TEMPLAR GENERAL CHAPTERS

By ALAN FOREY

This paper seeks to examine various aspects of Templar general chapters and also to draw some comparisons with the general chapters of other orders. Origins, frequency, length, and location are discussed, together with the size and composition of the chapter. The functions of chapters, including legislation, appointments to leading offices, alienation of property, and justice, are considered. The question of capitular seals is also investigated. For many topics the surviving evidence is limited, but some claims that have been made about Templar general chapters are challenged. The evidence about alleged early chapters is not convincing. It seems that chapters were expected to be held annually and not at intervals of five years. There is evidence to show that chapters were occasionally held in western Europe as well as at the Order's headquarters and other places in the East. Lastly, the assertion that Hospitaller general chapters were more representative than those of the Temple is questioned.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries new religious orders commonly followed the example of the Cistercians in summoning periodic general chapters. In 1215 Innocent III further decreed that in each kingdom or province there should be a chapter for the heads of religious houses who until then had not been obliged to attend a general chapter.[1] It is therefore not surprising that general chapters became a normal feature of the government of military orders, including the Temple. It is not, however, easy to provide a comprehensive

I am very grateful to Jochen Burgtorf for his comments on an earlier version of this paper. The following abbreviations will be used throughout: ACA = Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón; AHN = Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional; CH = *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, ed. Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, 4 vols. (Paris, 1894–1906); CN = *Il corpus normativo templare: Edizione dei testi romanzi con traduzione e commento in italiano*, ed. Giovanni Amatuccio (Galatina, 2009); CR = Cancillería Real; CRT = *The Catalan Rule of the Templars: A Critical Edition and English Translation from Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Cartas Reales, MS 3344*, ed. and trans. Judi Upton-Ward (Woodbridge, 2003); FL = Alan Forey, "Letters of the Last Two Templar Masters," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45 (2001): 145–71; PT = *Procès des Templiers*, ed. Jules Michelet, 2 vols. (Paris, 1841–1851); PTF = *Processus contra Templarios in Francia: Procès-verbaux de la procédure menée par la commission pontificale à Paris (1309–1311)*, ed. Magdalena Satora, 2 vols. (Leiden, 2020); and RT = *La règle du Temple*, ed. Henri de Curzon (Paris, 1886).

[1] *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al., 4 vols. (Turnhout, 2006–2016), 2.1:174.

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survey of the general chapters of military orders, and comparatively little has been written about them. One obstacle is the lack of precision in the use of terms in the documentation of the military orders, as in many other medieval sources. The titles *commendator* and *preceptor* were given to brothers holding a wide variety of positions, ranging from those having charge of a convent's sheep or other farm animals to headship of a province or other senior post.[2] There were also various assemblies designated by the term *capitulum*. In the Temple, as in some other military orders, there were not only the meetings held weekly in individual houses but also provincial chapters and general chapters of the whole Order, as well as more occasional assemblies of various sorts. In Templar sources the chapter of an individual house was occasionally called a *capitulum particulare*, *capitulum singulare*, or *capitulum speciale*.[3] A provincial chapter was sometimes described as *capitulum provinciale*, but more frequently as *capitulum generale*, since it was the general assembly of the province.[4] The latter term was also applied to general chapters of the whole Order. Yet in many instances the single word *capitulum*, or its vernacular equivalent, was used to describe any of these meetings. This problem of terminology is, for example, very apparent in the surviving texts of Templar regulations. These also present a further difficulty. They do not constitute a coherent whole, and comparatively little is known about the process of composition of the sections added to the early rule.[5] Yet it is clear that some parts include statements which are merely observations inserted by those who compiled them.[6] A further major

[2] For preceptors of sheep, pigs and other animals, see *Col·lecció diplomàtica de la casa del Temple de Gardeny (1070–1200)*, ed. Ramon Sarobe i Huesca, 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1998), 2:632–33 (doc. 422); Antonio Benavides, *Memorias de D. Fernando IV de Castilla*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1860), 2:728; RT, 307 § 591; and CN, 322–24 § 41.

[3] PT, 1:506 and 588; 2:34, 119, and 135; PTF, 1:654, 740, 816, and 831; *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson, 2 vols. (Farnham, 2011), 1:128, 134, and 179; and Konrad Schottmüller, *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1887), 2:16.

[4] Francesco Tommasi, "Interrogatorio di Templari a Cesena (1310)," in *Acri 1291: La fine della presenza degli ordini militari in Terra Santa e i nuovi orientamenti nel XIV secolo*, ed. Francesco Tommasi (Perugia, 1996), 265–300, at 288; Léon Ménard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et littéraire de la ville de Nismes avec des notes et les preuves*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1750–1758), 1, Preuves, 176, 177, 179, 180, 185, 187, 191, 192, 194, 203, 211, and 212; Telesforo Bini, "Dei Tempieri e del loro processo in Toscana," *Atti della Reale Accademia Lucchese di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti* 13 (1845): 395–506, at 463–64, 472–73, and 495; *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:105 and 170; PT, 2:36, 135, 167, 169, 207, 235, and 279; PTF, 1:741, 831, 863–64, 900, and 926; and Jochen Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars: History, Organization, and Personnel (1099/1120–1310)* (Leiden, 2008), 183.

[5] The Hospitaller *Usances* were compiled by *prodomes* of that order: CH, 2:548 (doc. 2213).

[6] Christian Vogel, *Das Recht der Templer* (Berlin, 2007), 125–27.

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obstacle to the investigation of general chapters of military orders is, of course, lack of evidence. This is especially apparent in the case of some short-lived or minor military orders, such as Mountjoy or St Thomas of Acre, but the study of the Temple's general chapters is also much impeded by the loss of the Order's central archives.[7] It is therefore more difficult to reach conclusions about the Temple's general chapters than about those of many religious orders, and on many points conclusions have to be tentative.

Origins

The general chapters of some orders can be traced back to within a few years of an institution's foundation. The Cistercian general chapter was established very shortly after daughter houses of Cîteaux began to be founded, while the general chapter of the military order of Santiago was mentioned by Alexander III in his bull of confirmation in 1175, only five years after that order's creation.[8] The emergence of the Temple's general chapter, like that of the Hospital, cannot be traced so easily. A meeting in Paris in 1147, at which a donation was made to the Temple and 130 Templars were said to be present, has been called a "general" chapter, but that word is not used in the document and, as the pope, the French king, and several archbishops participated, it cannot be compared with later general chapters.[9] Attention has also been drawn to a charter recording a sale in Paris by the Templar master Everard in 1150, which was said to have been drawn up in "comuni capitulo," but there is nothing to indicate that it was a general

[7] Rudolf Hiestand, "Zum Problem des Templerzentralarchivs," *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 76 (1980): 17–38; and Anthony Luttrell, "The Templars' Archives in Syria and Cyprus," in *The Templars and their Sources*, ed. Karl Borchardt et al. (Abingdon, 2017), 38–45. A general chapter of the order of St. Thomas of Acre is mentioned only once in thirteenth-century documentation, while the only possible reference to a general chapter of the order of Mountjoy is in a document in which the master, with the counsel of twenty-one named brothers, including seven commanders, "totiusque capituli eiusdem domus", sought an amalgamation with the Templars in 1196: London, National Archives, SC 8/331/15661; *Fuero de Alfambra*, ed. Manuel Albareda y Herrera (Madrid, 1926), 101–102; and F. D. Gazulla, "La orden del Santo Redentor," *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura* 10 (1929): 98–101, at 100–101.

[8] Jean-Berthold Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement des origines au milieu du XIIIe siècle (1098–1265)* (Paris, 1951), 60–61; Florent Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter: Cisterzienser, Prämonstratenser, Kartäuser und Cluniazenser* (Münster, 2002), 24–25; and José L. Martín, *Orígenes de la orden militar de Santiago (1170–1195)* (Barcelona, 1974), 248–54 (doc. 73).

[9] Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Structures of the Orders of the Temple and the Hospital in c.1291," in *The Medieval Crusade*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard (Woodbridge, 2004), 125–43, at 136; Vogel, *Recht der Templer*, 305; and *Cartulaire général de l'ordre du Temple, 1119?–1150*, ed. Marquis d'Albon (Paris, 1913), 279–80 (doc. 448).

