City of Jerusalem.

This reference evidences the fact that the Templar Order was initially founded under the sovereign royal patronage of King Baldwin II in 1118 AD, which was reconfirmed and formalized at the Council of Nablus in 1120 AD [23], before the Vatican later gave additional ecclesiastical patronage by endorsing the Temple Rule in 1129 AD.

The confirmation of royal patronage in Rule 1 proves that the Order was never a mere fraternity, was never a self-proclaimed force, and never used Knighthood merely as a self-styled title. Rather, under the rules of chivalry under customary law and canon law, the Order was founded in full legitimacy, possessing official authority to grant titled Knighthood in Nobility.

Describing the concept that “God has chosen” the Knights Templar for “defense of the Holy Church” has a deeper meaning and wider significance in the context of true Templar history. It is revealing that it states the Knights were chosen for this by God, and not by the Church:

This indicates that the Church which the Knights were chosen to defend was actually not the Vatican, but rather its own "Church" of the ancient Templar Priesthood of the Biblical Solomon. It is that Priesthood which the founding Knights excavated and recovered from the Temple of Solomon, which the Order itself was named after, and which the Knights were sworn to preserve and defend.

The Temple of Solomon contained the most ancient Priesthood of the Biblical Magi of Melchizedek, which embodies the underlying foundations and origins of all major world religions. Therefore, the Knights Templar were not simply "defenders of the Church", but rather were the Defenders of Faith, to protect and advance the principle of religion and spirituality itself, in all its forms.

Confirming that the Templar Order was essentially its own Priesthood, is the phrase "those whom God has chosen... and has ordained". The Old French term used is "a ordonés", which specifically means religious ordination as canonical Holy Orders of Clergy. Again, it is significant that the Templars are described as "ordained" directly by God, and not by the Church. The act of joining the Templar Order is thus clearly described as ordination into its own autonomous Priesthood.

This is supported by Rule 3 that the Order "was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit", and Rule 41 referring to the Order as "ordained by God".

Rule 2. Before all things, whosoever would be a Knight of Christ, choosing such Holy Communion, strained by your profession, must apply pure diligence and firm perseverance, which is so dignified and so Holy, and so noble and known to be, that if it is guarded purely and durably, you will deserve to hold company among the martyrs who gave their souls for Jesus Christ.

It is interesting that the Templar Order is described as itself being a "Holy Communion", a technical term of canon law indicating that it is a Priesthood in its own right. Accordingly, the phrase "choosing such Holy Communion" describes the act of becoming a Templar Knight as entering into the Clergy, or serving in spiritual communion with, a Priesthood.

This Rule mandates that the Order, described as a Holy institution of Priesthood, must be "guarded purely and durably". This evidences that the Templars were dedicated to being guardians of the Priesthood of the Temple of Solomon, to preserve its doctrinal purity, and ensure its longevity as a permanent historical institution for the benefit of humanity.

This theme that the ancient wisdom is so highly valued that it must be actively guarded, is supported by Rule 8 that the Order's foundations in Holy Scriptures "must not be forgotten, and... must be guarded firmly."

The importance of wisdom is supported by Rule 14 requiring new Knights to “be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master”, Rule 36 that only “those who the Master knows to have wisdom” can advise the Grand Mastery, and Rule 37 instructing to “set an example of good works and wisdom”.

In this Religion [Fr. religion] has flourished and is revitalised this Order of Knighthood. Which other knighthood despised the love of Justice that constitutes its duties and did not do what it should, that is to defend the poor, widows, orphans and churches, but strove to plunder, despoil and kill. The good works of Our Lady of God [Fr. Damedieu] are with us, and our saviour Jesus Christ; He has sent his friends from the Holy City of Jerusalem, on the path to France and to Burgundy, those who for our salvation and for spreading belief in the true faith do not cease to offer their souls to God, a pleasing sacrifice.

In this Rule the Templar Order is specifically identified as a “Religion”. It clarifies the perspective of the original Knights, that the Order was created and founded “in this Religion”. Although the Templars were widely considered “warrior monks”, this clarifies that it was not some Priesthood within a chivalric Order, but rather that the Order was founded within the context of and upon the foundations of its own Religion.

That the Templar Order was recognized as its own religion, is supported by Rule 14 calling it “the Religion of Knighthood”, Rule 57 calling it a “type of new Religion”, a “Religion of Knights” and also “Religion by armed Knighthood”, and Rule 71 using the phrase “in every religion” as including the Templar Order.

Of course, since the Templar Order was in fact part of Catholicism and in communion with the Vatican, technically its Priesthood is not a whole different “religion”, but would properly be called a “denomination” of Christianity. Since this is the ancient Priesthood of the Essenes as restored from the Temple of the Biblical Solomon by the Knights Templar, it would be most accurately called the denomination of Ancient Catholicism.

Looking behind another popularized mistranslation, “God works well with us”, leads us to another discovery which is highly revealing of authentic Templar spirituality. The original phrase was actually written as “The good works of Our Lady of God are with us”. Surprisingly, it actually uses a rare Old French word “Damedieu”, which is unique, and literally means “Our Lady of God”, in the sense of “the feminine face of God”.

This is supported by Rule 16, in which the phrase “Our Lady” in the original Latin is actually “Sancte Marie”, which indicates that it is not Mother Mary as presumed, but rather Saint Mary Magdalene, the female Gnostic Apostle revered by the Templars. This confirms the fact that medieval Templars generally used “Our Lady” to mean Mary Magdalene .

That the rare word "Damedieu" refers to the feminine face of God and often Saint Mary Magdalene, is further confirmed by the fact that the normal French phrase for Mother Mary has always been "Notre Dame". Thus, the very fact of such a unique and distinct word evidences that it represents a very different concept than the superficially presumed Mother Mary reference.

The medieval French manuscripts thus evidence that the Templars saw themselves as honoring the spiritual feminine aspect of God. The phrase "Our Lady of God [is] with us... and our savior Jesus Christ" emphasizes the ancient esoteric principles of duality of male-female spiritual energies, which were a key feature of the Templar Priesthood from the Essenes. This concept is supported by Rule 64, which declares that the Templar Priests serve by "the authority of Our Lady of God".

This Rule declares that the Templar Order "revitalized" the tradition of "Knighthood" as an institution, by restoring "the love of Justice" as its primary "duties". This confirms that it is an original Templar mission to restore historical institutions, and that its primary purpose for such missions is to uphold the principles of Justice.

This introduces the theme that the Templar Order is dedicated to "the love of Justice which constitutes its duties".

This is supported by Rule 47 requiring that all wrongdoing must be punished "for the love of Justice" to protect the innocent, Rule 57 commanding to "govern Justly" and "take your rights" only as "specifically established" by law, and Rule 59, commanding "for love of Truth... to Judge the matter" by serving as Judges over disputes whenever requested.

Here, the founding Templars criticize the prior institution of "knighthood" which preceded them, thereby specifically referring to the Crusades. They criticize that the Crusades "did not do what it should... to defend" the weak and uphold Justice. They blame that the Crusaders only "strove to plunder, despoil and kill". This proves that the Templars were actually not "Crusaders" and did not agree with the Crusades, but instead were wholly dedicated to the cause of Justice, and serving as Defenders of Faith.

Rule 3. Therefore we, in all joy and all brotherhood, by the prayers of the Grand Master Hugues de Payens, by whom the aforesaid Knighthood was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit, assembled at Troyes from diverse provinces beyond the mountains on the feast of Monseigneur Saint Ylaire, in the year of the incarnation of Jesus Christ 1128, in the ninth year after the founding of the aforesaid Knighthood. And the manner and establishment of the Order of Knighthood we heard in common chapter from the mouth of the aforesaid Grand Master Brother Hugues de Payens; and according to the knowledge of the limitations of our understanding, what seemed to us good and beneficial we praised, and what seemed to us unreasonable we eschewed.

The phrase that the Order “was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit” further supports the concept that it originated from the Holy Priesthood which the founding Knights recovered from the Temple of Solomon. This is also expressed in Rule 1 describing the Templars as “whom God has chosen... and has ordained”, and Rule 41 referring to the Order as “ordained by God”.

It is that history which is referred to as “the manner and establishment of the Order”. This rule thus confirms that the Council of Troyes featured a full presentation of this ancient priestly ecclesiastical authority of the Order.

This is supported in more detail by Rule 7 that the Templars “presented... the customs and observances of their humble beginnings... to make all known”, and confirmed by Rule 8 that the priestly origins were fully “considered and examined through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures”.

Rule 4. And all that was presented to the Council [of Troyes] cannot be said nor recounted; nor could be considered lightly by us, but with wise contemplation, which we left to the discretion of both our honourable father Lord Honorius and of the noble Patriarch of Jerusalem, Stephani, who knew the affairs of the East and of the Poor Knights of Christ, by the advice of the common Council we unanimously praised it. Although too great a number of religious fathers who assembled in that Council praised the authority of our words, nevertheless we should not pass over in silence the true words which they spoke and judged.

Rule 5. Wherefore I, Jean Michel, by the grace of God worthy to be the humble scribe of the present parchment by the commandment of the Council [of Troyes] and of the venerable father Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, was entrusted and committed by them to this divine office.

The Names of the Fathers who Were at the Council

Rule 6. First was Matthew, Bishop of Albano, by the grace of God Legate of the Holy Church of Rome; Renaut, Archbishop of Reims; Henri, Archbishop of Sens; and then their subordinates: Gocelin, Bishop of Soissons; the Bishop of Paris; the Bishop of Troyes; the Bishop of Orléans; the Bishop of Auxerre; the Bishop of Meaux; the Bishops of Chalons; the Bishops of Laon; the Bishops of Beauvais; the Abbots of Vèzelay, who later were made Archbishops of Lyon and [one] a Legate of the Church of Rome; the Abbot of Cîteaux; the Abbot of Pontigny; the Abbot of Trois-Fontaines; the Abbot of Saint Denis de Reims; the Abbot of Saint Etienne de Dijon; the Abbot of Molesmes; the above named Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux: The words of whom those aforesaid, by their outspoken voices, praised. Also were present [Templar] Master Aubri de Reims; Master Fulcher and many others, of whom it would be laborious to recount.

Among introductory Rules which refer to the founding Grand Master Hughes de Payens, this passage for the first time mentions several other Templars holding the title "Master". This introduces a difference between the term "Grand Master", and the different term "Master" which is used throughout most of the Temple Rule:

Many of the Rules describe administration of various routine functions at the discretion of a "Master". Only in the earliest years of the first Knights Templar, this meant the Grand Master, as the Templar Order had only one base of operations on Temple Mount in Jerusalem. However, as the Order spread into France and England and across continents, all subdivisions each had their own local Master, all different from the Grand Master of the international operations of the historical institution as a whole.

Accordingly, the term "Master" would be any Abbot of a Templar Monastery, Preceptor of a Preceptory, Commander of a Commandery, Prior of a Priory, or Grand Prior of a Grand Priory. The present translation was corrected to use the title "Grand Master" only in those few instances where it refers to the supreme commander, and all other references to "Master" apply to the many various heads of all local facilities and other subdivisions.

And of the others who have not been recorded, it seems profitable that we bring witnesses in such matter that those [present] are lovers of Truth: These [witnesses] are known as the counts of Theobald; the counts of Nevers; André de Baudemant.

All those were in such manner at the Council [of Troyes], that by refined and studious hearts, that which was good they sought out, and that which did not seem reasonable they disapproved.

The phrase “refined and studious hearts”, describing seeking Truth and wisdom by scholarship, is supported by Rule 1 which presents “studious” learning as a path to developing spiritual merits of a Knight, and Rule 9 commanding “during periods of time, [to] study universally”, specifically by academic scholarly studies to develop new knowledge and skills.

Rule 7. And presenting were Brother Hugues de Payens, Grand Master of the Knighthood, with some of his brothers whom he had brought with him. Those were made known as Brother Roland, Brother Godefroi, and Brother Geoffroi Bisot, Brother Payen de Montdidier, Brother Archambaut de Saint Amand. Grand Master Hugues presented, with his Disciples [Fr. desciple, Lat. discipulis], the customs and observances of their humble beginnings and of He who said: Ego principium qui et loquor vobis, that is to say: 'I who speak to you am the beginning,' according to the knowledge of his memory, to make all known to the above named fathers.

One popularly mistranslated phrase refers to the Grand Master “with his followers”. However, surprisingly, the original manuscripts very clearly refer to those Templars under the Grand Master as being his “Disciples”, in the full religious and Biblical sense of the word. The Old French uses the word “desciple” as the singular form for “Discipleship”, and the original Latin uses the plural “discipulis”, clearly meaning “Disciples”.

This overwhelmingly confirms the concept that the Templar Order was founded with its own independent ecclesiastical authority, from the Priesthood of Solomon which it recovered from the Temple, having its own lineage of succession, comprising the denomination of Ancient Catholicism.

That the Templar Priesthood was recognized as its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism, is further supported by Rule 8 which in Old Latin actually mentions the “Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon” indicating its own Pontifical authority, Rule 9 describing ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as “divine service... being dressed with the crown”, Rule 62 declaring the Grand Mastery to be exercising its own ecclesiastical authority by issuing the Rules, and Rule 64 describing “servants of the Church” as under command of the Grand Master, confirming independent Pontifical authority of the Templar Order.

Clarifying another popular mistranslation, the Templars were not merely “present” at the Council of Troyes, but rather, they were actually “presenting” and “presented” information and “knowledge”, in the sense of giving a “presentation” to the Vatican Council.

Specifically, this Rule states that the Templars “presented... the customs and observances of their humble beginnings... to make all known”. In the context of the Temple Rule as an official Vatican document, the word “customs” is a canonical technical term which historically means “laws”, and “observances” means religious practices and spiritual doctrines.

These key phrases thus confirm the historical fact that the Templars fully presented all details of their Priesthood from the Temple of Solomon to the Vatican Council, “to make all known”.

This is supported by Rule 3 that “the manner and establishment of the Order of Knighthood we heard”, and is confirmed by Rule 8 that the priestly origins were fully “considered and examined through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures”.

Rule 8. It pleased the common Council [of Troyes] that their advices which were sought, considered and examined through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures, with the wisdom of my lord Honorius, Pope of the Holy Church of Rome, and of the Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon [Lat. Patriarchae Ierosolimitarum], and by the assent of the chapter, and by the approval [Fr. l’otroi, Lat. assensu] of the Poor Knights of Christ of the Temple which is in Jerusalem, which must be put in writing, and which must not be forgotten, and which must be guarded firmly, and through which by right hearts one can come to his creator; the sweetness of which exceeds that of honey insomuch as comparable to God; the bitterness of which resembles absinth [Lat. absintum], and the compassion of which compels us to come to Him whom we desire to serve. Per infinita seculorum secula. Amen.

This evidences that everything about the Templar Order was fully “considered and examined” by the Vatican at the Council of Troyes. The fact that this consideration included the Templar Priesthood as the foundations of the Order, is confirmed by Rule 3 that “the manner and establishment of the Order of Knighthood we heard”, and Rule 7 that the Templars “presented... the customs and observances of their humble beginnings... to make all known”.

Perhaps most importantly, the Templar Order and its originating Priesthood were wholly approved, in particular “through diligence and study of the Holy Scriptures”. This is a ringing endorsement, in effect declaring that everything about the ancient Templar Priesthood was deemed canonical and wholly compatible with Roman Catholicism.

Indicating that the denomination of Ancient Catholicism of the Templar Order was also recognized as a path to salvation, the Council described it as an Order “through which... one can come to his creator [God]”.

The Council's "advices which were sought... with the wisdom of... [the] Pope", were adopted in the Temple Rule "by the approval of" the Knights Templar. Much insight is provided by the original words used in the medieval manuscripts:

The Old French word "l'otroi", based on the root word "roi" meaning royalty, later became the modern French "octroyer", meaning to "grant" from a position of authority. The Latin word "assensu" means "approval" with authority, in the sense of "royal assent" under conventional law. Therefore, the Templars did not merely agree or accept the decisions from the Vatican, but rather had the established authority to grant their own necessary official "approval".

One key phrase, which is typically casually translated as "of the Patriarch of Jerusalem", is revealed by the original Latin manuscripts to have a shockingly unexpected and very different meaning: "Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon":

The word for "Jerusalem" in Latin would normally be "Ierosolym", and elsewhere throughout the Temple Rule, and even within this same Rule 8 referring to the Temple as "which is in Jerusalem", the Old Latin word "Ierusalem" is consistently used.

However, this unique word "Ierosolimitarum" uses the end root "imitarum", meaning "imitation" or "representation", indicating that "Ierosol-imitarum" has a dual meaning as "Little Jerusalem", thus referring to the Temple of Solomon; The more determinative leading root "Iero" (from the Greek "Hieros" meaning "sacred") was often used to mean a "Priesthood" or "Temple" (from the Greek "Hieron" meaning "temple"); The central root "Solimin" means the Biblical "Solomon", such that "Solimitarum" would mean literally "representing Solomon". Therefore "Ierosolimitarum" means the "Temple Representing Solomon".

This linguistic analysis, from the original Latin, compellingly reveals that by three established grammatical rules of Latin (any one of which would be sufficient alone), the phrase "Patriarchae Ierosolimitarum" in fact means "Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon".

That the Templar Priesthood was recognized as its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism, is further supported by Rule 7 describing the Templars under the Grand Master as "Disciples" confirming its own religious tradition, Rule 9 describing ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as "divine service... being dressed with the crown", Rule 62 declaring the Grand Mastery to be exercising its own ecclesiastical authority by issuing the Rules, and Rule 64 describing "servants of the Church" as under command of the Grand Master, confirming independent Pontifical authority of the Templar Order.

This Rule declares that the foundations of the Templar Order in the Holy Scriptures “must not be forgotten, and... must be guarded firmly”. This again highlights the concept that the Knights Templar were dedicated to being guardians of the ancient doctrines of religion, through preserving historical institutions.

This theme that the ancient wisdom is so highly valued that it must be actively guarded, is supported by Rule 2 that the Templar Priesthood must be “guarded purely and durably”.

The importance of wisdom is supported by Rule 14 requiring new Knights to “be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master”, Rule 36 that only “those who the Master knows to have wisdom” can advise the Grand Mastery, and Rule 37 instructing to “set an example of good works and wisdom”.

Giving insight into medieval Templar culture, the Latin phrase “Per infinita seculorum secula” is a classic Templar saying, which means “By the eternity of the centuries of time”. This is a version of the same expression from the Gregorian Chant “Honor Virtus et Potestas” (Honor Virtue and Strength) using different Latin synonyms for the same words: “In perhenni seculorum tempore”. From that core collection of chants, the Templars often used the short phrase “in seculorum secula” (“into the centuries of time”) as a blessing or benediction. [24]

Here Begins the Rule of the Poor Knighthood of the Temple:

Rule 9. You renouncing your own wills, and being servants of the sovereign King with horses and with arms, for the salvation of your souls, during periods of time, study universally, with purity of desire to hear matins and the entirety of the service according to canonical law and the customs of the regular Masters of the Holy City of Jerusalem. O you venerable brothers, for this purpose God is with you, that you forego the deceiving world and despise it, for the perpetual love of God, and despising the torments of your body: Satiated by the meat from God, and watered and instructed by the commandments of our Lord, for the purpose of divine service, never fearing to go into battle, but being dressed with the crown [Fr. Ia corone, Lat. coronam].

Shedding light on Templar culture and values, this Rule commands the Knights “during periods of time, [to] study universally”. This recognizes the deeply rooted tradition, that the Knights Templar were dedicated to the principle of knowledge, and always strived to develop new knowledge and new skills. This is supported by Rule 37 instructing to “set an example of good works and wisdom”.

The commandment to “study universally” emphasizes academic or scholarly studies in many different areas of life, to be “universal” in one’s knowledge. In this regard, the Templar Order itself was somewhat like a “university”, as a center for teaching and learning of diverse areas of wisdom and knowledge.

The admonition “that you forego the deceiving world and despise it” indicates that the purpose of such studies is also to pursue the Truth, and to value the principle of Truth.

This theme of studies to develop knowledge and skills is supported by Rule 1 which presents “studious” learning as a path to developing spiritual merits of a Knight, and Rule 6 praising the work of the Council of Troyes “by refined and studious hearts”.

This Rule repeats the phrase “sovereign King” (as opposed to “divine” King), specifically in the context of serving “according to canonical law and the customs” of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The word “customs” is a traditional legal term meaning “laws”, referring to the royal jurisdiction of the secular Kingdom. This is further supported by Rule 1 that the Templars “serve in chivalry with the sovereign King”.

This again confirms the fact that the Templar Order was initially founded under the sovereign royal patronage of King Baldwin II in 1118 AD, before the Vatican later gave additional ecclesiastical patronage in 1129 AD. This proves the tradition of legal legitimacy of the Order, for granting official titled Knighthood in Nobility, something which a mere fraternity would have no lawful authority to do.

Notwithstanding the fact of royal patronage, this Rule contains a surprising reference to the Templar Order having its own ecclesiastical sovereignty since its inception:

The Knights are described as “instructed by the commandments of our Lord, for the purpose of divine service... being dressed with the crown”. This is significant, because it describes the status of the Knights since the creation of the Order in 1118 AD. The key phrase “dressed with the crown” clearly indicates sovereignty, in the context of “divine service”, thus evidencing recognition of ecclesiastical sovereignty.

This is supported by Rule 7 describing the Templars under the Grand Master as “Disciples” confirming its religious autonomy, Rule 8 which in Old Latin actually mentions the “Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon” indicating its own ecclesiastical authority, Rule 62 declaring the Grand Mastery to be exercising its own ecclesiastical authority by issuing the Rules, and Rule 64 describing “servants of the Church” as under command of the Grand Master, confirming independent Pontifical authority of the Templar Order.

Also noteworthy, is that this Rule introduces a monastic philosophy “to forego the deceiving world... for the perpetual love of God... Satiated by the meat from God”. This concept of being sustained by the spiritual “meat from God” probably formed the doctrinal basis for Rules 26-27, which evidence a general policy of being mostly vegetarian.

Rule 10. But if any of the brothers are sent for the needs of the Order and for the Christianity of the East – which we believe will occur often – and thus could not hear the services of God, he should say for morning prayers thirteen paternosters; for the daytime hours seven and for vespers [evening prayers] nine. And all together we oblige him to say those [prayers]. But those who for such needs will be sent and could not come at the hours established for hearing the services of God, if it is possible, those established hours should not be wasted to render unto God his due.

The Manner in which We Should Receive Brothers

Rule 11. If any secular Knight, or any other man, wishes to depart from the mass of perdition, and renounce that secular life, and choose your communal life, do not consent immediately to receive him. For thus said our lord Saint Paul: *Probate spiritus si ex Deo sunt*. That is to say: ‘Test the soul whether it comes from God.’ But, before he may be granted the company of the brothers, the Rule shall be read to him, and if he wishes to studiously obey the commandments of the Rule, and if it pleases the Master and the brothers to receive him, assemble the bothers in chapter and before everyone he shall reveal his wish and his desires, and make his request with a pure heart.

This establishes a firm requirement that Knighthood in the Templar Order should never be granted “immediately”. It highlights the necessity to “test the soul”, and make sure that the person is “from God”. A person cannot be granted official Knighthood in Nobility simply because they want it, or merely because they “join” the company of Templars in membership. As a solution, for active engagement of new Templars, this Rule places emphasis on the importance of Postulant studies.

The phrase “the Rule shall be read to him” is interpreted by some revival groups as a ceremonial rite of a Knight actually reading the rule aloud to the initiate one time (which takes about one full hour). However, this mandate is more metaphorical, and its meaning is of much greater significance. It evidences the paramount importance of a lengthy process of in-depth studies of Templar history, knowledge, skills and the laws of the Rule, in the role of a Postulant. This Rule is related to Rule 14 on Postulant studies.

During this time of studies, the community of Knights also needs sufficient personal interaction with the Postulant, “testing their soul” by cooperation on some projects, to be sure of the goodness of their spirit.

On Excommunicated Knights

Rule 12. There where you know to be gathered Knights who are not excommunicated [Lat. non excommunicatos], there we command you to go; and if there is anyone who wishes to serve and join the Order of Knighthood from regions overseas, you should not expect worldly gain so much as the eternal salvation of their souls. We order him to be received on the condition that he come before the Bishop of that province and make known his proposal. And when the Bishop has heard and absolved him, then send him to the Master and brothers of the Temple, and if his life is honest and worthy of their company, if he seems good to the Master and brothers, let him be received mercifully; and if he should die in the meantime, through the anguish and torment he would have suffered, he shall be given all the benefits of the brotherhood as one of the Poor Knights of the Temple.