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chapter of the Order.[10] The first clear reference to a general chapter of the Temple is found in the Order's *retrais*, which may have been compiled about the year 1165, although differing views have been expressed about the date of composition. By comparison, the earliest surviving mention of a Hospitaller general chapter is from the year 1176.[11] Yet it is likely that general chapters of both orders were instituted rather earlier, as they had begun to create a provincial organization well before the 1160s and 1170s. There would have been a need for a central assembly of the whole order, and it is known that the Hospital had begun to convene provincial or prioral chapters as early as 1123.[12]

Frequency

It is not possible to provide a complete list of Templar general chapters, but it has been claimed that they were convened once every five years, and that thirteen can be traced in the thirteenth century.[13] A list of known chapters in fact includes fourteen, held in 1221, 1236, 1241, 1246/47, 1251, 1261, 1266, 1271, 1276, 1281, 1286, 1291, 1293, and 1296.[14] The conclusion could clearly be drawn that general chapters were normally summoned in the first and sixth years of each decade. The list is said to have been drawn up "avec un degré d'erreur acceptable," but, as the sources of information for these chapters have been indicated in only a few cases,

[10] *Cartulaire général du Temple*, ed. Albon, 362 (doc. 589). A chapter held by the Templar master Bertrand of Blanchefort in Jerusalem in 1167 has also been referred to as a "capitulum commune," but it has been pointed out that this claim is based on a misunderstanding of the Latin text: H. H. Grauert, "Eine Tempelherrenurkunde von 1167," *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 3 (1878): 294–309, at 294–95; Riley-Smith, "The Structures of the Orders," 136; and Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 52 n. 288.

[11] RT, 83 § 93; CN, 54 § 18; Vogel, *Recht der Templer*, 104–107; Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 10–11 and 52; and CH, 1:339–40 (doc. 494). Several references to a Hospitaller *capitulum* were made in a letter of Alexander III in 1170, but the nature of the assembly is not explained: CH, 1:276–79 (doc. 403); and *Papsturkunden für Templer und Johanniter: Neue Folge*, ed. Rudolf Hiestand (Göttingen, 1984), 222–27 (doc. 19).

[12] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c.1070–1309* (Basingstoke, 2012), 194.

[13] Alain Demurger, *Les Templiers: Une chevalerie chrétienne au moyen âge* (Paris, 2005), 147; idem, *Chevaliers du Christ: Les ordres religieux-militaires au moyen âge, XIe–XVIe siècle* (Paris, 2002), 115; and Pierre-Vincent Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple en Terre Sainte et à Chypre au XIIIe siècle*, 3 vols. (Nicosia, 2005), 1:136–37 and 139. Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:136, asserts that Marie L. Bulst-Thiele, "Der Prozess gegen den Templerorden," in *Die geistlichen Ritterorden Europas*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein and Manfred Hellmann (Sigmaringen, 1980), 375–402, at 375, maintains that general chapters were held every five or six years, but she merely states that the Aragonese provincial master had to attend the chapter every five or six years.

[14] Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:139.

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it is difficult to distinguish between fact and hypothesis.[15] Yet the dates of some may certainly be questioned. The chapter assigned to the year 1236 is mentioned in Templar regulations. It was held at Caesarea and the Templar Hugh of Montlaur was said to be among those present.[16] In 1236, Hugh was the Aragonese provincial master. He can be traced in his province in the later part of October 1235, in the second half of May 1236, and in September, October, and November of that year.[17] Given the normal sailing times across the Mediterranean and the likelihood that general chapters were held in the autumn, it may therefore be doubted whether Templar regulations were referring to the year 1236.[18] That there was a chapter in 1246/47 seems to rest merely on supposition.[19] Doubts may also be voiced about the chapter said to have been held at Caesarea in 1251.[20] The Barcelona manuscript of Templar regulations reports that the French provincial master Guy of Bazainville went to the East to seek advice from the master and convent about a brother who had left his house by going over the wall. The issue was brought before the master Renaud of Vichiers at Caesarea in 1251/52, and Guy then returned to France, where the brother was expelled. The provincial master may have been going to a general chapter, but the text refers only to the master and convent.[21] The Templar customs do elsewhere mention a general chapter convened by Renaud of Vichiers, who held the office of master from 1250 to 1256, but they give no indication of date or place.[22]

Evidence of a general chapter in 1276 seems to be based on a report found in a work by the Hospitaller Roger of Stanegrave, the manuscript of which has been

[15] It may also be pointed out that a chapter general in 1300 is mentioned in Pierre-Vincent Claverie, "'*Contra soldanum de Coine*' ou la contribution des templiers portugais à la défense de la Syrie franque," in *As ordens militares e as ordens de cavalaria entre o ocidente e o oriente*, ed. Isabel Cristina F. Fernandes (Palmela, 2009), 399–412, at 407.

[16] RT, 304 § 585; and CN, 312–14 § 34.

[17] ACA, CR, Registro 309, fols. 22v–23v; Registro 310, fol. 47r–v; AHN, Códices, L. 470, 118 (doc. 147); and Laureà Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les terres de l'Ebre (Tortosa): De Jaume I fins a l'abolició de l'orde (1213-1312)*, 2 vols. (Tarragona, 1999), 2:55–57 (doc. 45).

[18] Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 566, suggests that the chapter took place while Hugh held the post of marshal (1242–44). See also Vogel, *Recht der Templer*, 111.

[19] Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:139 n. 87, states that the only information about this chapter is an unsubstantiated comment by Laurent Dailliez, *Les Templiers: Ces inconnus* (Paris, 1972), 110. Dailliez assigns the assembly to the year 1247. Later, Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:178, links the case of a Templar, who appeared before a general chapter after claiming to have been forced to convert while in Muslim captivity, with the supposed chapter of 1246/47, although the report in the Templar customs gives no indication of date: RT, 296–97 § 569; and CN, 304 § 21.

[20] Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:138.

[21] CRT, 78 § 176. On the date, see Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 638.

[22] RT, 317–18 § 616; and CN, 346 § 78.

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severely damaged by fire.[23] It does not obviously allude to a Templar chapter, and its editor describes it as a meeting, "sans doute imaginaire," of King Hugh of Cyprus, the nobles in Acre, the new Templar master, and others late in 1275 or in 1276.[24] Differing opinions have also been expressed about the date of the chapter held in Cyprus "in the year when the city of Acre was lost" (*illo anno quo civitas Aconensis fuit perdita*), which was mentioned by a Templar witness during the Order's trial.[25] While some have placed it in the later part of 1291, others have argued in favor of 1292.[26] The wording would seem to imply the year 1291, and according to a dating system then in common use, that year would not end until 24 March 1292. Yet a date of April 1292 has been suggested, although chapters were apparently not usually held at that time of year. But it should also be noted that the witness was commenting some twenty years after the event and that his memory may by then have become somewhat vague. It does not follow, of course, that chapters were not in fact held in the years listed, but it may be questioned whether the neat pattern of quinquennial assemblies is as definitive and clear-cut as the list would suggest. The claim about quinquennial chapters is also hardly compatible with a statement made by the Templar master William of Beaujeu in 1290 when rejecting a request from the Aragonese queen-mother Constance that William of Canellis should be reappointed as provincial master in Sicily. He maintained that it was the norm for provincial masters to be recalled at four-year intervals.[27]

In most religious orders general chapters were scheduled to be held at regular intervals, and the majority normally convened annual chapters. The Franciscans and Carmelites were unusual in calling a general chapter only once every three years.[28] The regulations of some military orders state or imply that general chapters

[23] Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:140.

[24] *Projets de croisade (v.1290–v.1330)*, ed. Jacques Paviot (Paris, 2008), 328 with n. 99.

[25] PT, 2:139; and PTF, 1:836.

[26] Alain Demurger, *Jacques de Molay: Le crépuscule des Templiers* (Paris, 2002), 95–96; Anthony Luttrell, "The Election of the Templar Master Jacques de Molay," in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307–1314)*, ed. Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham, 2010), 21–31; Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 133 and 148 n. 137; and Philippe Josserand, *Jacques de Molay: Le dernier grand-maître des Templiers* (Paris, 2019), 105.

[27] *Acta Aragonensia*, ed. Heinrich Finke, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1908–1922), 3:10 (doc. 5); *Diplomatari de Pere el Gran 1: Cartes i pergamins, 1258–1285*, ed. Stefano M. Cingolani (Barcelona, 2011), 808–809 (doc. 459); and Elena Bellomo, "Mobility of Templar Brothers and Dignitaries: The Case of North-Western Italy," in *International Mobility in the Military Orders (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries): Travelling on Christ's Business*, ed. Jochen Burgtorf and Helen Nicholson (Cardiff, 2006), 102–13, at 106.

[28] Jacques Hourlier, *Le chapitre général jusqu'au moment du grande schisme: Origines-développement-étude juridique* (Paris, 1936), 145 and 152; C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London, 1994), 51; and Frances Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2008), 22.

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were to be held every year. This was decreed in Alexander III's confirmation of Santiago and in the regulations of the Teutonic Order, which derived many of its rulings from the Templars.[29] In 1264, Urban IV ruled that at general chapters of Santiago it should be decided where the assembly was to be held in the following year.[30] Decrees issued in several later chapters of that order include a provision for the summoning of the assembly in the next year. Thus, in 1265 it was stated that in 1266 the chapter was to be held at León.[31] In 1274, the chapter of Santiago also ruled that young oxen should be distributed among the order's houses at the general chapter each year, while the chapter of Santiago held in the following year decreed that "we consider it proper that they hold a chapter every year in accordance with the declaration and the privilege" (*tenemos por bien que fagan cada año cabildo commo dize en la declaración e en el previllejo*).[32] Chapters of the order of Santiago are in fact recorded in every year from 1251 until 1254, from 1256 until 1260, and from 1268 until 1271.[33]

No decree stating that general chapters should be held annually survives for the Hospital, but it is known that Hospitaller general chapters were held every year between 1262 and 1265 and again between 1300 and 1306.[34] Several statements in that order's statutes also suggest that it was the norm to hold chapters annually. A decree of 1304 stated that the infirmarer should render account every year at the general chapter, while an earlier Hospitaller decree issued in 1283 had stated that no bailiwick granted by the general chapter should be assigned for more than a year, which would also suggest that meetings normally took place every year.[35] A Hospitaller document of 1299 includes the clause "when the time of the chapter approaches" (*quant la saison dou chapitre aprochoit*), which could indicate that general chapters were held at regular intervals, and the Hospitaller ruling of 1301 that at least two western priors should travel to the East each year would also suggest that chapters were held annually.[36]

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[29] Martín, *Orígenes de la orden militar de Santiago*, 248–54 (doc. 73); and *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle, 1890), 102 (Gewohnheiten 18).

[30] *Bullarium equestris ordinis sancti Iacobi de Spatha*, ed. A. F. Aguado de Córdova, A. A. Alemán y Rosales, and J. López Agurleta (Madrid, 1719), 202–203; *La documentación pontificia de Urbano IV (1261–1264)*, ed. Ildefonso Rodríguez de Lama (Rome, 1981), 244–45 (doc. 165); and Manuel López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa: Historia y leyenda de un maestre santiaguista* (Badajoz, 2010), 609–10 (doc. 27).

[31] Philippe Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique: Les ordres militaires dans le royaume de Castille (1252–1369)* (Madrid, 2004), 841; and López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa*, 574.

[32] Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 848 and 849; and López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa*, 565 and 576.

[33] Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 440.

[34] Alain Demurger, *Les Hospitaliers: De Jérusalem à Rhodes, 1050–1317* (Paris, 2013), 540–41.

[35] CH, 3:450–55 (doc. 3844 § 26); and 4:93–99 (doc. 4672 § 11).

[36] CH, 3:769–76 (doc. 4462); and 4:14–23 (doc. 4549 § 12).

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Less evidence survives about the Temple, but the Barcelona version of Templar customs includes a clause stating that the provincial masters of Tripoli and Antioch were to attend a chapter with the master and convent each year.[37] This does not mention western provincial masters, as a similar clause in the Teutonic Order's regulations does. This states that the provincial masters of Armenia and Cyprus should attend, together with "others whom the master decides should be summoned" (*alii quos magister viderit convocandos*).[38] But obviously not all western provincial masters could be expected to travel out to the East annually, as journeys across the Mediterranean and back occupied many months.[39] This clause in the Templar customs is implying merely that western provincial masters did not go to the East every year. In other religious orders heads of houses living at a great distance were not expected to attend every general chapter and, according to witnesses at the Templar trial, commanders in Ireland attended provincial chapters in England only every two or three years.[40]

Further evidence about the Temple is provided by an agreement in 1258 about the settling of disputes between the Temple, the Hospital, and the Teutonic Orders. The masters of the three orders promised that they and their successors would have the agreement read out every year at their general chapters.[41] This would hardly have been agreed if it had not been regarded as the usual practice to hold annual general chapters in all these orders. It has admittedly been claimed that the comment about annual chapters may have been referring to provincial, rather than general, chapters and also that it "may have been the expression of a pious wish."[42] Yet it is difficult to understand why an agreement made in the Holy Land by the masters of the three orders should have referred only to provincial chapters; and it was usually in provincial documents that provincial chapters were termed "general." Nor would an agreement of this kind be expected to be an occasion for expressing pious wishes.

[37] CRT, 22 § 44; and CN, 358.

[38] *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 102 § 18.

[39] On the journeys to the East of the Aragonese Templar master in 1300–1301 and 1306–1307, see Alain Demurger, "Between Barcelona and Cyprus: The Travels of Berenguer of Cardona, Templar Master of Aragon and Catalonia (1300–1)," in *International Mobility in the Military Orders*, ed. Burgtorf and Nicholson, 65–74; and FL, 153–54.

[40] *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:125–26. Some Cistercian abbots, for example, were for reasons of distance not required to attend every general chapter. See Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement*, 179; and Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, 53.

[41] CH, 2:859–63 (doc. 2902); and *Tabulae ordinis theutonici*, ed. Ernst Strehlke (Berlin, 1869), 98–103 (doc. 116).

[42] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Templars and Hospitallers as Professed Religious in the Holy Land* (Notre Dame, 2010), 52; and idem, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant*, 133.

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It may further be noted that some western provincial masters of the Templars, like some Hospitaller priors, travelled to the East in years when references elsewhere to a general chapter are lacking.[43] In 1231 the Templar provincial master in England was promised royal protection, which was to last until he returned from his chapter overseas.[44] The English provincial master Robert of Sandford went out to Jerusalem in 1243.[45] In 1274 a later English provincial master, Guy of Foresta, appointed deputies until he returned to the kingdom or until a replacement arrived. He was probably going to a general chapter, for in that year he was apparently relieved of his post and stayed in the East, where he was marshal in 1277.[46] Berenguer of Santjust, Templar provincial master in Aragon, similarly travelled to the East in 1290, when he was replaced by Berenguer of Cardona; two years later he was *comandor de la terre* in Cyprus.[47] Evidence from the opening years of the fourteenth century similarly reveals the presence of western provincial masters in the East in years other than 1301 and 1306. The Aragonese provincial master Berenguer of Cardona and the master of Portugal were in Cyprus in the autumn of 1300; the English provincial master William de la More was there in 1304; and the head of the Castilian province apparently travelled to the East in 1305.[48] Admittedly, not all heads

[43] In 1215, for example, the English Hospitaller prior was granted a safe-conduct "in travelling overseas to their chapter with his payments" (*in eundo in partes transmarinas cum elemosinis suis versus capitulum eorum*): *Rotuli litterarum patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. Thomas D. Hardy (London, 1835), 138. Apparently, no other reference to this chapter survives. See also *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, A.D. 1247–1258* (London, 1908), 561.

[44] *Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office, A.D. 1225–1232* (London, 1903), 433.

[45] *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office, A. D. 1242–1247* (London, 1916), 19.

[46] *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A. D. 1272–1279* (London, 1901), 124; Evelyn Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow, 2002), 21; and Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 553.

[47] ACA, CR, Registro 81, fol. 81r. He was *comandor de la terre* in Cyprus in 1292: Alan Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón* (London, 1973), 405–406 (doc. 36); and Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 495–96.

[48] Demurger, "Between Barcelona and Cyprus," 65–74; FL, 153–54; Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 414–15 (doc. 44); *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, Vol. 5, A. D. 1302–1307* (London, 1908), 137–38, 172, and 208; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A. D. 1301–1307* (London, 1898), 222; Marie L. Bulst-Thiele, *Sacrae domus militiae Templi Hierosolymitani magistri: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Templerordens 1118/19–1314* (Göttingen, 1974), 366–67 (doc. 8); Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 597; Schottmüller, *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens*, 2:208; and *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus: A Complete English Edition*, ed. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Leiden, 1998), 138.

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of provinces were necessarily going to attend chapters when they journeyed to the East.[49] Yet clearly at least some of these journeys were made for the purpose of heads of provinces participating in general chapters to which no other reference has survived.

There are, therefore, some grounds for maintaining that general chapters of the Temple, as of some other military orders, were expected to be held annually, even though the evidence is limited, but the lack of definitive proof does not necessarily invalidate the claim. It is to be remembered that indications of annual provincial chapters do not exist for most Templar provinces. That they were normally convened each year is known mainly from the chance survival of a set of royal responses to petitions submitted during the Templar trial by individuals in England who during the preceding decades had been assigned corrodies or pensions at provincial chapters.[50]

That general chapters were expected to be held annually does not, of course, imply that there were no exceptions. Although the Dominicans usually convened a general chapter each year, there were eight occasions between 1220 and 1360 when no general chapter of that order was held.[51] When James of Molay was in the West in the last decade of the thirteenth century—Templar sources in western Europe for that time are fairly plentiful—he appears not to have summoned a general chapter in 1294 or 1295. An assembly in Paris in the latter year, at which the grand master was reported to have admitted several recruits, seems to have been merely a provincial chapter, as it was held on 24 June, the normal date for the chapter of the French province. Chapters at Bruer in Lincolnshire and at Lleida in Catalonia at which James was present in 1294 were merely *ad hoc*

[49] In 1306 the Aragonese master Berenguer of Cardona informed the commander of Peñíscola that he had received a letter from James of Molay in which the latter stated that he had had a communication from the pope and wanted the provincial master to go to the East in August for discussions. A letter from James of Molay to the Aragonese king James II also mentions that Berenguer of Cardona had been instructed to go "ad conventum" on the passage in September. Berenguer himself later reported that he had arrived at Limassol on 8 October, but he was with the grand master for only three days before the latter departed for the West. Berenguer did not allude to a general chapter, and it would be rather surprising if the three days had happened to coincide with a meeting of the chapter, although his journey may have taken longer than anticipated: ACA, CR, Cartas Reales Diplomáticas, Jaime II, Templarios (cajas 137–42), 142 and 247; and FL, 164–65 (doc. 11).