It was clearly commanded in the original Latin to seek out other Knights who are “not excommunicated” (correcting an error in the 19th century Old French translation). The subsequent phrase, that one can “be received on the condition that... the Bishop has... absolved him”, thus implies an unwritten rule that a Knight who was excommunicated may be absolved and then received, as a rare exception.

Under traditional canon law, generally an excommunicated person can only be absolved and restored by the same particular Bishop who had excommunicated him, or else by the Pontifical authority of the Church itself. Accordingly, it is unusual that the Templar Order could restore an excommunicated person by any random local Bishop, upon the authority of the Grand Master. Therefore, this Rule further evidences the fact of independent ecclesiastical authority of the Order in its own right, possessing the essence of Pontifical capacity.

Rule 13. In no other manner should the brothers of the Temple have company with an obviously excommunicated man, nor shall they take any things; and this we prohibit strongly, because such doubtful thing could make them excommunicated like him. But if he is only forbidden to hear the services of God, it would be well permitted to receive his things for charity, with the consent of your Commander.

On Not Receiving Children

Rule 14. Although the rule of the Holy fathers allows to receive children into religion, we do not advise you to do this. For he who wishes to give to his child perpetually the Religion of Knighthood [Fr. religion de chevalerie, Lat. militari religione], he must nourish until such time as he can carry arms vigorously, and remove [Fr. arachier, Lat. delere] from the land the enemies of Jesus Christ.

This Rule states that “Although [permitted] to receive children into religion”, the additional aspect of Knighthood requires more preparation. The key word “although” strongly implies that the Templar Order itself is a “religion”, and suggests that this fact created a need to explain why the normal rule of receiving children should not apply to this “religion”. Confirming this directly, the original text then explicitly calls the Templar Order “the Religion of Knighthood”.

That the Templar Order was recognized as its own religion, is supported by Rule 2 calling the Order a “Holy Communion” in its own right, describing it as “this Religion” which gave rise to its “knighthood”, Rule 57 calling it a “type of new Religion”, a “Religion of Knights” and also “Religion by armed Knighthood”, and Rule 71 using the phrase “in every religion” as including the Templar Order.

It is important to notice here, that the primary purpose of Templar skills and capabilities is defined as to “remove from the land the enemies of Christ”. Contrary to popularized misconceptions, this does not at all mean to eradicate Muslims nor to eliminate Islam. The Old French word is “arachier”, modern French “arracher”, meaning literally “to extract” or “remove”. The original Latin phrase is “delere”, meaning to “drive out”. Therefore, this does not at all mean nor imply to eradicate or destroy, but merely to “remove”, by force only if necessary.

By this very specific wording “remove from the land”, the founding Templars were clear, that the mission of the Order is to oppose all “enemies of Christ”, which by definition must also include any evil-doers who pretend to be Christian.

The facts of Saladin being given the Templar Knighting Ceremony in 1190 AD [25] [26] [27] [28] [29], and the resulting Treaty of Ramla in 1192 AD [30] [31], prove that the Templars fully understood that the “enemies of Christ” were generally the same as the enemies of Islam. Indeed, evil-doers are essentially the enemies of all Faith, opposed to the principle of religion itself, and are thus the enemies of God.

This further proves that the Templars were not “Crusaders” against Muslims, and did not agree with any such philosophy. Rather, the Knights Templar were Holy warrior-monks fighting for good against evil, regardless of which religions may or may not be involved.

This interpretation is supported by Rule 57, which in the original Latin says only to “strike” enemies, proving no specific intent to kill, evidencing that Templar warfare was never intended to eliminate Muslims nor to destroy Islam. It is further supported by the later Rule 630, which specifically allows Templar Knights to “enter into another religion”, declaring a principle of no-conflict and non-competition.

Then the mother and father may lead him to the Order and make known to the brothers what he desires; and it is much better if he does not make the Vow [of Chivalry] when he is a child but when he is of age, and it is better if he does not regret than if he were to regret this. And henceforth first he shall be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master and brothers and according to the honesty of the life of he who requests to be in the brotherhood.

This part confirms the emphasis on the paramount importance of a lengthy process of in-depth studies of Templar history, knowledge, skills and the laws of the Temple Rule, in the role of a Postulant. This Rule is related to Rule 11 on Postulant studies.

This theme that new Knights must “be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master”, is supported by Rule 36 that only “those who the Master knows to have wisdom” can advise the Grand Mastery, and Rule 37 instructing to “set an example of good works and wisdom”.

That wisdom is so highly valued that it must be actively guarded by the Templar Knights, is supported by Rule 2 that the Templar Priesthood (embodying the ancient wisdom) must be “guarded purely and durably”, and Rule 8 that the foundations (and sacred wisdom) of the Templar Priesthood “must not be forgotten, and... must be guarded firmly”.

On Brothers who Stand Too Much in Chapel

Rule 15. It has been made known to our ears, and we have heard from truthful witnesses, that without restraint and without moderation you hear the services of God while standing. We do not condone that you behave in such a manner, rather we disapprove of it. But we command as much to the strong as to the weak, to avoid scandal, singing the psalm called Venite, throughout the invitatory and the hymn, as much the strong as the weak sitting down; and saying their prayers in silence, and simply and without loudness, so that the one praying does not disturb the prayers of the other brothers.

Although this Rule is ostensibly about the behavior of Knights during Church services, it reflects a much more important general rule, which applies to the conduct of Knights in all activities of daily life. This evidences an underlying requirement of modesty and humility. The Rule mandates Knights to behave with “restraint” and “moderation”, and for their appearance and conduct to be expressed “simply and without loudness”.

The phrase “as much to the strong as to the weak” emphasizes that above all, one’s strength should never be used nor presented in any manner of “loudness”, which implies expressions of “pride”. Thus, one should never use their strength to be disruptive nor to demand attention. Rather, one must be humble and meek, never abusing one’s strength to interfere with nor seek advantage over the weak.

This doctrine, commanding to live a life of modesty and humility, is also supported by Rule 17 requiring “simplicity” as a form of purity, Rule 18 prohibiting any “show of pride”, Rule 19 forbidding “pride or arrogance”, and Rule 55 commanding to “go simply and humbly”.

The principle that one’s strength must never be used to disrupt the weak nor take advantage of others’ weakness, is supported by Rule 34 declaring that “no person shall be elevated” and the strong must “give thanks to God” for it and care for the weak, Rule 38 proclaiming that “God holds both the strong and the weak equal” such that the strong must never abuse the weak, and Rule 46 that no person “strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually... remain unpunished”.

Rule 16. But at the end of the psalms, when the Gloria patri is sung, for prayerful reverence of the Holy Trinity, you rise and bow towards the altar, and the weak and the unwell incline their heads. And in this manner we command you; and when the recitation of the Gospels is read, and the Te deum laudamus is sung, and also as all the praises are sung, and the matins are finished, then to be on your feet. In such a manner we likewise command you to be on your feet at matins and at all the other hours of Our Lady [Saint Mary] [Fr. Nostre Dame, Lat. Sancte Marie].

Reflecting the deeply rooted culture of medieval Templarism, the traditional prayer times are referred to here as the “hours of Our Lady”. While most Catholic liturgies and writings refer to almost everything as “of our Lord” Jesus, the Knights Templar strongly emphasized “Our Lady” at every possible opportunity.

Even more revealing of Templar spirituality, while it is widely assumed that “Our Lady” [Fr. Notre Dame] refers to Mother Mary, the Knights Templar mostly used this phrase as a coded reference to Mary Magdalene, a Gnostic Saint, who Saint Augustine recognized as “Apostle to the Apostles” [32].

In this Rule, "Our Lady" uses the original Latin phrase "Sancte Marie", which literally means "Saint Mary", which is very different from the usual references to the "Virgin" or "Mother" Mary. This clearly identifies her as Saint Mary Magdalene, the Gnostic Apostle revered by the Templars. This emphasizes Magdalene as a counterpart to Jesus, evidencing an ancient doctrine of balancing male and female spiritual energies.

This is supported by Rule 2, which places "Our Lady of God" in equal balance with Jesus, using the unique Old French word "Damedieu", which specifically represents the feminine aspect of God.

That the Knights Templar were dedicated to honoring the spiritual feminine aspect of God, is supported by Rule 64, which declares that the Templar Priests serve by "the authority of Our Lady of God".

On the Robes of the Brothers

Rule 17. We command that all the robes of the brothers should always be of one colour, that is white or black or brown [Fr. buriaus, Lat. burella]. And to all the brother Knights in winter and in summer, if possible, we grant to have white cloaks; and to none other is granted to have white cloaks, if not among the aforesaid Knights of Christ; that those who have abandoned the life of darkness, for the simplicity [Fr. essamples, Lat. conditori] of white robes are recognized as being reconciled with their creator: Which signifies cleanliness [Fr. blanchor] and complete purity [Lat. castitas]. Purity is certainty of courage and healthiness of the body. For if any of the brothers do not preserve purity, he cannot come to eternal rest nor see God, by the assurance of the Apostle who said: Pacem sectamini cum omnibus et castimoniam sine qua nemo Deum videbit. That is to say: "Bring peace to everyone, maintain purity, without which none can see God."

It is interesting that the typical long white robes with large red crosses, popularized by revival groups and fraternities as associated with the "Knights Templar", were actually invented by the 15th century fraternity of Freemasonry, only for private ceremonial use [33].

The authentic "white cloaks" of the original Templars were very different, designed for practical purposes in an active lifestyle in monastic humility. The famous Templar "white cloaks", originally authorized by this Rule, were soon required to be light-brown "burrel" color, and the robes were eventually phased out entirely:

This Rule was modified by Rule 68, originally intended for sergeants and squires, which was increasingly applied to all Knights. This was implemented in the context of Rule 18 and Rule 19 prohibiting “pride” in robes and habits, and Rule 52 that accessories must not be ornate “nor pride taken in them”.

It should be further noted that the popularized idea of long flowing robes was contradicted by Rule 21 requiring that “no excess of vice could be noted on their selves”, and was explicitly prohibited by Rule 22 strictly forbidding “to have excess of... robes of length”.

This Rule explains that it is the “simplicity” of white cloaks that “signifies... purity”. This emphasizes that “simplicity” was the rule, not merely using white fabric. The Old French word used is “essamples”, the origin of the modern French root word “simples” meaning “simple”. The Latin word used is “conditori”, meaning “foundations” as in “basics”. Therefore, the original manuscripts were clearly expressing the concept of “simplicity” of clothing.

This is supported by Rule 15 to behave “simply and without loudness”, Rules 18-19 prohibiting “pride or arrogance”, and Rule 55 commanding “to go simply and humbly”.

The word “robes” here is actually a medieval term meaning all articles of “clothing” more generally. The capes which became popularized as “robes” are actually referred to specifically as “cloaks”. As a historical fact, as the main alternative to light-brown dress cloaks, the Templars mostly wore simple monk robes, with solid black or brown color [34].

Rule 18. But these robes should be without any arrogance and without any show of pride. And so we establish that no brother shall have any piece of fur on his robes, nor any other thing which pertains to the usage of the body, not even a blanket, unless it is of lamb or sheep. In such manner we command everyone to have the same, so that each can easily dress and undress, be booted and un-booted. And the Drapier or he who is in his place must studiously consider and think to have the reward of God in all these things aforesaid, so that the eyes of the envious and the evil-tongued could not notice anything in the robes worn, that they be too long nor too short; but to the measure of those who must use them, and according to the size of each one he should distribute them.

Rule 19. And if any brother by a feeling of pride or for arrogance wishes to have as entitlement a nicer and better robe, the worst shall be given to him. And those who receive new robes, must immediately return the old ones, to give to squires and to sergeants and often to the poor, according to what seems good to he who holds such office.

It is important to highlight that Rules 17-19 generally require all Knights to live by “simplicity” as an essential form of purity. This is all related to Rule 15 requiring “restraint” and “moderation”, and to conduct oneself “simply and without loudness”. This is further supported by Rule 55 declaring that “it is fitting for every religious man to go simply and humbly”.