[50] *Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. Henry Cole (London, 1844), 139–230; and Alan Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters in the Later Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries," *Ordines Militares* 23 (2018): 275–99, at 277.

[51] G. R. Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216–1360* (Manchester, 1925), 87.

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assemblies and not even provincial chapters.[52] The Hospitaller master William of Villaret similarly convened no general chapters in 1298 and 1299 when he was also residing in the West.[53]

Location

The Templars, like the Hospitallers, appear usually to have held general chapters where their headquarters were located, although more information survives for Hospitaller chapters than for those of the Temple.[54] Yet both orders at times convened chapters elsewhere in the East. The Hospitaller general chapter that issued statutes in 1206 was held at Margat, and the prologue to those enacted in 1262 refers to chapters which had met at Caesarea, Jaffa, and La Vigne Neuve.[55] As has been shown, Templar regulations similarly refer to a chapter at Caesarea, and a Franciscan questioned during the Templar trial claimed to have seen a Templar letter, which referred to statutes of the Order that had been enacted at Château Pèlerin, presumably at a general chapter.[56] A Catalan Templar interrogated in Sicily similarly referred to statutes enacted at Damietta, apparently during the fifth crusade. He admittedly claimed that these decrees alluded to the adoration of a cat at chapters, but his comment may not have been complete fiction.[57] The decision to hold a chapter away from an order's headquarters was presumably determined by the political or military situation at the time.

Both these orders also occasionally convened general chapters in western Europe when masters were staying there. In 1297 the Hospitaller master William of Villaret summoned a general chapter at Marseille and planned to hold a further chapter at Avignon in 1300.[58] Although the assemblies that the

[52] PT, 1:475 and 627–28; PTF, 1:552 and 690; *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:133, 140, 192, and 251; Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les terres de l'Ebre*, 2:197–98 (doc. 171); and FL, 161–62 (doc. 4). In 1294, the English provincial chapter took place at Dinsley in June and that of the Aragonese province had met in May: *Documents Illustrative of English History*, ed. Cole, 175; and *Diplomatari del Masdéu*, ed. Rodrigue Tréton, 5 vols. (Barcelona, 2010), 5:2699 (doc. 71 sexto, where the date is given incorrectly).

[53] This is apparent from CH, 3:769–79 (docs. 4462–63).

[54] See the lists in Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*,1:139; and Demurger, *Les Hospitaliers*, 540–41.

[55] CH, 2:31–40 (doc. 1193); and 3:43–54 (doc. 3039). The suggestion that a Hospitaller general chapter was held at Tarsus in 1225 has been shown to be incorrect: Judith Bronstein, *The Hospitallers and the Holy Land: Financing the Latin East, 1187–1274* (Woodbridge, 2005), 79; and Demurger, *Les Hospitaliers*, 255.

[56] PT, 1:458; PTF, 1:537; and Rudolf Hiestand, "*Castrum Peregrinorum* e la fine del dominio crociato in Siria," in *Acri 1291*, ed. Tommasi, 23–41, at 33.

[57] F. J. M. Raynouard, *Monuments historiques, rélatifs à la condamnation des chevaliers du Temple et à l'abolition de leur ordre* (Paris, 1813), 282–83.

[58] Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant*, 137.

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Templar master James of Molay convened at Montpellier in 1293 and Arles in 1296 have been seen as merely provincial chapters attended by several Templar dignitaries from outside, and although provincial chapters in Provence were most commonly held at Montpellier, there are grounds for maintaining that these meetings were in fact regarded as general chapters of the Order.[59] In 1293 James of Molay informed the English king Edward I that he was planning to hold "our general chapter" (*nostrum capitulum generale*), and a document issued by the master at the Montpellier assembly was drawn up "in our general chapter" (*in capitulo nostro generali*).[60] Similar wording was used in a charter issued at the assembly at Arles in 1296.[61] The inclusion of the words *nostrum* and *nostro* suggests that these were the master's general chapter, and not merely provincial assemblies.

That they were general chapters is further implied by the fact that the business conducted was not only of a local character. Although one document drawn up at Montpellier was concerned with matters in Provence, that chapter also dealt with wider issues.[62] The proposed surrender of Templar rights in the Spanish city of Tortosa to James II of Aragon in return for property elsewhere was discussed.[63] According to a Templar who appeared before papal commissioners in Paris in 1311, new regulations about food were enacted by the master at Montpellier. As this witness was from the Paris region, he was not alluding to a merely local ruling.[64] Similarly, at Arles in 1296 a grant of commanderies in Portugal was made.[65] It may also be pointed out that both assemblies were attended by a number of western provincial masters. A royal letter of 18 June 1293 mentions that the English provincial master was going abroad, after James of Molay had summoned him to the chapter. Berenguer of Cardona, master of the Aragonese province, was given permission by James II to attend the "capitulum generale" at

[59] Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 114 n. 225; Laureà Pagarolas i Sabaté, "La fi del domini de l'orde del Temple a Tortosa: La permuta de 1294," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 28 (1998): 269–92, at 279; and Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 280.

[60] Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove, "Deux lettres inédites de Jacques de Molay," *Bulletin de l'Academie royale des sciences, des lettres, et des beaux-arts de Belgique* 38 (1874): 226–35, at 234–35; and Josserand, *Jacques de Molay*, 458–59 (doc. 5).

[61] *Documentos pontificios referentes a la diócesis de León (siglos XI–XIII)*, ed. Santiago Domínguez Sánchez (León, 2003), 592–93 (doc. 623).

[62] Josserand, *Jacques de Molay*, 458–59 (doc. 5).

[63] Francesch Carreras y Candi, "Entences y Templers en les Montanyes de Prades (1279 á 1300)," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 2 (1903–1904): 217–57, at 249. James of Molay was intending to go from Montpellier to Aragon immediately, but the visit did not occur until a year later: FL, 156; and Carreras y Candi, "Entences y Templers," 250.

[64] PT, 1:503; and PTF, 1:577.

[65] *Documentos pontificios*, ed. Domínguez Sánchez, 592–93 (doc. 623).

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Montpellier.[66] It is likely that some masters of French provinces were also there. In a document drawn up at the chapter in 1296, those listed as present included the provincial masters of France, Aquitaine, Auvergne, Provence, and Aragon.[67] The English master Brian of Jay was apparently also intending to be there, as he had obtained a license from Edward I in April 1296 to cross to France to meet the grand master, although there is no definite evidence that he actually attended the chapter.[68]

The Templar central convent remained, of course, in Cyprus during James of Molay's stay in the West, and Hospitaller regulations stated that, if the central convent could not come to a general chapter, the master should take some members of it with him to the assembly.[69] In 1306 James of Molay apparently travelled to the West with Raimbaud of Caromb, the commander of Cyprus, but it is not known whether any members of the convent accompanied him on his earlier journey to the West in the 1290s.[70] Yet a grant was made at the chapter at Arles by the master "and the whole convent of the said militia" (*totusque eiusdem militie conventus*).[71] When in 1294 James of Molay empowered the Aragonese provincial master to surrender Templar rights in Tortosa in an exchange with James II, he stated that he was acting "on our and our convent's authority" (*auctoritate nostra et conventus nostri*).[72] That document was also sealed with the seal of the convent. Whether or not James was accompanied by any members of the central convent during his stay in western Europe in the 1290s, he seems to have been authorized to act on behalf of the central convent, whose seal he had brought to the West, and he was associating the central convent in his decisions. Yet Templar masters rarely visited western Europe, and general chapters there were few. In contrast, masters of the Teutonic Order spent more time in the West, and general chapters of that order were not uncommonly held in Germany.[73]

Date and Duration

Many religious orders held their general chapters on the same date in a year or at approximately the same time each year. Several orders of friars, including the

[66] *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A. D. 1292–1301* (London, 1895), 22; and ACA, CR, Registro 98, fol. 218r.

[67] *Documentos pontificios*, ed. Domínguez Sánchez, 592–93 (doc. 623).

[68] *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, Vol. 3, A.D. 1288–1296* (London, 1904), 511. In January 1296, James of Molay had made known his intention to hold a chapter at Arles: Josserand, *Jacques de Molay*, 461–62 (doc. 7).

[69] CH, 2:31–40 (doc. 1193).

[70] He was interrogated in Paris in 1307: PT, 2:374–75.