All of these rules clearly command that all Knights must live a life of modesty and humility.

The present commandment forbidding any “pride or arrogance”, in the context of that doctrine of simplicity, is closely related to Rule 18 prohibiting “any arrogance... any show of pride”, Rule 34 that “no person shall be elevated among you” and to “not become proud” even in one’s expressions of apparent humility, Rule 46 that the only thing worse than committing an offense is to “pride himself in it”, Rule 49 that “idle words” spoken in “self pride” are “sinfulness” incurring “the harsh judgment of Jesus Christ”, and Rule 52 forbidding to have “an ornate bridle” or “gold or silver on his bridle” or equipment, nor any “resplendent beauty... seen by others, nor pride”.

On Irregular Shirts

Rule 20. Among the other things we establish mercifully that, for the great hardship of the heat which is in the countries of the East, from Easter to All Saints [day], through compassion and in no way as entitlement, a linen shirt shall be given to each one of the brothers who wishes to wear it.

This Rule established that for the extreme heat climate of the Middle East, the general requirements of Templar regalia tend to be relaxed, with various parts of the uniform optional or substituted.

On Bed Sheets

Rule 21. We establish by common counsel that each shall have robes and bed sheets according to the discretion of the Master. We expect it to be sufficient for each, after the mattress, one sheet and one blanket; and for he who needs one to have a carpet, and always a linen blanket can well be used, that which is soft. And always sleeping dressed in shirts and trousers and in shoes and belts, and there where they sleep shall be lighting until morning. And the Drapier should provide that the brothers be so reasonably groomed that they could be inspected front and back; and this same manner we command to firmly maintain for beards and moustaches, so that no excess of vice could be noted on their selves.

On Points and Laces of Shoes

Rule 22. We prohibit points and laces on shoes, and forbid for anyone to have them; and for all those who serve the Order for a term we do not permit them, rather we forbid them in any manner to have shoes with points or laces. For it is well known and is manifest that these abominable things belong to pagans. Nor to have excess of hair nor robes of length. For those who serve the sovereign creator must by necessity be born within and without by the promise of God himself who said: Estote mundi quia ego mundus sum. That is to say: "Be born, as I am born."

It should be noted that Rules 21-22 introduce a principle of avoiding "excess", which is defined to include any expressions or behavior giving an appearance of "excess of vice". This is supported by Rule 30 that wine "should not be taken in excess", and Rule 37 requiring "to live without excess of food and drink".

The concept of avoiding "excess" is closely related to the Templar principle of "simplicity", established by Rule 15 to behave "simply and without loudness", Rule 17 requiring "simplicity" as a form of purity, Rule 18 prohibiting any "show of pride", Rule 19 forbidding "pride or arrogance", and Rule 55 commanding to "go simply and humbly".

How They Should Eat

Rule 23. In the palace, and better what would be called the refectory, they should eat together. But if because you have not become accustomed to the signals of the other men of religion, whatever thing you find necessary, softly and privately, you may request to be brought to your place at the table, and with all humility and submission of reverence. For the Apostle said: Manduca panem tuum cum silentio. That is to say: "Eat your bread in silence." And the Psalmist: Posui ori meo custodiam. That is to say: "I guarded my mouth." That is, "I thought my tongue would fail me." That is, "I held my mouth so that it would speak no wrong."

On Reading the Scripture

Rule 24. Always, at the dinner and supper of the convent, shall be read the Holy Scripture, if possible. If we love God and all those His Holy words and those His Holy commandments, we must attentively desire and listen; the reader who reads the lesson will instruct you to hold silence before he begins to read.

On Bowls and Drinking Vessels

Rule 25. For the shortage of bowls the brothers will eat in pairs, for one to provide for the other more studiously, so that neither austerity nor secret abstinence is introduced into the communal meal. And this seems to us a just thing that each brother have equal measures of rationing wine in his cup.

While many of the Rules seem to “micro-manage” details of the daily lives of the Knights, it must be remembered that this was not a concept of mere “membership” in some club or fraternity. The Temple Rule was a “monastic rule”, literally a constitution for governing monastic life in Templar churches, castles and fortresses which were essentially monasteries. It was thus assumed that all Knights would be living in a Templar monastery as monks. Most of the rules were needed only for management of that monastic life.

On the Eating of Meat

Rule 26. Three times is sufficient for you to eat meat in each week, except during Christmas, or the feasts of All Saints, or the Assumption, or of the Twelve Apostles. For the custom of eating meat is understood to corrupt the body. But if it was on a Tuesday that the monks refrained from meat, the next day it should be given plentifully to the brothers. And on Sunday to all the brothers of the Temple, and the chaplains, and the clerics shall be given two meals of meat in honour of the Holy resurrection of Jesus Christ. And the others of the household, that is the squires and sergeants, shall be content with one meal and for such to give thanks to God.

On Meals for Weekdays

Rule 27. On the other days of the week, that is Monday, Wednesday and the same on Saturday, the brothers shall have two or three meals of vegetables or grains, and we establish that this should be sufficient, and thus command for this to be maintained. For he who does not eat of one meal will eat of the other.

Together, Rules 26-27 evidence a general policy of being mostly vegetarian, even recognizing that the “custom of eating meat is understood to corrupt the body”. The word “corrupt” indicates spiritual considerations. (This is also in the context of Rule 9, that Templars should be nourished by the spiritual “meat from God”.)

Of an average three meals a day totaling 21 meals a week, to “eat meat” was authorized only “three times”, thus being only 15% of the Templar diet. This establishes that the Knights Templar were 85% vegetarian.

This mostly vegetarian diet demonstrates that the Templar Priesthood observed spiritual doctrines favoring vegetarianism, which was practiced by the ancient Priesthood of the Essenes, of which Jesus the Nazarene was a High Priest.

The allowance of meat periodically was considered necessary to nutritionally sustain the physical strength and stamina of the Knights as warriors. It also had practical benefits of allowing the Templars to remain adapted to the meat-based diets they would encounter during their frequent and distant travels in diverse foreign lands.

The ancient Priesthood preserved by the Templars historically relied upon vegetarianism specifically to facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of spiritual meditation. Rules 29, 31, 32 and 49 evidence that the Templars practiced daily prayerful meditation. This confirms that the mostly vegetarian diet was intended to support the advanced spiritual practices of the Templar Priesthood.

On Meals for Fridays

Rule 28. On Fridays meat shall be given communally to the whole congregation, for reverence of the passion of Jesus Christ, and fasting from All Saints until Easter, except not on Christmas Day, nor the Assumption, nor the feast of the Twelve Apostles. But the weak and sick brothers are not held to this. But from Easter until All Saints they can eat [meat] twice, as long as there is no general fast.

On Giving Thanks to God

Rule 29. All times after eating and after dinner, all the brothers should give thanks to God in silence, if the church is near to the palace where they eat, and if it is not so close, in that same place, with a humble heart giving thanks to Jesus Christ who is our Lord Provider. The remains of broken bread shall be given to the poor, and the whole loaves shall be kept. Although the reward of the poor, which is the kingdom of heaven, without doubt will be given to the poor, just as the Christian faith recognizes you among them without doubt, we command that a tenth of the bread be given to your Almoner.

A Templar tradition of prayerful meditation is evidenced by this and other related Rules: Rule 29 commands to "all times... give thanks to God in silence" every day; Rule 31 requires to go to bed every evening "silently and quietly"; Rule 32 prohibits "idle words", favoring quiet at every opportunity; Rule 49 mandates to avoid "idle words", and to generally "refrain from speaking... and observe silence". This is also supported by Rule 63 referring to focused prayers "day and night" as frequent meditation.

This supports conclusions that the Knights Templar had a strong custom of daily spiritual meditation, which they were required to practice at every possible opportunity.

On Taking the Light Meal

Rule 30. When day fades out and the night comes, hear the signal of the bell or the call, or according to the customs of that country, all of you will prepare to come to the gathering. But we command first to take the general light meal [Fr. collation, Lat. collatio]; but we place this light meal in the arbitration and in the discretion of the Master. When he wills water and when he will command by mercy a light wine, it shall be given reasonably. Truly, it should not be taken in excess, but in moderation. For Solomon said: Quia vinum facit apostatare sapientes. That is to say, that wine compromises the wise.

Generally, medieval Knights were famous for rambunctious and spirited celebratory drinking of alcohol, whether mead, beer or wine. This led to the popular humorous expression "Drink like a Templar". However, that phrase arose only because medieval knighthood was mostly associated with the Crusades, and the Crusades were disproportionately associated with the Templars, merely because they were the most famous of all Knights.

Authentically, the historical record evidences that the Knights Templar were not rambunctious, but rather dedicated to monastic modesty. This commandment that "wine... should not be taken in excess", but only "reasonably", proves that the Templars were specifically prohibited from any excessive drinking.

The reference to Templars drinking only "light wine" is interesting. That does not imply that it would be watered down, a practice which would certainly be rejected by the predominantly French culture of the Templars. Rather, this indicates that instead of the ecclesiastical sacramental wine which could have 16-20% alcohol content, the Knights Templar regularly chose a lighter table wine which would have only 9-12% alcohol content, as do modern wines.

This Rule reminds Templars of the principles of "moderation", living "reasonably", as part of a tradition of simplicity and humility. The commandment in this Rule that wine "should not be taken in excess" is supported by Rule 21 requiring that "no excess of vice could be noted on their selves", Rule 22 prohibiting "excess of hair nor robes of length", and Rule 37 requiring "to live without excess of food and drink".

On Keeping Silence

Rule 31. When the brothers emerge from the gathering, they have no permission to speak openly unless it be for an important need. But each shall go silently and quietly to his bed, and if he has need to speak to his squire, softly and quietly to say what he has to say. But if by chance as they emerge from the gathering, for great necessity of the needs of Knighthood or of the state of the household, that by chance the next day could not suffice to meet this need, we establish that the Master or a group of elder brothers governing the household after the Master, could speak appropriately. And for this we command it to be done in such a manner.

The commandment to “go silently and quietly” at bedtime is evidence of a Templar tradition of daily prayerful meditation. Indeed, the primary purpose of silence at bedtime is to prevent any distractions from focus and concentration during evening meditations by the Knights.

Rule 32. For it is written: In multiloquio non effugies peccatum. That is to say, that to talk too much is not without sin. And elsewhere: Mors et vita in manibus lingue. That is to say: “Life and death are in the power of the tongue.” And in saying that, we prohibit idle words and wicked bursts of laughter in all forms. And if anything is said in such speaking which should not be said, when you go into your beds, in all humility and in pure devotion, we command you to say the prayer of the paternoster.

A Templar tradition of daily spiritual meditation is evidenced by Rule 29 to “all times... give thanks to God in silence” every day, Rule 31 to go to bed every evening “silently and quietly”, Rule 32 prohibiting “idle words” and favoring quiet at every opportunity, and Rule 49 to avoid “idle words” and generally “refrain from speaking... and observe silence”. This is also supported by Rule 63 referring to focused prayers “day and night” as frequent meditation.

On Overworked Brothers

Rule 33. Those brothers who are overworked for the great needs of the Order, can be allowed to rise in the mornings, by the assent and consent of the Master or of those who are charged with such office. But they must say for morning prayers thirteen paternosters, if he is established as such [overworked], in such a manner that the words be in accordance with the heart. Thus said David: Psallite sapienter. That is to say: “Sing wisely.” And elsewhere the same David said: In conspectu Angelorum psallam tibi. That is to say: “I will sing to you before the angels.” And this thing shall be at all times at the discretion of the Master or of those who are charged with such office.

On the Communal Life

Rule 34. One reads in the Holy Scriptures: *Dividebatur singulis prout cuique opus erat.* That is to say, that “to each was given according to his need.” For this we say that no person shall be elevated among you, but must be caring for the sick; and he who is less unwell [stronger] shall give thanks to God and not be troubled; and he who is more unwell shall humble himself for his infirmity and not become proud for seeking mercy. In such manner all the members will be in peace. And we prohibit for anyone to embrace excessive abstinence; but to firmly keep the communal life.

This develops the theme that one’s strength must never be abused, and imposes an obligation to respect the weak. It declares that “no person shall be elevated” and the strong must “give thanks to God” for it and care for the weak.

This is supported by Rule 15 commanding “as much to the strong as to the weak” to behave with humility and moderation to “not disturb others”, Rule 38 proclaiming that “God holds both the strong and the weak equal” such that the strong must never abuse the weak, and Rule 46 that no person “strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually... remain unpunished”.

This Rule introduces a new concept for a deeper understanding of the sins of pride and excess, which are forbidden throughout the Temple Rule: Here is explained that one can also be “proud for seeking mercy”, even taking pride in one’s weakness to gain advantage of sympathy. Likewise, one can behave with “excessive abstinence”, even taking pride in the exaggerated expression of one’s apparent modesty.

Therefore, the Templars considered even pride in one’s weakness, or excess in one’s expression of modesty, as merely alternate forms of the sin of pride.

Combined with the mandate that “no person shall be elevated among you”, the commandment to “not become proud” even in one’s expressions of apparent humility, is related to Rule 18 that Knights must be “without any arrogance and without any show of pride”, Rule 19 forbidding any “pride or arrogance”, Rule 46 that the only thing worse than committing an offense is “to pride himself in it”, Rule 49 that “idle words” spoken in “self pride” are “sinfulness” incurring “the harsh judgment of Jesus Christ”, and Rule 52 forbidding to have “an ornate bridle” or “gold or silver on his bridle” or equipment, nor any “resplendent beauty... seen by others, nor pride”.

On the Master

Rule 35. The Master can give to whomever he wills the horse of a brother and armaments, and anything that he wills, and the brother who had possession of that thing which was given must not be troubled nor agitated: for know with certainty that if he becomes angry he would be acting against God.

On Giving Advice

Rule 36. Those brothers to be called to the [Templar] Council, are those who the Master knows to have wisdom and to give beneficial advice; for thus we command, and not to take everyone. For when it occurs that they want to deal with important matters, such as to grant communal land, or to speak of the affairs of the household, or of receiving a brother, thus, if it pleases the Master, it is appropriate to assemble all of the congregation and to hear the advice of the whole chapter; and that which seems to the Master more or most beneficial, he shall do.

This theme that only “those who the Master knows to have wisdom” can advise the Grand Mastery, is supported by Rule 14 requiring new Knights to “be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master”, and Rule 37 instructing to “set an example of good works and wisdom”.

On Brothers Sent Overseas

Rule 37. Brothers who will be sent through diverse parts of the world must strive to keep the commandments of the Rule according to their ability, and to live without excess of food and drink [Lat. cibo et potu], and to live without reproach; and so that they could have good reports from outsiders, so they would not disgrace by deed nor by word the purposes of religion, and that they set an example of good works and wisdom; above all that those with whom they associate and those in whose hostels they lodge will be bestowed with honour. And if possible, the nights should not be without lighting in the house where they stay or lodge, so that the shadowy enemies would not lead them astray unto wickedness, which God forbids of them.

All Templars were required to “set an example of good works and wisdom”, as part of their mandate to “live without reproach”. The emphasis on “wisdom” demonstrates a core Templar value, that one should always seek and promote wisdom, and set an example for society to respect and desire wisdom. That this principle is presented in the context of upholding “the purposes of religion”, indicates that the “wisdom” most valued by the Knights Templar is that of the ancient sacred knowledge.

This theme of the importance of wisdom is supported by Rule 14 requiring new Knights to “be put to the test according to the wisdom of the Master”, and Rule 36 that only “those who the Master knows to have wisdom” can advise the Grand Mastery.

That wisdom is so highly valued that it must be actively guarded by the Templar Knights, is supported by Rule 2 that the Templar Priesthood (embodying the ancient wisdom) must be “guarded purely and durably”, and Rule 8 that the foundations (and sacred wisdom) of the Templar Priesthood “must not be forgotten, and... must be guarded firmly”.

This is supported by Rule 9 requiring to “study universally”, for repeated “periods of time”, to develop one’s knowledge and wisdom.

The mandate in this Rule to “live without excess of food and drink” is supported by Rule 21 requiring that “no excess of vice could be noted on their selves”, Rule 22 prohibiting “excess of hair nor robes of length”, and Rule 30 that wine “should not be taken in excess”.

On Keeping the Peace

Rule 38. Every brother must diligently ensure that he does not incite another brother to wrath or anger, for the sovereign mercy of God holds both the strong and the weak equal in the name of charity.

This repeats the theme that “the strong and the weak [are] equal” before God. The phrase “in the name of charity” clarifies that this means for the strong to never abuse their strength against the weak, as that would violate the Holy principles of charity.

The principle that one’s strength must never be used to interfere with nor take advantage of the weak, is supported by Rule 15 commanding “as much to the strong as to the weak” to behave with humility and moderation to “not disturb” others, Rule 34 declaring that “no person shall be elevated” and the strong must “give thanks to God” for it and care for the weak, and Rule 46 that no person “strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually... remain unpunished”.

How the Brothers Should Go About

Rule 39. It is appropriate for all the brothers who are professed, to carry out Holy service, and to gain the glory of the heavenly blessings, and to escape the fear of the fires of hell, that they maintain strict obedience to their Master. For nothing is more valued by Jesus Christ than to keep obedience. For as soon as anything will be commanded by the Master or by one whom the Master has given authority, it shall be done without delay just as if God himself had commanded it. For thus said Jesus Christ, and it is the truth, through the mouth of David: Ob auditu auris obedivit mihi. That is to say: “He obeyed me as soon as he heard me.”

Rule 40. For this we pray, for the brother Knights who have abandoned their own wills, and for all the others who serve for a term we pray and firmly command that they not presume to go into town nor into the city without consent of the Master or from he who has been charged with such office; except at night to the Sepulchre and to the places of prayer which are within the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

Rule 41. Here [on Templar territories] they can go out in pairs of two brothers together, and in other manner shall not go out neither in the day nor at night; and once they have stopped at a hostel, neither brother nor any squire, nor any sergeant may visit to the lodge of another for the purpose of seeing him or speaking with him without permission, as is said above. We command by common Council that in this Order which is ordained [Fr. ordenée, Lat. ordinata] by God, no brother shall fight nor rest according to his own will, but according to the commands of the Master, under whom all must follow, that they can follow this declaration of Jesus Christ who said: Non veni facere voluntatem meam, sed ejus que misit me, patris. That is to say: "I did not come to do my own will, but the will of my father who sent me."

The key phrase, describing the Knights Templar as "this Order which is ordained by God", is a reference to canonical ecclesiastical ordination into Clergy, thereby describing the Templar Order as a Priesthood. It is significant that the Templars are described as "ordained" directly by God, and not by the Church, confirming independent priestly authority.

This is supported by Rule 1, which refers to the Templars as "whom God has chosen... and has ordained", and Rule 3 that the Order "was founded by the grace of the Holy Spirit".

The command that "no brother shall fight nor rest according to his own will", was not intended to be dictatorial nor micromanaging. Rather, this was a practical rule, in the context of medieval Knights being out in the field, often separated from their house Masters or even field Commanders:

The idea was that if a Knight was ordered to fight (or work), he must continue that mission indefinitely until completion, without doubting that the ordered mission remains in force, and without taking it upon himself to decide whether the mission should be completed or not. Likewise, if there was no order to fight, then the Knight should not take it upon himself to provoke or engage in a conflict which could involve the Order in unnecessary war, without having the approval of the Order to do so.

How they Should Make Exchange

Rule 42. Without permission from the Master or from one who holds such office, no brother shall exchange one thing for another, nor request to, unless it is a small or petty thing.

On Locks

Rule 43. Without permission from the Master or from he who holds that office, no brother shall have a lock, not on a bag nor on a case; but this shall not be held to commanders of houses nor of the provinces, nor the Masters themselves. Without the consent of the Master or of his Commander, no brother shall open letters from his relatives nor from any other person; but, if he has permission, if it pleases the Master or the Commander, the letters shall be read to him.

On Secular Gifts

Rule 44. If by gratitude anything is given to any brother by a secular person, which is perishable like meat, he must present it to the Master or to the keeper of meats. But if it occurs that any of his friends or relatives does not wish to give it except only to him, he shall not take it without the consent of the Master or of he who holds such office. But if to the brother is sent any other thing from his relatives, he shall not take it without the consent of the Master or he who holds such office. But these aforesaid commandments we do not want to be held to the commanders nor housekeepers, who are especially charged to implement this function.

On Minor Faults

Rule 45. If any brother in speaking or soldiering or in another manner commits a minor fault, he himself must voluntarily make known the fault to the Master, to make amends with a pure heart. And if his fault is not habitual, then he shall have a light penance; but if the fault is too serious, then he shall depart from the company of the brothers, that he does not eat nor drink at any table with the brothers; but all alone by himself, and to be submitted to the mercy and judgment of the Master and the brothers, so that he can be saved on the Day of Judgment.

On Serious Offenses

Rule 46. Before all things we must ensure that no brother, powerful or not powerful, strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually and become proud and defend his offense, remain unpunished. But if he does not wish to correct it, he shall be given a harsher punishment. But if by pious counsel prayers are said to God for him, and he does not wish to make amends, but wishes more and more to pride himself in it, he shall be uprooted from the pious flock; according to the Apostle who says: Auferte malum ex vobis. That is to say: "Remove the wicked from among you." It is necessary that you remove the wicked sheep from the company of the faithful brothers.

The commandment that no person "strong or weak, who wishes to promote himself gradually... remain unpunished", is related to the doctrine that one's strength must never be used to interfere with nor take advantage of the weak.

This is supported by Rule 15 which commands "as much to the strong as to the weak" to "not disturb" others, Rule 34 that "no person shall be elevated" and the strong must "give thanks to God" for it and care for the weak, and Rule 38 that "God holds both the strong and the weak equal" such that the strong must never abuse the weak.

This Rule also establishes the principle that pride makes any wrongdoing even worse, as an aggravated offense. It emphasizes that the only thing worse than committing an offense is to "become proud and defend" it, or "to pride himself in it", requiring a "harsher punishment".

This is related to Rule 18 that Knights must be "without any arrogance and without any show of pride", Rule 19 forbidding any "pride or arrogance", Rule 34 that "no person shall be elevated among you" and to "not become proud" even in one's expressions of apparent humility, Rule 49 that "idle words" spoken in "self pride" are "sinfulness" incurring "the harsh judgment of Jesus Christ", and Rule 52 forbidding to have "an ornate bridle" or "gold or silver on his bridle" or equipment, nor any "resplendent beauty... seen by others, nor pride".

Rule 47. But the Master, who must hold in his hand the staff and the rod – the staff, which must sustain the weaknesses and strengths of others; the rod, which must beat the vices of those who would sin – for the love of Justice, by counsel of the Patriarch, shall make sure to do such things. But also, as Monseignor Saint Maxime has said: "May the leniency be no greater than the offense; nor excessive harshness [of punishment] cause the sinner to return to wicked deeds."

This Rule requires that all wrongdoing must be punished “for the love of Justice” to protect the innocent.

This is supported by Rule 2 which dedicates the Order to “the love of Justice which constitutes its duties”, Rule 57 commanding to “govern Justly” and “take your rights” only as “specifically established” by law, and Rule 59 commanding “for love of Truth... to Judge the matter” by serving as Judges over disputes whenever requested.

On Rumor

Rule 48. We command by divine counsel that you avoid as plague: envy, rumour, spite, slander. Thus each shall diligently guard against that which the Apostle said: Ne sis criminator et susurro in populo. That is to say: “Do not accuse nor malign the people of God.” But when a brother knows clearly that his fellow brother has sinned, quietly and with fraternal mercy he shall be chastised between the two privately, and if he does not want to listen, then join with another brother, and if he scorns the one and the other, before the whole chapter he must manifestly recant [his defamation]. Those are filled with great blindness who disparage others, and many are filled with great sorrow who do not guard against carrying envy towards others; by which they will be plunged into the ancient wickedness of the Devil.

Defamation was always regarded by the Knights Templar as the most despicable and sinful practice, inherently embodying the “wickedness of the Devil”. This makes defamation itself one of the evils which Templars are sworn to fight against, as defenders of Justice. It also means that those who engage in defamation are the “enemies of God” whom Templars are sworn to fight and defend against.

Strictly banning all defamation, this Rule absolutely prohibits “rumour” and “slander”, and forbids to “malign” people or “disparage others”, calling it the “wickedness of the Devil”.