[71] *Documentos pontificios*, ed. Domínguez Sánchez, 592–93 (doc. 623).

[72] Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les terres de l'Ebre*, 2:197–98 (doc. 171); and FL, 161–62 (doc. 4).

[73] Klaus Militzer, *Von Akkon zur Marienburg: Verfassung, Verwaltung und Sozialstruktur des Deutschen Ordens, 1190–1309* (Marburg, 1999), 134–35.

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Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Carmelites, held their chapters at Pentecost, while the general chapter of Grandmont was convened on 24 June, and that of the Cistercians met in mid-September.[74] The regulations of the Teutonic Order similarly ruled that its general chapter was to be held on 14 September.[75] Hospitaller chapters were not convened on a fixed date, but in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries they usually met in the period from September to November.[76] This arrangement would have allowed representatives from western Europe to sail out to the East on the autumn passage. It is more difficult to discover at what point in the year Templar general chapters were convened. Templar regulations provide no information about the timing of general chapters, but it was the custom in the later thirteenth century for Aragonese Templars to travel and dispatch supplies to the East in August or September. The assembly that appointed Berenguer of Cardona as visitor in the Iberian Peninsula in November 1300 was—on the evidence of the list of witnesses to the document of appointment—probably a general chapter.[77] It may therefore be suggested that Templar general chapters, like those of the other orders based in the East, were normally held in the autumn. It has admittedly been asserted that Templar general chapters usually took place in mid-August, but this conclusion is based on the dates of the two chapters that James of Molay held during his first visit to the West.[78]

General chapters of religious orders were of varying lengths. Those of the Premonstratensians and the Gilbertines lasted three days, and that of the Cistercians met for five days, while in 1266 the Dominicans ruled that their general chapter should not be in session for more than a week, although if necessary it could be extended by a further day or two.[79] Hospitaller statutes in 1300 decreed that general chapters could be extended to last for up to ten days—a limit which was increased to eighteen in 1304—but no clear evidence survives about the

[74] Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order*, 85 and 242; Hourlier, *Le chapitre général jusqu'au moment du grande schisme*, 145 and 152; Carole A. Hutchinson, *The Hermit Monks of Grandmont* (Kalamazoo, 1989), 108; Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement*, 174; and Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, 51.

[75] *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 102 (Gewohnheiten 18).

[76] Demurger, *Les Hospitaliers*, 540–41. In 1270, however, the chapter was convened in mid-June and in 1278 it was held in early August.

[77] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 326–27 and 414–15 (doc. 44). See also Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 114. The list of witnesses in 1300 includes the provincial master of Portugal as well as central officials. Demurger, "Between Barcelona and Cyprus," 67, states that All Saints' Day was the customary date for the Templar general chapter but does not substantiate this assertion. The document naming Berenguer of Cardona as visitor was written on 10 November.

[78] Claverie, *L'ordre du Temple*, 1:140.

[79] Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, 56, 60–61, and 153–55; Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement*, 194–95; Rose Graham, *St. Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertines* (London, 1901), 49; and Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order*, 86 and 244.

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normal length of Templar general chapters.[80] It has been claimed that a general chapter at Paris in October 1297 lasted for fourteen days, but no reference for this is supplied, and there was in fact no general chapter of the Order there in that year.[81] Templar provincial chapters, however, appear to have met for three or four days, and the Order's general chapter was presumably of greater length.[82]

Composition and Size

The composition and size of a general chapter were determined partly by an order's governmental structure. The chapter of the Cistercians, who had adopted a system of affiliation, was attended in principle by all Cistercian abbots. In contrast, the chapters of the Franciscans and Dominicans, whose houses were grouped into provinces, included provincial representatives.[83] The leading military orders based in the Holy Land also had a provincial structure, but the composition of their general chapters was further influenced by the fact that a large proportion of their convents and provinces were situated in western Europe. Although some religious orders had precise rules about attendance at general chapters, Templar regulations, like those of the Hospital and the Teutonic Order, do not give a full account of the composition or size of the Order's general chapter.[84] The central convent was, however, apparently the main element in general chapters convened in the Holy Land and later in Cyprus. As has been shown, the provincial masters of Tripoli and Antioch were also expected to attend regularly. Although it has been claimed that provincial masters from the West did not participate in Templar general chapters, no evidence has been adduced to support this claim, and it would seem that the Templars present usually included the heads of some western provinces.[85] It might be expected that, as they were apparently appointed for terms of four years, western provincial masters would

[80] CH, 3:810–16 (doc. 4515 § 12); and 4:93–99 (doc. 4672 § 16).

[81] Laurent Dailliez, *Les Templiers: Gouvernement et institutions* (Nice, 1980), 267.

[82] Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 293–94.

[83] Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement*, 178; Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, 25; Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order*, 89–91; Hourlier, *Le chapitre général jusqu'au moment du grande schisme*, 146; and John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford, 1968), 98.

[84] It has been claimed that in the Hospital all available brothers in the East participated in general chapters: Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant*, 130. Statutes issued at Margat certainly decree that "all the brothers on this side of the sea—the bailiffs, and the most wise and discreet of the others—should be summoned to the general chapter" (*au general chapistre doivent estre apelez tous les freres deça mer, les bailliz et les autres plus sages et plus discrez*): CH, 2:31–40 (doc. 1193), but this ruling, which does not cover all brothers, refers to a special general chapter for the election of a new master. It would have been militarily unwise to remove a large portion of the garrisons from Hospitaller castles.

[85] Riley-Smith, "The Structures of the Orders," 137. This claim was later modified to state that they did not come "as a matter of course to the chapters-general in the East": Riley-Smith, *Templars and Hospitallers*, 51; and idem, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant*, 133.

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attend a chapter at the end of that period, as the Aragonese provincial master Berenguer of Santjust appears to have done in 1286 and 1290.[86] Berenguer of Cardona, his successor as provincial master, is known, however, to have journeyed to Cyprus on only two occasions between 1291 and 1307.[87] Provincial masters travelling to the East were usually accompanied by several brothers, who may also have attended the chapter.[88] It is possible that eastern provincial masters brought some brothers with them, although Templar regulations mention only the attendance of the provincial masters of Tripoli and Antioch. Some brothers bringing supplies from the West may also have attended, although responsions were not always transported by brothers.[89] For example, in August 1304 the Aragonese provincial master arranged for a Barcelona merchant to make payment in Cyprus out of the money the latter gained by selling his cargo on the island.[90]

The most precise statement about the size of a Templar general chapter is found in the testimony given by the Templar John Cenaud in 1311, during the Templar trial. He asserted that there had been about 400 (*quadringinti*) brothers at the general chapter held in Cyprus in the year when Acre was lost.[91] This figure has occasioned considerable discussion. It has been suggested that the assembly was made up partly by recent arrivals from the West, although, as the Order had suffered severe losses when the Holy Land fell, it would have been difficult for western provinces to provide a large number of replacements very quickly.[92] It has further been suggested that *quadringinti* is an error for *quadrageni*.[93] Yet *quadrageni* means "forty at a time" or "forty each", and is unlikely to have been mistaken by a professional scribe for *quadringinti*. It would, however, probably be unwise to attach too much importance to John Cenaud's statement. Medieval assessments in large round numbers are often misleading, as is apparent from many estimates of the size of armies.

There are, however, some indications of the size of the central convent that apparently made up the bulk of those present at general chapters, although it is not altogether clear whether all brothers resident at the Order's headquarters

[86] ACA, CR, Registro 66, fol. 61v; and Registro 81, fol. 81r.

[87] Demurger, "Between Barcelona and Cyprus," 65–74; and FL, 153–54.

[88] In 1286 Berenguer of Cardona travelled to the East with Berenguer of Santjust: ACA, CR, Registro 66, fols. 57v and 61v; and Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 402 (doc. 30). When Berenguer of Cardona journeyed to Cyprus in 1306, he was accompanied by several Templars: ACA, CR, Cartas Reales Diplomáticas, Jaime II, Templarios 143.

[89] These responsions were the annual payments made by provinces to the Order's headquarters.

[90] ACA, CR, Pergaminos, Jaime II 2071 and 2073.

[91] PT, 2:139; and PTF, 1:836.

[92] Demurger, *Jacques de Molay*, 95–96. See also Marie-Anna Chevalier, "L'ordre du Temple en Méditerranée orientale autour de 1300," in *Entre Deus e o rei: O mundo das ordens militares*, ed. Isabel Cristina F. Fernandes, 2 vols. (Palmela, 2018), 2:599–622, at 601.

[93] Luttrell, "The Election of the Templar Master Jacques de Molay," 23.