This is supported by Rule 32 prohibiting “idle words” as being “not without sin”, as that generally tends to lead to rumour, which inherently tends to be defamatory. It is further supported by Rule 38 prohibiting to “incite another... to wrath or anger”, which is the primary effect of defamation, and Rule 49 forbidding “speaking evil”, which by definition means false rumour or any maligning slander.

It is highly significant, and indeed prophetic, that defamation of others was the sin most despised by the Templar Order:

During the infamous persecutions by the French King Philip IV, all “confessions” extracted under torture were based upon recruited “witnesses”, who were mostly disgruntled former Templars who the Order had expelled for their own wrongdoing [35]. Such “witnesses”, including those with known ulterior motives, were given immunity from any punishment even if their accusations were proven false [36].

Indeed, the entire persecution was driven solely by false defamatory accusations. The Papal Bull Vox in Excelso of 1312 AD, which merely “suppressed” (but in fact did not dissolve) the Templar Order, highlighted (and thereby protested) that the Vatican was “unwilling to lend our ears to insinuation and accusation against the Templars; ... Then came the intervention of... Philip, the illustrious King of France.” [37]

The Papal Bull Considerantes of 1312 AD, implementing the merely administrative internal termination of support by the Vatican established by Vox in Excelso, also witnessed that the persecution was based solely on empty but aggressive defamation: It protested that the Vatican was coerced by the “clamorous charges... of the Kingdom of France” artificially creating a “grave scandal”. [38]

It is most interesting that the modern Code of Canon Law prohibits precisely such defamation as was used against the Knights Templar, eliminating it as a medieval instrument of persecution. Canon Law now prohibits both defamation and the related abuses which rely upon defamation, including: Aggressive interference with disregard for rights and justice (Canon 287, §1); Defamation to “unlawfully harm good reputation” by inflammatory accusations (Canon 220); Falsely or maliciously “denouncing” to “injure the good name of another” (Canon 1390, §2).

That None Shall Take Pride in his Faults

Rule 49. Although all idle words are generally known to be sinful, those who speak them in self pride by their own sinfulness will go before the harsh judgment of Jesus Christ. Which demonstrates to us that which the prophet David said: *Obmutui et silui a bonis*. That is to say that in faith one must refrain even from speaking good, to hold silence.

A Templar tradition of daily spiritual meditation is evidenced by Rule 29 to “all times... give thanks to God in silence” every day, Rule 31 to go to bed every evening “silently and quietly”, Rule 32 prohibiting “idle words” and favoring quiet at every opportunity, Rule 49 to avoid “idle words” and generally “refrain from speaking... to hold silence”, and Rule 63 referring to focused prayers “day and night” as frequent meditation.

Likewise one must refrain more and cease to speak evil to escape the penalty of sinfulness. We prohibit and firmly forbid for any brother [to recount] the brave deeds he has done in the world, which would be better called follies of the necessities of Knighthood, and the pleasures of the flesh which he had with immoral women, not to recount to any brother nor to any other; and if it occurs that he hears such told by another brother, to immediately make him silent; and if he cannot silence him, to immediately leave that place and not give his ears of his heart to the peddler of filth.

The commandment to “cease to speak evil to escape the penalty of sinfulness” primarily applies to defamation. Defamation was always strictly banned by the Templar Order, defined as being the very same evil and injustice of the enemies of God who they were sworn to fight and defend against. Indeed, Rule 48 prohibits “rumour”, “slander”, to “malign” people or to “disparage others” as “wickedness of the Devil”, and Rule 32 prohibits “idle words” as being “not without sin”, as gossip tends to foster defamation.

That None Shall Ask

Rule 50. This custom we command to properly keep and firmly guard among the others, that no brother shall request neither the horse of the other nor his armaments. In this manner it shall thus be done, if the infirmity of the brother or the weakness of his horses or of his armour is known to be such that the brother cannot go out for the needs of the Order without damage, to come to the Master, or to he who is in his place in this office after the Master, and show him this need in pure faith and in true fraternity, and to thereafter remain in the disposition of the Master or of he who holds such office.

On Horses and Squires

Rule 51. Each brother Knight may have three horses and no more, without the permission of the Master, because of the great burden of poverty which presently exists in the Order of God and of the Temple of Solomon. To each brother Knight we grant to have three horses and one squire, and if that squire serves charity of his good will, the brother must not beat him for any offense which he does.

That No Brother Have an Ornate Bridle

Rule 52. We completely forbid that any brother have gold or silver on his bridle, nor on his stirrups, nor on his spurs. This is to be followed if he buys them; but if it occurs that such an old harness be given to him in charity, that the gold or silver is tarnished, that the resplendent beauty will not be seen by others, nor pride: he may well have it. But if a new harness is given to him, the Master shall determine what he will do.

This is supported by Rule 18 to be “without any show of pride”, Rule 19 forbidding “pride or arrogance”, and Rule 34 that “no person shall be elevated among you”, in the context of Rule 68 that squires abused the unauthorized white robes attracted by their pride.

On Lance Covers

Rule 53. No brother shall have a cover, neither over shield nor over lance, as this is no benefit, whereas we expect that this would be greatly damaging.

Many parts of the Temple Rule, such as Rules 51-53, are specific to medieval equipment such as horses and chivalric arms of the middle ages. As a practical matter, in the modern era these Rules would simply be interpreted as the equivalent (or analogous) modern equipment, such as motor vehicles and automotive accessories.

On Horse-Feed Bags

Rule 54. This commandment which is established by us is to everyone a beneficial thing to follow, and for this we command that it be firmly held henceforth, that no brother shall make a horse-feed bag of linen or wool principally, nor of anything else, except string-mesh.

On Hunting

Rule 55. We collectively forbid any brother to hunt a bird with another bird. It is not fitting for the religious to engage in pleasures, but to hear willingly the commandments of God and to be often in prayers and each day to reconcile with God, with tears in his prayers, the sins which he has committed. Nor shall any brother presume to go especially with such one who hunts a bird with another bird. As it is fitting for every religious man to go simply and humbly and without laughing nor speaking many words, but reasonably and not shouting loudly: and for this we command especially to all brothers, that they not to go in the woods with longbow nor crossbow, to hunt animals, nor accompany one who would do so, unless out of love to protect him from faithless pagans. Nor should you go after dogs, nor shout, nor chatter, nor spur on a horse for desire to hunt a wild beast.

Kindness to animals, and moral rights of animals as God’s creatures, is established here as a core part of Templar values. Hunting for pleasure is defined as inherently sinful. Using one animal to hunt another is considered immoral and wrongful. Dogs, who are among the most emotional and affectionate of God’s creatures, are especially protected from any interference.

Animal rights evidenced in Rule 55 are most likely related to Rules 26-27, which establish a general practice of vegetarianism, such that 85% of Templar meals were vegetarian, and meat was used for only 15% of the meals.

The statement that “it is fitting for every religious man to go simply and humbly” represents a core Templar doctrine, to live a life of modesty and humility. This commandment to “go simply and humbly” is supported by Rule 15 to behave “simply and without loudness”, Rule 17 requiring “simplicity” as a form of purity, Rule 18 prohibiting any “show of pride”, and Rule 19 forbidding “pride or arrogance”.

On the Lion

Rule 56. It is the truth that to you is given especially, as if by a debt, that you must give your souls for your brothers, just as did Jesus Christ, and defend the land from pagan miscreants who are enemies of the Son of the Virgin Mary. That aforesaid prohibition [against hunting] does not apply to the lion, as he comes circling and searching that he can devour, and his hands are against everyone and the hands of all are against him.

How They May Have Lands and Men

Rule 57. This type of new Religion [Lat. genus novum religionis] we believe by the Holy Scriptures and by divine providence took its beginnings in the Holy Land of the East. Let it be known that this Religion of Knights [Lat. religionis miliciam], and thus Religion by armed Knighthood [Lat. sic religio per militiam armata], are permitted to strike the enemies without sin [Lat. hostem sine culpa feriat]. For this we judge that by right you are called Knights of the Temple, with double merit and special virtue [Lat. speciale probitatis], and permitted to have lands and men, houses and fields to hold and govern Justly, and take your rights to them as it is specifically established.

Continuing a major theme of the authentic Temple Rule, this passage features a triple reference to the Order being its own religion based upon the Templar Priesthood from the Temple of Solomon. Here the Order is specifically called a “type of new Religion”, a “Religion of Knights” and also a “Religion by armed Knighthood”.

That the Templar Order was recognized as its own religion, is supported by Rule 2 calling the Order a “Holy Communion” in its own right, describing it as “this Religion” which gave rise to its “knighthood”, Rule 14 calling it “the Religion of Knighthood”, and Rule 71 using the phrase “in every religion” as including the Templar Order.

This Rule contains the famous passage in which Knights were permitted to kill without imputation of sin by the Vatican. (This would be the historical predecessor for the legendary James-Bondian "License to Kill".) Although the Old French text says "sans colpe tuer", meaning "to kill without sin", the original Latin uses the softer term "sine culpa feriat" meaning "to strike without sin". While those two versions are not inconsistent, the Latin reveals that the true intent of Templar warfare was to "strike", without any specific purpose to "kill".

This reveals the authentic Templar philosophy of chivalric warfare, that there was no desire, intent nor purpose to "kill" or eradicate the people of an enemy. Rather, the only intent was to use sufficient and proportional force as necessary to drive out and keep out those enemies who present themselves. This is further confirmation that the Knights Templar never agreed with the popularized idea of the Crusades, as supposedly being to destroy Muslims or eliminate Islam.

This interpretation is supported by Rule 14, that the only real purpose of Templar warfare was to "remove from the land the enemies of Christ", not to kill Muslims, evidencing the understanding that Muslims were not necessarily enemies, and that the real enemies could even be evil-doers pretending to be Christians. It is further supported by the later Rule 630, which specifically allows Templar Knights to "enter into another religion", implicitly including even Islam, declaring a principle of no-conflict and non-competition.

The authorization to "have lands and men" should not be confused with the Crusader concept of conquering lands, which the Templars specifically rejected and criticized (in Rule 2). This is simply a declaration of the right to keep and own personal property. That was a necessary clarification, in the context of the tradition that the Knights would not hold personal property within the Templar monastic life, while residing in Templar facilities.

To "take your rights" to property "as it is specifically established" requires that it must be lawfully acquired, in accordance with rights under law. It also mandates that the Knights must "govern Justly" over their territorial possessions.

The theme of Justice in the Temple Rule is further expressed by this commandment to "govern Justly", and "take your rights" only as "specifically established" by law.

This is supported by Rule 2 which dedicates the Order to "the love of Justice which constitutes its duties", Rule 47 requiring that all wrongdoing must be punished "for the love of Justice" to protect the innocent, and Rule 59 commanding "for love of Truth... to Judge the matter" by serving as Judges over disputes whenever requested.

On Tithes

Rule 58. You who have abandoned the pleasant riches of this world, we believe you to be subjects of good will and poverty; thus we establish for you who live the communal life to receive tithes. If the Bishop of the place to whom the tithe should be rendered by right wishes to give it to you in charity, with the consent of his chapter, he may give from those tithes which the Church possesses. But if any layman still retains those tithes of his patrimony to his detriment against the Church, and wishes to leave them to you, by the grant of the Prelate and of his chapter he can do so.

This Rule introduced a historic new concept, that tithes can be paid not only by individuals to the Church, but rather the institution itself can also pay tithes to individuals. This established a new tradition unique to the Knights Templar, that the Templar Order could pay tithes to its Knights, and the Templar Priesthood could pay tithes to its own Clergy.

The original phrase, permitting those “who live the communal life to receive tithes”, refers to the essence of “communal life” as giving one’s full-time service, skills and talents to the Templar Order. Tithes can thus be interpreted as something earned, or as a bonus of gratitude, for making a major contribution of skilled effort of substantial value to the Order. Accordingly, such “tithes” can take the form of a commission on fundraising or assets which a Knight actively helps to bring into the Order.

The practice of the Order paying tithes to individuals also served as a basis for giving a “parting bonus” for a person leaving the Order after meritorious service. This is supported by Rule 66, which provided that a departing Knight returning home should be given half the price of his horse.

On Giving Judgements

Rule 59. We know for having seen that persecutors are without number and people who like conflicts and strive to cruelly torment others and the faithful of the Holy Church. By the clear pronouncement of our Council [of Troyes], we mandate that if anyone is in the regions of the countries of the East or in any other place, and requests anything of you, for the weak and for the love of Truth we command you to Judge the matter, if the other party wishes to allow it. This same commandment shall be held perpetually in all matters which will be bound to you.

This Rule confirms the values of Justice as being at the heart of knightly duties, especially in their interactions with the general public. It commands the Knights to uphold Justice by serving as Judges over various disputes, requiring “for love of Truth... to Judge the matter”.

This is supported by Rule 2, which firmly declares that “the love of Justice” is the core of the mandatory “duties” of the Templar Order, Rule 47 requiring that all wrongdoing must be punished “for the love of Justice” to protect the innocent, and Rule 57 commanding to “govern Justly” and “take your rights” only as “specifically established” by law.

On Elder Brothers

Rule 60. We command by compassionate counsel that the elder and weak brothers shall be diligently honoured and shall be regarded according to their weakness; and, preserved by the authority of the Rule in those things which are necessary to their bodies, shall not be in any manner in distress.

On Sick Brothers

Rule 61. Brothers who are sick shall be given diligent help and care, and be served, according to what the Gospel says, and Jesus Christ: *Infirmus fui et visitastis me*. That is to say: “I was sick and you visited me”; and this shall not be forgotten. For those brothers who are unwell must be treated gently and diligently, that by such service without doubt you will gain the kingdom of heaven. Thus we command the Infirmier to provide diligently and faithfully those things which are necessary for diverse illnesses, such as meats, other meats, birds, and all other foods which support good health, according to the means and ability of the house.

On Deceased Brothers

Rule 62. When any brother passes from life to death, from which nobody is exempt, we command with a pure heart to sing the mass for his soul, to perform the services of God by the Priests who serve Christ and are with you for a term out of charity, and all the brothers who are present where the body is and are with you for a term out of charity, throughout seven days, to say one hundred paternosters. And all the brothers under the command of that house where the brother passed must say the hundred paternosters, as is said above, from the time they know of the death of that brother, by the mercy of God. Additionally we pray and command by pastoral authority [Fr. *par l'autorité pastoral*, Lat. *pastorali auctoritate*], that a pauper be fed with such meat and such wine throughout forty days for the deceased brother, just as if the brother were alive. All the other offerings, which had been made without discretion upon the death of brothers and on the holidays of Easter and on other holidays, to which the Poor Knights of the Temple have become accustomed by their own wills, in all manners we prohibit.

This Rule features an unexpected phrase, “we... command by pastoral authority”, thereby declaring that the commandment itself (like all other commandments) is an exercise of ecclesiastical authority. This is surprising, in the context of the entire Temple Rule being essentially commandments from the Templar Grand Mastery to all Templars.

Although the Temple Rule was endorsed by the Vatican at the Council of Troyes, as a constitution it was nonetheless a charter of Rules issued by the Grand Mastery itself. As a result, this phrase reveals that the Grand Mastery was in fact exercising its own inherent ecclesiastical authority in issuing and enforcing these Rules throughout the Templar Order.

That the Templar Priesthood was recognized as its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism, is further supported by Rule 7 describing the Templars under the Grand Master as “Disciples” confirming its own religious tradition, Rule 8 which in Old Latin actually mentions the “Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon” indicating its own Pontifical authority, Rule 9 describing ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as “divine service.. being dressed with the crown”, and Rule 64 describing “servants of the Church” as under command of the Grand Master, confirming independent Pontifical authority of the Templar Order.

Rule 63. But day and night your prayers shall be with a pure heart, so that they can compare with those of the most wise of all the prophets; who said: Calicem salutaris accipiam. That is to say: “I will take the chalice of salvation.” That is: “I will avenge the death of Jesus Christ by my death. For just as Jesus Christ gave his body for me, I also am prepared in such manner to give my soul for my brothers.” This is an appropriate offering; truly a living sacrifice and very pleasing to God.

On Priests and Clergy who Serve in Charity

Rule 64. All offerings and all forms of alms in whatever manner they be made, to the Chaplains and to the Clergy and to others who remain for a term in charity, by the entirety of the common Council [of Troyes], in all forms we command you to give them.

This declares a clear obligation, as perhaps the most pervasive tradition of the Order, that “All offerings and all forms of alms... in all forms we command you to give them.” Therefore, all Templars are required to actively make charitable donations and contributions, in all ways possible, at all times possible. Accordingly, to be a “Templar” necessarily means to actively volunteer for charitable and non-profit organizations, and to proactively and generously donate to charitable and non-profit causes, as frequently and meaningfully as possible.

Under the customary concept of allegiance to the Order, it is presumed that Templars should volunteer for and donate to those non-profit missions which are officially endorsed and supported by the Templar Order. However, this would not limit a Templar from contributing to other non-profits independently, as long as that does not detract from supporting the particular charities which are deemed important to the official missions of the Order.

The servants of the Church, according to the authority of Our Lady of God [Fr. Damedieu], have only food and clothing, and do not presume to have any other thing, unless the Master by his good will wishes to give them [something] out of charity.

Another instance of the rare Old French word "Damedieu", referring to the feminine face of God, expressed as "Our Lady of God", appears in this Rule. In this passage, it is significant that the Latin phrase is "secundum auctoritatem tantum habeant" meaning "according to the authority which they [the Priests] possess". The fact that this was translated in Old French as "according to the authority of Our Lady of God" is highly revealing:

This evidences the authentic doctrinal philosophy of the Knights Templar, that the "authority" which the Templar Priesthood "possesses" is precisely the authority of "Our Lady of God", as representing the feminine face of God.

This is supported by Rule 2, which refers to all prayer times as "the hours of Our Lady of God", and emphasizes "Our Lady of God" in equal balance with Jesus. That the Knights Templar often used "Our Lady" and "Damedieu" to mean Saint Mary Magdalene, is supported by Rule 16 in which the original Latin identifies her as the "Saint" (and not the "Virgin" or "Mother").

The passage that "servants of the Church... do not presume to have any other thing, unless the Master... wishes to give them", clearly evidences that "servants of the Church" are those who are under the direct authority and command of the Templar Master. This reveals that references to "servants of the Church" throughout the Temple Rule in fact mean the Templar Priests of the ancient Priesthood of the Temple of Solomon, as the denomination of Ancient Catholicism.

That the Templar Priesthood was recognized as its own denomination of Ancient Catholicism, is further supported by Rule 7 describing the Templars under the Grand Master as "Disciples" confirming its own religious tradition, Rule 8 which in Old Latin actually mentions the "Patriarchate of the Temple of Solomon" indicating its own Pontifical authority, Rule 9 describing ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Templar Priesthood as "divine service... being dressed with the crown", and Rule 62 declaring the Grand Mastery to be exercising its own ecclesiastical authority by issuing the Rules.

On Secular Knights

Rule 65. There are Knights in the Order of God and of the Temple of Solomon, who serve for mercy and remain with you for a term; whom we, for mercy, ask and indeed firmly command you, that if during [their term] the power of God takes any one of them to his end, for the love of God and for fraternal mercy, one pauper shall have seven days of food for his soul, and every brother being in that house shall say thirty paternosters.

On Secular Knights who Serve for a Term

Rule 66. To all the secular Knights who desire with a pure heart to serve Jesus Christ for a term and [to serve] the Order of the Temple of Solomon, we command to faithfully purchase an appropriate horse and armaments and whatever will be useful to him for such needs. Additionally we command for both parties to put a price on the horse and to put that price in writing, that it not be forgotten; and all things needed by the Knight, his squire and his horse for their lives, and even the horseshoes, shall be given according to the means of the house by fraternal charity. If during the term by chance it occurs that the horse dies in service to the Order, if the house has the means, the Master shall replace it. If at the end of his term the Knight wills to return to his country, half of the price of the horse the Knight shall leave for charity to the house and the other half if he wishes he shall receive from the alms of the Order.

This documents that the Templar Order had a standard arrangement of service "for a term", evidencing that many Knights were not only allowed, but actually expected, to eventually leave the Order. These facts prove that despite popularized misconceptions, it was not prohibited to leave the Order, and there was certainly no supposed punishment for doing so.

The provision that a departing Knight should be given half the price of his horse reveals a practice of giving a "parting bonus" for a person leaving the Order after meritorious service. This is supported by Rule 58, which authorized the Order to pay "tithes" to deserving individuals. These facts confirm that leaving the Order was not only permitted, but is something that was usually done very much in good standing.

On the Commitment of Sergeants

Rule 67. Whereas the squires as much as the sergeants, who wish to serve in charity in the Order of the Temple for the salvation of their souls and for a term, come from diverse regions, to us it seems beneficial that their commitments be received, that the envious enemy does not put into their hearts for those to renounce, nor to retreat from their good promises.

On White Mantles

Rule 68. By the common Counsel of everyone in chapter we forbid and command to be expelled, as a familiar vice, those who without discretion being in the Order of God and the Knights of the Temple, that sergeants and squires shall not have white robes, from which has occurred great damage to the Order; for in the regions beyond the mountains have been false brothers and the married and others, who would say they were brothers of the Temple; but they were of the world. Those brought us so much shame and damage to the Order of Knighthood, that those same squires prided themselves in it; for this caused many scandals to arise. Therefore [they] shall assiduously be given black robes; but if those cannot be found, such which can be found in that province, those shall be given; or whichever shall be the lowest price, known as burell.

The original Templar robes of the famous “white cloaks”, used only during the first few early years based on Rule 17, soon fell out of use by the Templar Order. As secular society began to see them as social status symbols of elegance and finery, they quickly became unacceptable objects of “pride”.

This was undesirable, in the context of Rule 18 requiring that “robes should be... without any show of pride”, Rule 19 that “if any brother out of a feeling of pride or arrogance wishes... a better and finer habit, let him be given the worst”, and Rule 52 that accessories must not be ornate “nor pride taken in them”.

This Rule, originally intended for sergeants and squires, became increasingly used to modify and phase out the “white cloaks” for all Knights. Applying the theme of “burell” (which comes from the French word “beurre” for “butter”), the Templar robes were required to be a buttery cream color, which is basically a sand-colored light brown.

The popularized idea of long flowing robes was explicitly prohibited by Rule 21 requiring that “no excess of vice could be noted on their selves”, and Rule 22 which strictly forbid “to have excess of... robes of length.” This also contributed to the “white cloaks” soon being phased out entirely.

On Married Brothers

Rule 69. If men who are married request the fraternity and blessings and devotions of the Order, we grant that you receive them in such manner, that each upon their death grants [to the Order] a portion of his estate and all which he will acquire from now on. Meanwhile he must lead an honest life and endeavor to do good towards the brothers. But he must not take to wear white robes, nor the white cloaks; And if that lord dies before his lady, the brothers must take the portion of his estate, and all remainder shall be for sustaining the life of the lady; because it would not seem right to us that such worldly brothers should reside in one house with brothers who have pledged their purity to God.

While this Rule clearly allows married men to join the Templar Order, and does not actually discriminate against them, it does express some concerns which tend to be perceived as discouraging married men from becoming Knights:

The main issue mostly arises from the context of monastic life, in medieval times when the majority of Templar warrior-monks were expected to be celibate. It evidences the cultural discomfort of most of the Knights, who gave up the blessings and moral support of marriage in self-sacrifice for dedicated service. The celibate Knights were generally bothered by the idea of married men living among them, who had the advantage, luxury and comfort of knowing a wife was waiting for them to come home, and would take periodic leave to visit their wives.

The practical solution established by this Rule was a requirement for married brothers to be seen making major contributions to the Templar Order. A commitment granting a share of inheritance was a way to demonstrate such measurable and substantial support to the Order. This would certainly be one reliable way to help prevent or diffuse any potential resentment by the majority of celibate Knights.

However, the deeper underlying principle and spirit of this Rule is really an obligation of married brothers to be sensitive to the burden of sacrifice made by the unmarried Knights. This requires the humility and modesty to avoid calling any attention to one's marriage. It also requires that the brother be seen as making major contributions of value to the Order, which are not undermined by the worldly demands of marriage.

This interpretation is supported by the later Rule 630, that if a Knight goes out and “takes a woman as a wife”, it would “do no harm if he returns” to the Templar monastery, but he must “not be held by anything to the woman”. The misperception that married men were discouraged or somehow disfavored is disproven by this fact, that even Knights in active service were permitted to leave to get married and then return.