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participated in these assemblies.[94] As—at least in the Order's later years—most Templars at the Order's headquarters were knights, presumably the large majority did.[95] Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Jerusalem in the 1160s, wrote that the Templars had 400 knights there, while in his *Historia orientalis* James of Vitry claimed that the central convent included more than 300 knights.[96] Figures from the closing decades of the Order's existence are rather lower. In his testimony during the Templar trial, one brother said that he had witnessed the reception of a recruit at Acre in the time of the master William of Beaujeu, when about a hundred knights and others had been in attendance.[97] Another witness at the trial referred to an admission ceremony at Limassol about the year 1304, at which more than 120 brothers had been present.[98] There is nothing to suggest that these ceremonies took place during a general chapter, as the second admission occurred between Easter and Pentecost, rather than in the autumn.[99] These figures could, however, offer an approximate estimate of the size of the Templar convent in its later years, although the assessments are again in round numbers and could somewhat exaggerate the convent's size at that time.[100] It was later claimed that

[94] Alan Forey, "Rank and Authority in the Military Orders during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Studia monastica* 40 (1998): 291–327, at 312–14.

[95] Alan Forey, "Recruitment to the Military Orders (Twelfth to Mid-Fourteenth Centuries)," *Viator* 17 (1986): 139–71, at 144.

[96] Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine* (London, 1848), 83; and Jacques de Vitry, *Historia orientalis* 65, ed. Jean Donnadieu (Turnhout, 2008), 266–67. One version of a letter sent by the Templar grand preceptor Thierry after the battle of Hattin stated that the convent had been almost annihilated in 1187, and that sixty brothers were lost at Cresson and 230 at Hattin, but it is not known how many of these belonged to the central convent: John H. Pryor, "Two *excitationes* from the Third Crusade: The Letters of Brother Thierry of the Temple," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25 (2010): 147–68, at 148 and 156.

[97] Heinrich Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, 2 vols. (Münster, 1907), 2:352 (doc. 156); and Barbara Frale, "L'interrogatorio ai Templari nella provincia di Bernardo Gui: Un'ipotesi per il frammento del registro avignonese 305," *Dall'Archivio Segreto Vaticano: Miscellanea di testi, saggi, e inventari* 1 (2006): 199–272, at 257.

[98] PT, 1:562; and PTF, 1:632.

[99] The statement by Jean-Marie Allard, "Templar Mobility in the Diocese of Limoges according to the Order's Trial Records," in *International Mobility in the Military Orders*, ed. Burgtorf and Nicholson, 130–41, at 135, that the second was "undoubtedly" referring to a general chapter seems rather overconfident.

[100] Chevalier, "L'ordre du Temple," in *Entre Deus e o rei*, ed. Fernandes, 601–602, states that in 1300, when the central convent was on the island of Ruad, there were 520 brothers there (120 knights and 400 sergeants). Yet the sources quoted do not indicate how many of this force were Templars: *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243–1314): La caduta degli stati crociati nel raconto di un testimone oculare* 402, ed. Laura Minervini (Naples, 2000), 310; and *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, ed. René de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1891), 239. A Templar interrogated at Poitiers in 1308 stated that he had been among 300 brothers dispatched to the East some ten years earlier following a decision by a provincial chapter in Paris: Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, 2:335 (doc. 155). Yet it is not clear why reinforcements on that scale would have been needed about the year 1298. The number is probably an overestimate.

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in 1307 there were 118 Templars in Cyprus, while only seventy-six brothers were later interrogated on the island and not all of these would have been resident at the Order's headquarters.[101]

By comparison, in 1292 the Hospitallers decreed that there should be forty knights and ten sergeants-at-arms in the kingdom of Cyprus, although in the early fourteenth century the number was increased to eighty knights and sergeants-at-arms.[102] The number of priests and "brethren of labor" was not specified in these Hospitaller pronouncements, but if most of the Hospitallers in Cyprus were knights, like the Templars on the island after the fall of Acre, then the total number would not be increased greatly by adding these groups, and again not all would have been resident at the Hospital's headquarters. It would therefore be surprising if the numbers attending a Templar general chapter in the Order's later years much exceeded a hundred brothers, although earlier the total would no doubt have been greater when the convent was apparently larger and when the provinces of Antioch and Tripoli still existed. There is, however, no indication that the Temple felt the need at any stage to appoint a committee to act on behalf of the general chapter, as some orders with large general chapters did.[103]

Functions

Templar general chapters presumably began with prayers, as those of other orders did, and then discussed a wide range of issues. Some matters could apparently be determined only in general chapters, but other issues considered by these assemblies were of a kind which could also be decided in provincial or local chapters. The surviving sources are, however, sometimes ambiguous and inconsistent, and it is also necessary at times to differentiate between theory and practice.

Legislation was a normal function of general chapters of religious orders, including many military orders, although the military orders affiliated to the Cistercians did not possess the degree of independence enjoyed by other similar foundations in this matter. Calatrava and its daughters received regulations from the abbot of Morimond and the Cistercian general chapter, while Alcántara is

[101] *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, ed. de Mas Latrie, 286; "Chronique de l'île de Chypre par Florio Bustron," ed. René de Mas Latrie, in *Mélanges historiques: Choix de documents* 5 (Paris, 1886), 1–531, at 167; Schottmüller, *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens*, 2:143–400; and *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, ed. Gilmour-Bryson.

[102] Anthony Luttrell, "Gli Ospitalieri di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme dal continente alle isole," in *Acri 1291*, ed. Tommasi, 75–91, at 80; and CH, 4:14–23 and 36–41 (docs. 4549 § 5 and 4574 § 14).

[103] See, for example, Mahn, *L'ordre cistercien et son gouvernement*, 190–93; Ludo Milis, *L'ordre des chanoines réguliers d'Arrouaise: Son histoire et son organisation, de la fondation de l'abbaye-mère (vers 1090) à la fin des chapitres annuels (1471)* (Bruges, 1969), 565–73; and Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order*, 92.

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known to have been given rulings by the master of Calatrava.[104] For some military orders, such as the Hospital and Santiago, dated statutes drawn up in general chapters have survived.[105] Decrees in this form do not exist for the Templars. The surviving additions to the Templar rule are comparable with the Hospitaller *Usances* and *Esgarts* rather than with that order's statutes. The records of the Templar trial do, however, contain various references to the enactment of statutes. As has been shown, a Catalan Templar who was questioned in Sicily mentioned statutes issued at Damietta.[106] Likewise, a Franciscan interrogated in Paris alluded to statutes enacted at Château Pèlerin.[107] These comments are, however, obviously not very precise: one was made by a non-Templar; both refer to events then distant in time; and neither alludes to a general chapter. During the trial, however, some brothers referred in general terms to the enacting of statutes at general chapters. The English Templar Peter of Oteringham stated that regulations were drawn up by the general chapter in Cyprus, and the same comment was made by several others questioned in the British Isles.[108] Yet generalized statements of this kind are of questionable value, as there was clearly considerable ignorance and uncertainty among Templars living in the West about legislative procedures in the Order. Some claimed that rulings emanated from the papal *curia*.[109] Others believed all Templar regulations dated back to the Order's origins or early years.[110]

Yet there are a few more specific comments about the legislative role of general chapters. A non-Templar witness, who held royal office in Montpellier, stated in 1310 that he had heard it said that sixteen years earlier the master, the visitor of

[104] Derek W. Lomax, "Algunos estatutos primitivos de la orden de Calatrava," *Hispania* 21 (1961): 483–94; Luís F. Oliveira, "Em torno da normativa de Calatrava: Umas Definições inéditas de finais do século XIII," in *Cister e as ordens militares na idade média: Guerra, igreja e vida religiosa*, ed. José Albuquerque Carreiras and Carlos de Ayala Martínez (Tomar, 2015), 103–36; idem, "De volta à normativa da ordem de Calatrava: Novo testemunho das *Definições* de finais do século XIII," *En la España medieval* 43 (2020): 9–26; Philippe Josserand, "Pour une étude systématique de la documentacion statutaire des ordres militaires: Deux manuscrits des 'definiciones' inédites d'Alcántara de 1306," *En la España medieval* 20 (1997): 321–38; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "The Earliest *Difiniciones* of the Order of Calatrava (1304–1383)," *Traditio* 17 (1962): 225–84; and Aurea L. Javierre Mur, *La orden de Calatrava en Portugal* (Madrid, 1952), 45–46 (doc. 1).

[105] Those for the Hospital have been published in the volumes of CH, and in translation in E. J. King, *The Rule, Statutes and Customs of the Hospitallers, 1099–1310* (London, 1934). For Santiago, see Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 835–50; and López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa*, 561–77.

[106] Raynouard, *Monumens historiques*, 283.

[107] PT, 1:458; and PTF, 1:537.

[108] *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:121, 289, and 339.

[109] *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:131, 145–47, 149, 151, 153, 155, and 259.

[110] *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:139, 245–46, and 254.

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France, and other Templar officials had issued decrees about the brothers' way of life and food. This is presumably a reference to the proceedings at the Montpellier chapter in 1293.[111] Importance should also be attached to a comment made by the Templar John Cenaud, during his interrogation at Clermont in 1309, that "some general decrees" (*aliqua precepta generalia*) were enacted at general chapters, as he claimed to have been present at a number of general chapters in the East.[112] Attention should further be drawn to clause seventy-two in the Barcelona manuscript of Templar customs, which states that changes to regulations were to be made in the general chapter and nowhere else: "it should be done by the general chapter, since the regulations of the house cannot be changed in any other way" (*il se …deit fere per chapitre general, car [en] altra manera…nuil ne le pot remuer les [est]ab[limens] de la maisó*).[113]

Although this evidence implies that legislation was a function of the general chapter, it has been asserted that "the grand master and his convent comprised the sole true legislative body in the Temple," unlike the Hospital, which had "a properly representative chapter-general." This would suggest that the master and convent could legislate at any time. In support of this claim, it has been pointed out that during the trial many Templars in western Europe stated that decrees were issued by the master and convent.[114] This evidence is, however, of limited significance. Most of those who attributed legislative powers to the master and convent were questioned in Paris, although the two brothers who gave evidence at Cesena in Italy were also of that opinion, as were several English Templars.[115] Yet Templars both in Paris and Cesena were responding to the article of accusation that "whatever the grand master, especially with his convent, ruled, ordained or decreed, the whole Order had to observe and obey and did so" (*quicquid magnus magister, maxime cum conventu suo, faciebat, ordinabat aut statuebat, totus ordo tenere et observare habebat et eciam observabat*).[116] Given the ignorance

[111] PT, 1:186; and PTF, 1:267. The statement made by another Templar that brothers were ordered not to eat fish on Fridays and that only one dish of meat should be provided on days when that was eaten could be referring to the decrees made in 1293: PT, 1:269; and PTF, 1:350–51. See also PT, 2:112; and PTF, 1:810.

[112] *Le procès des Templiers d'Auvergne, 1309–1311*, ed. Roger Sève and Anne-Marie Chagny-Sève (Paris, 1986), 120.

[113] CRT, 38 § 72; and CN, 38. Vogel, *Recht der Templer*, 139, argues that this ruling applies only to the regulations mentioned up to that point, but it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between these and later sections, which include regulations as well as examples of their implementation.

[114] Riley-Smith, "The Structures of the Orders," 135 and 139; idem, *Templars and Hospitallers*, 51 and 53; and idem, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant*, 132.

[115] PT, *passim*; PTF, 1, *passim*; Tommasi, "Interrogatorio di Templari a Cesena," in *Acri 1291*, ed. Tommasi, 292 and 297; and *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:123, 133, and 314.

[116] PT, 1:95; and PTF, 1:168.

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among Templars in the West, witnesses' answers may well have been determined by the wording of the question which was put to them. Moreover, this wording may also have influenced the way in which their responses were recorded by scribes.

It is, of course, true that the Templar general chapter in the East was dominated by the master and convent. This is apparent from the wording of clause seventy-two of the Barcelona version of regulations, for it states that the master and convent should make changes to regulations in the general chapter. The wording of the clause implies that changes could be made only there. Other clauses in the surviving texts of regulations are, however, not so specific. Clause fifty of the French versions states that "if an innovation is made, which is not among the regulations which should be observed, it should not be maintained; but if the master and the convent make an enactment, that should be adhered to" (*se une novelletés se fait, por ce n'est-il pas establissemens que l'en doie tenir, et ne le doit l'en maintenir; mais se li Maistres et li couvens establissent chose, cele doit estre tenue*).[117] This comment was made with reference to a judgement about a brother who had left the house of Acre and who later sought to return, but was then expelled for not returning his mantle quickly enough, even though it was not known how soon he had sent it back. The clause asserts that changes were made by the master and central convent, and it does not state that this had to be done in the general chapter. Yet this statement appears only in the French versions and is omitted from the Barcelona version, where it is replaced by "and this was done in the general chapter, and he was expelled from the house; and this happened in the time of brother Thomas Bérard" (*E so fo en chapitre general e perdet la maysó; e so fo el tems de ffrere Tomàs Berart*).[118] The comment in the French versions therefore appears to have been a merely a scribal insertion, although it obviously reflects the scribe's opinion. Attention may also be drawn to clause 559 in the French versions, which refers to a decree "that no one can undermine unless the convent annuls it" (*que nul ne puet abatre se li couvent nel'oste*).[119] The absence of any reference to the general chapter in these two clauses in French versions of regulations does not, however, necessarily signify that the master and convent could legislate at any time. As they were the predominant element in the general chapter, decisions made there may in some instances have been recorded as the actions of merely the master and convent. On the other hand, the possibility cannot be ruled out that in practice it may have been necessary on some occasions for the master and convent to make rulings on particular issues when the general chapter was not sitting.

Yet the alleged contrast with the Hospital, based on the assumption that Templar provincial masters in the West did not attend general chapters, can

[117] RT, 292–93 § 560; and CN, 296 § 12.
[118] CRT, 56 § 133.
[119] RT, 292 § 559; and CN, 294 § 11.

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certainly be challenged. Few provincial priors were present at Hospitaller general chapters. A statute enacted in 1301 ruled that two or more priors should be recalled each year, but this decree was annulled three years later.[120] William of Villaret, who was Hospitaller prior in Provence for thirty years, was said to have sailed to the East only twice in that time instead of undertaking the six journeys expected of him.[121] Moreover, it was reported in 1277 that the prior of Castile and Leon had refused to obey the master's summons to go to the East.[122] It may also be pointed out that documents issued by English kings concerning journeys made by Hospitaller priors to the Holy Land or later to Cyprus are not noticeably more numerous than those relating to visits to the East by Templar masters of the English province.[123] In the Hospital, as in the Temple, annual journeys to the Holy Land or Cyprus by heads of provinces would have occasioned prolonged absences from their posts every year. The Hospitaller general chapter was apparently no more representative than that of the Temple, and there was probably little difference between the legislative procedures of the two orders.

It may, of course, also be asked whether legislative rulings were at times also made more locally. A set of decrees issued by a chapter at *Mausonium* in Italy in the third quarter of the twelfth century survives, and this does appear to have been a provincial enactment.[124] Yet no other comparable documents are known. During the Templar trial many brothers stated that rulings were received from the Order's headquarters in the East, and none referred to more local legislation.[125]

The appointment of leading officials was usually a further function of general chapters of military orders.[126] In the Temple the general chapter was responsible for the appointment of the more important central officials, the heads of

[120] CH, 4:14–23 and 93–99 (docs. 4549 § 12 and 4672 § 17).

[121] CH, 3:769–76 (doc. 4462).

[122] *Diplomatari de Pere el Gran 2: Relacions internacionals i política exterior (1260–1285)*, ed. Stefano M. Cingolani (Barcelona, 2015), 161 (doc. 47).

[123] For journeys to the East by Hospitaller priors, see *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, ed. Hardy, 138; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, A. D. 1232–1247* (London, 1906), 208; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, A. D. 1247–1258*, 561; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, A. D. 1266–1272* (London, 1913), 348; and *Calendar of the Close Rolls, A.D. 1272–1279*, 50.

[124] Alois Knöpfler, "Die Ordensregel der Tempelherren," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 8 (1887): 691–95; CN, 396–402; and Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 290–91. On the dating, see Simonetta Cerrini, "Nuovi percorsi templari tra i manoscritti latini e francesi della Regola," in *Atti del Convegno i Templari in Piemonte: Dalla storia al mito*, ed. Renato Bordone (Turin, 1995), 35–51, at 40–41; and eadem, "La tradition manuscrite de la règle du Temple: Études pour une nouvelle édition des versions latine et française," in *Autour de la première croisade*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris, 1996), 203–19, at 209–10.

[125] See, for example, *The Proceedings against the Templars*, ed. Nicholson, 1:240, 245, 249–50, and 256–58.

[126] See, for example, CH, 2:31–40 (doc.1193) and 536–61 (doc. 2213 § 90 and 109); and *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 97 § 8.