On Sisters

Rule 70. The company of women is a dangerous thing, in that the old Devil through the company of women has misled many from the straight path to heaven. From now on ladies should not be received as sisters in the Order of the Temple; thus, very dear brothers, henceforth it is not appropriate for this practice to become a custom, that the flower of purity will always appear among you.

This Rule specifies that it is the “company of women”, in particular “among you”, which could undermine the monasticism of the men, and not merely the fact of women being admitted to the Templar Order.

The qualifying phrases “From now on... henceforth” indicate that during the period from 1118 – 1129 AD, some women in fact had been admitted as Dame Templars.

Moreover, the statement that it was “not appropriate for this practice to become a custom” confirms that such “practice” of admitting women did in fact exist, and clarifies only the intent for it not to become the predominant “custom”. Accordingly, this Rule is best interpreted as establishing that women should not be actively recruited into the Templar Order, while leaving room for any reasonable exceptions.

The historical record reveals at least one major precedent, proving that women were sometimes admitted into the Templar Order: Manuscripts of the Teutonic Order evidence that in 1305 AD, the Abbey des Camaldules de Saint Michel de Lemmo was granted to (and received by) the Knights Templar. The “Abbess Agnès” took Vows in the Templar Order, in her Church, received into the Order by the Templar Prior from Venice who had come to take possession of the Abbey. [39]

This fact establishes that the true policy of this Rule was actually for ladies not to be “received as sisters” only within Templar houses where the celibate monastic brothers were living. Accordingly, women could be admitted as Dame Templars otherwise, and could reside in female monasteries (convents) of the Templar Order.

All of these historical facts demonstrate that women were occasionally admitted to the Order as Dame Templars, and that the actual Rule was for women to be received as an exception, and also to ensure a reasonable degree of separation from the male Knights.

This interpretation is supported by Rule 71, which only instructs the Knights to “avoid... to kiss any women”, while still not excluding women from membership in the Templar Order. That women were in fact admitted to the Order is proven by Rule 72, which requires Templars to “refuse to be godfathers or godmothers”, specifically using the additional word referring to women.

From its inception in 1118 AD, the Templar Order needed to satisfy the widespread cultural expectations of 12th century chivalry, in which knighthood had been associated with aggressive military Crusades. Other contemporary chivalric Orders did not have any women in membership as Dames, and women had no social access to training to become warriors.

Since Vatican patronage of the Temple Rule in 1129 AD, based upon the Benedictine and Cistercian Rules, the Templar Order needed to appear to comply with the widely accepted monastic practices of Catholicism. Other monastic Orders had no concept for how their traditionally celibate monks could accommodate women, and no means of learning to effectively interact with women.

The Order was granted independent sovereignty by the Papal Bull Omne Datum Optimum in 1139 AD, which recognized its own ancient Solomonic Priesthood [40]. That Priesthood flowed from the Essenes [41], who included women as equal Priestesses. Thereafter, the Templars could thus openly accept women as Dames, at any time when that would become socially acceptable.

Joan of Arc, who led the French Army against British imperialism in 1429 AD, was a descendant of the Templar King Fulk and thus a hereditary Templar [42]. She was canonized as a Martyr in 1456 AD and a Saint in 1920 AD. Saint Joan thus set an overwhelming precedent for women to be Templar Dames in full and equal membership, forever more.

That They Not Have Familiarity with Women

Rule 71. We believe it to be a dangerous thing in every religion [Fr. a toute religion, Lat. omni religioni] to look too much upon the face of a woman. And for this none of you shall presume to kiss a woman, neither widow, nor young girl, nor mother, nor sister, nor aunt, nor any other woman; and therefore the Knighthood of Jesus Christ must avoid in all manners to kiss any women, by which men have perished many times, that they can converse and remain perpetually with a pure conscience and a sure life before the face of God.

The phrase "in every religion" is significant, as it is used to apply a doctrine on women to the Templar Order as an analogous "religion", and thus implicitly includes the Order as being a religion among other religions.

That the Templar Order was recognized as its own religion, is supported by Rule 2 calling the Order a "Holy Communion" in its own right, describing it as "this Religion" which gave rise to its "knighthood", Rule 14 calling it "the Religion of Knighthood", and Rule 57 calling it a "type of new Religion", a "Religion of Knights" and also "Religion by armed Knighthood".

In this Rule, the idea that it is "dangerous... to look too much upon the face of a woman" is not the commandment. Rather, as indicated by the words "for this" and "therefore", it is only mentioned as a reason for the real policy, which is to "avoid... to kiss any women". Therefore, even this 12th century Rule is not incompatible with accepting women into the Order as Dame Templars (provided only that the brothers should not take to actually kissing them).

This interpretation is supported by Rule 70, which only limited that women should not be actively recruited as a "practice" and "custom", and should not live in Templar monasteries together with the men, while otherwise allowing women to be admitted as an exception with some reasonable degree of separation.

That women were in fact admitted to the Order is proven by Rule 72, which requires Templars to "refuse to be godfathers or godmothers", specifically using the additional word referring to women.

Also, the warning not "to look too much upon the face of a woman" is somewhat limited or modified by the tradition which became the later Rule 679, allowing Knights to retain services of a woman for care during illness, but also for any other reason if permission is granted.

In the proven tradition of Saint Joan of Arc, who was martyred in 1431 AD as a hereditary Templar actively fighting for Templar historical missions, the equality, merit and value of the role of women in the Templar Order can never more be denied. The historical record proves that women can and should be Dame Templars in full membership, with all chivalric legitimacy.

Accordingly, all parts of the Temple Rule related to women are necessarily modified by the historical realities of some proven exceptions. In modern times, those Rules which limited interaction with women would be interpreted simply as traditional requirements for modesty, respect and professionalism, to accommodate women into the modern Templar Order in an appropriate way.

Not Being Godparents

Rule 72. We command to all of the brothers that none from now on shall dare to hold children over the [baptismal] font, and none shall be ashamed to refuse to be godfathers or godmothers; as this [worldly] shame brings more glory than sin.

It was not the intent or purpose of this Rule to imply anything wrong with being sworn as a godparent during the baptism of a child. Rather, this prohibition applies only to Templars, and only because of the rigorous demands and harsh realities of Knighthood during the 12th century:

Accepting such an obligation, to potentially owe a duty to God to raise a child if anything would happen to its parents, is a major commitment to worldly life, analogous to even marriage. The essence of medieval Templar Knighthood was necessarily to renounce and reject the worldly life, to dedicate oneself in service to God. Moreover, the long military campaigns and battles in diverse foreign lands would most likely prevent a Knight from being available to help or raise such child as a godparent.

Surprisingly, this Rule contains a much unexpected reference to also being "godmothers". This is conclusive proof, directly from the historical record, that women were in fact admitted into the Order as Dames Templar. Indeed, if there were no women in the Templar Order, there would certainly be no need to write a commandment to prohibit being "godmothers".

This is supported by Rule 70, which only limited that women should not be actively recruited as a "practice" and "custom", and should not live in Templar monasteries together with the men, while otherwise allowing women to be admitted as an exception with some reasonable degree of separation. It is further supported by Rule 71, which only instructs the Knights to "avoid... to kiss any women", while still not excluding women from membership in the Templar Order.

On the Commandments

Rule 73. All of the commandments which are said and written above in this present Rule are within the discretion and in the guardianship of the Grand Master.

Selected Additional “Hierarchical” Rules

After the Temple Rule was translated into Old French ca. 1138 AD, it was expanded with additional “Hierarchical Rules” which increased it to 609 Rules by ca. 1149 AD. It was then further expanded up to 685 Rules during the 12th and 13th centuries (ca. 1150-1300 AD). All of those later Rules remained within the context and general framework of the original 72 Rules, which continued to serve as the core principles of the way of life in the Templar Order.

This section presents only two of the later additional Rules, which were found to be most relevant to interpreting the authentic meaning of the original 72 Rules:

Rule 630. If a brother goes out from the house and takes a woman as a wife, or enters into another religion [Fr. en autre religion], it would do no harm if he returns to rejoin the house; but he must not bring anything into it which he should not bring, and will not be held by anything to the woman, nor to that religion nor to us also, for he has returned from the one and from the other.

In this later Rule, the phrase “another religion” implicitly refers to the Templar Order as being its own religion, in contrast with some other religion. This is a theme which is consistently repeated throughout the Temple Rule, demonstrating that the founding Knights Templar, and also the later medieval Templars, were well aware of having their own ecclesiastical authority of their own religious denomination of Christianity.

That the Templar Order was recognized as its own religion, is supported by Rule 2 calling the Order a “Holy Communion” in its own right, describing it as “this Religion” which gave rise to its “kighthood”, Rule 14 calling it “the Religion of Knighthood”, Rule 57 calling it a “type of new Religion”, a “Religion of Knights” and also “Religion by armed Knighthood”, and Rule 71 using the phrase “in every religion” as including the Templar Order.

It is most surprising that this Rule clearly permits a Knight to “enter into another religion”, even allowing to return to the Templar base in good standing. It establishes that in such case, the Knight “will not be held by anything... to that religion nor to us also”.

Essentially, this is a principle both declaring “no conflict”, and also establishing “non-competition”. The Knight is only required not to violate Templar rules, and is equally not obligated to do anything which would violate a doctrine of the other religion. The mere existence of this Rule proves that the Templars authentically regarded all religions as fundamentally compatible, and rejected the idea that doctrines of different religions could ever really be in conflict.

This also confirms the fact that the Knights Templar did not agree with the idea of the Crusades being against Muslims nor to oppose Islam. Indeed, this Rule would even allow a Templar to already be a Muslim, or to actually convert to Islam, and still be a Knight in good standing in full participation in the Order.

As this later Rule was added in the 13th century, it most likely was a result of the fact that the Saracen leader Saladin accepted the Templar knighting ceremony and swore the Templar Vow ca. 1190 AD [43]. The historical context indicates that this Rule developed within the few decades after, in recognition of the understanding that Christianity and Islam were generally compatible, and that both were dedicated to upholding the principles of goodness of the same God.

This interpretation is supported by Rule 14, that the only real purpose of Templar warfare was to “remove from the land the enemies of Christ”, not to kill Muslims, evidencing the understanding that Muslims were not necessarily enemies, and that the real enemies could even be evil-doers pretending to be Christians. It is further supported by Rule 57, which in the original Latin says only to “strike” enemies, proving no specific intent to kill, evidencing that Templar warfare was never intended to eliminate Muslims nor to destroy Islam.

It is also very interesting that this Rule openly allows a Knight to go out and “take a woman as a wife”, and then return to the Templar monastery. In that case, it is established that he “will not be held by anything to the woman... nor to us also”. This essentially declares a policy of “non-interference” both ways, that the marriage should not undermine dedicated service to the Order, and that nothing of the Order should compromise the bonds of marriage.

This is supported by the original Rule 69, which imposes only an obligation of modesty to avoid flaunting the comforts of one’s marriage, and to be seen making major contributions which are not undermined by the worldly demands of marriage.

Rule 679. ... Nor should you ever take the services of a woman, unless being for illness of your body, or by permission from he [a Templar Master] who grants that you may.

It was an established tradition, eventually codified in this later Rule, that Knights were permitted to retain the services of a woman for their care during periods of illness. Moreover, it was also allowed to have the services of women for any other reason, as long as permission was granted by the appropriate Master or Commander of the Order.

This Rule clearly limits and qualifies, and indeed seems to somewhat undermine, the warning in Rule 71 not “to look too much upon the face of a woman”.

Records of the "Temple de Paris" (the Templar headquarters in France) contained statements by Deputies of the Grand Master within the Grand Priory of France, that "religious brothers during illness" were allowed to "call women of age, of an upright life" to care for them. Similar records from the 14th century also evidenced that the Templar Paris facility also permanently employed "one or two" women for cooking and cleaning, and sometimes for providing hair cuts. [44]

Accordingly, those Rules which limited the interaction of men with women can be authentically interpreted as simply traditional requirements for modesty, respect and professionalism. Far from excluding women from participation in the Templar Order, such Rules actually served to facilitate and accommodate women in an appropriate way, in the context of contemporary culture during the relevant period in history.

Understood from this more balanced perspective, this more fundamental core principle can still be observed in the modern era, while enabling full and active participation of women in the Templar Order.

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