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provinces, and visitors.[127] Clause eighty-seven in the French versions of the Order's regulations states that the master could not appoint to leading offices in the central convent, such as those of marshal, seneschal, and drapier, or to the posts of provincial master in the crusader states or the West, without the chapter. This is clarified in the next clause, which refers to visitors or commanders nominated in the chapter general. This latter clause is admittedly a later addition, as the office of visitor did not exist until the middle of the thirteenth century, but it indicates what was then regarded as the normal practice.[128] The Barcelona version of Templar regulations, dating from the second half of that century, also states that the master could not appoint the head of a province except in the chapter general.[129] Very little evidence, however, exists about the nominating of officials in practice. As has been shown, although the surviving letter naming Berenguer of Cardona as visitor in the Iberian peninsula in 1300 does not allude to the general chapter, the appointment seems to have been made there.[130] It may also be pointed out that, according to a papal letter sent to the Templar master in 1265, after Urban IV had sought to remove the Order's marshal Stephen of Sissy from office, the latter had argued "that it had never been known for the pope to interfere to any degree with regard to posts in your aforesaid Order: decisions about them are to be left to the will of you, the aforementioned master, and the general chapter of the Order" (*quod nunquam auditum fuerat quod summus pontifex de predicti ordinis vestri officiis aliquatenus intromittat, sed circa illa tuum, memorate magister, et ejusdem ordinis generalis capituli beneplacitum est reservandum*).[131] The involvement of the general chapter in appointments is further suggested by the wording of a poorly preserved letter in which James of Molay in 1302 refused James II's request to have the Aragonese provincial master replaced: "when offices are conferred for a term … of our chapter, they cannot in any way be lawfully revoked before the end of that term" (*quando officia traduntur ad terminum … nostri capituli, ante ipsius termini finem non possunt legitime modo aliquo relaxari*).[132]

[127] The procedure for the election of a new grand master will not be considered here, as I have sought to discuss this in "The Election of Heads of Military Orders in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *The Military Orders, Volume VIII: In a Wider World*, ed. Emanuel Buttigieg and Clara Almagro Vidal (Abingdon, 2025), 95–104.

[128] RT, 80–81 § 87–88; and CN, 52 § 10–11. Clause 88 is absent from the Dijon and Baltimore manuscripts.

[129] CRT, 56 § 136. See also CRT, 2, 22 § 3 and 43. A letter sent by James of Molay to the Aragonese king James II implies that the advice of brothers in a province was also sought before the appointment of a new provincial master: FL, 166–67 (doc. 14).

[130] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 414 (doc. 44).

[131] Bini, "Dei Tempieri e del loro processo," 452–55; Hans Prutz, *Entwicklung und Untergang des Tempelherrenordens* (Berlin, 1888), 290–91 (doc. 18); and *Les registres de Clément IV*, ed. Edouard Jordan (Paris, 1893–1945), 326–27 (doc. 836).

[132] *Acta Aragonensia*, ed. Finke, 1:122–23 (doc. 85).

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There were occasions, however, when this procedure could not be implemented. The last Aragonese provincial master, who was appointed in September 1307 following the death of Berenguer of Cardona, was clearly not chosen in a general chapter. None of the surviving documents about the nomination does more than state that James of Molay was acting "with the common counsel of our brothers" (*communi fratrum nostrorum consilio*).[133] But the grand master was then in France. A situation of this kind could explain the statement in the Barcelona manuscript of regulations that if the head of a province "is appointed by counsel, he [the master] can summon him or remove him by counsel" (*es fait por conseil el lo pot fer venir o relaxer per conseyl*).[134] Two priors of Portugal had similarly been appointed by the Hospitaller master William of Villaret when he was in the West a decade earlier.[135] In 1307 there was also, of course, an added urgency for an appointment to be made, as accusations against the Temple were already being voiced and James of Molay had asked the pope to institute an inquiry so that the Order could be cleared of any wrongdoing.[136]

Although heads of provinces and visitors were answerable to the Order's headquarters, it is not altogether clear whether the general chapter decided which visitors or western provincial masters should be summoned to the East in any year. Clause eighty-seven in the French versions of Templar regulations states that western provincial masters should not travel to the East without being summoned by the master and chapter, and that clause elsewhere uses the latter term to refer to the chapter general.[137] The Barcelona version of Templar regulations also rules not only that heads of provinces had to be chosen in a general chapter but also that a head of a western province could not normally be recalled or relieved of his post except in a chapter.[138] Yet clause eighty-eight of the French versions of Templar regulations includes the words "if visitors or commanders appointed by the general chapter are recalled by the master and by the convent" (*se viseteors ou comandeors fait par chapitre general est rapelés par le Maistre et par le covent*), while clause forty-three of the Barcelona version states that "the master cannot summon any provincial master appointed by the chapter to come to the East except with the agreement of the convent" (*Lo maistre ne pot*

[133] Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, 2:43 (doc. 28); and FL, 167–71 (docs. 15–19).

[134] CRT, 27 § 43.

[135] Benavides, *Memorias de D. Fernando IV*, 2:170–71 (doc. 123).

[136] *Vitae paparum Avenionensium*, ed. Guillaume Mollat, 4 vols. (Paris, 1914–1928), 3:58–60. As has been mentioned, commanderies in Portugal were granted at the chapter held at Arles in 1296, but this was unusual. Commanders of convents were normally appointed locally, although the grand master did at times assign commanderies in the West to brothers, especially to those who were returning to western Europe after serving in the East: *Documentos pontificios*, ed. Domínguez Sánchez, 592–93 (doc. 623); and FL, 168–70 (doc. 17).

[137] RT, 80 § 87; and CN, 52 § 10.

[138] CRT, 56 § 136.

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nuil comandaor de provincia per chapitre fere venir desa [mer], sino ab acort deu convent).[139] The next clause of the Barcelona version further mentions that when a Castilian provincial master travelled out to the East after he had been replaced, he was asked by the convent why he had done so, as it had not summoned him.[140] It would in fact seem quite likely that it became the normal practice for the master and convent to summon provincial masters or visitors to the East. If the matter was reserved to the general chapter, decisions would have to have been made at the preceding chapter.[141]

At general chapters of the Hospital and the Teutonic Order, central officials and heads of provinces who were present were expected to render an account of their office-holding.[142] No Templar ruling on this point survives, but in 1290, when discussing the requested appointment of William of Canellis in Sicily, the master William of Beaujeu wrote that he would act after he and the convent had received an account at the general chapter from William of Canellis about the latter's tenure of his existing office.[143] It was also, of course, the custom for heads of Templar convents to report on the state of their commanderies each year at their provincial chapter.[144] It is probable, therefore, that Templar practice on this issue was similar to that of the other two leading military orders.[145] As has been shown, Berenguer of San Justo, who was first mentioned as Aragonese provincial master in April 1283 and who held office until 1290, went out to the East in 1286 and returned there four years later in 1290.[146] On these occasions he presumably reported on his term of office. As has also been mentioned, the English master Guy of Foresta appears similarly to have been journeying to the East in 1274 at the completion of his term of office. Yet clearly not all western provincial masters travelled to the East every four years, but it is possible that at times written reports were sent to general chapters in the East, as

[139] RT, 81 § 88; CN, 52 § 11; and CRT, 22 § 43.

[140] CRT, 22–24 § 44.

[141] Hospitaller statutes allude to the recalling of western officials by the chapter general: CH, 2:31–40 (doc. 1193); and 3:450–55 and 769–76 (docs. 3844 § 18 and 4462). But a list of grievances drawn up in 1296 mentions untimely recalls by the master: CH, 3:681–83 (doc. 4310).

[142] CH, 2:31–40 and 536–61 (docs. 1193 and 2213 § 109); 3:225–29 (doc. 3396 § 18); and *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 59–60 § II.

[143] *Acta Aragonensia*, ed. Finke, 3:10 (doc. 5); and *Diplomatari de Pere el Gran 1: Cartes i pergamins*, 808–809 (doc. 459).

[144] Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 289–90.

[145] This might seem to be contradicted by the report about the replaced Castilian provincial master who was criticized for travelling to the East without being summoned: CRT, 22–24 § 44. But further detail is lacking. He may have journeyed to the East before he received a summons to a general chapter.

[146] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 313, 405–406 (doc. 36), and 421; and Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 495–96.

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was required in the Teutonic Order, although no Templar documents of this kind survive.[147]

In surviving summonses to Aragonese provincial chapters, heads of convents were instructed to bring their responsions to the chapter.[148] Yet these were in cash, whereas the responsions sent by western provinces to the East were normally in kind, at least from Mediterranean countries. Although considerable detail survives about the dispatch of these goods from western Europe, precise evidence about their reception in the East is lacking.[149] Clauses in Templar regulations suggest, however, that they were normally sent to the Order's headquarters, and they were presumably handed over as soon as ships docked.[150] As goods were commonly transported in the second passage of the year, they may therefore have arrived at approximately the time of a general chapter and a report on them may have been made during the assembly.[151] But in 1304, when the responsion of the Aragonese province was unusually paid in money and when it was arranged that a Barcelona merchant should make the payment out of the profits gained from the cargo he took to the East, the merchant merely undertook to pay the responsion within two months of his arrival in Cyprus. The date when the responsion was paid was dependent on the speed with which the merchant disposed of the cargo brought from the West. The Aragonese provincial master did not assume that it would be handed to the grand master at the time of the general chapter.[152]

Decisions about the dispatch of brothers, other than provincial masters, to the West were also at times made at a general chapter. Clause ninety-three in the French versions of Templar regulations defines the procedure to be followed if, at the time of a general chapter, "the master wishes to send brothers to the West because of their ill-health or for the needs of the house" (*li Maistre veaut envoier freres outre mer por lor maladies, ou por les besoignes de la maison*).[153] Yet the ruling does not state that such decisions could be made only at the time of the general chapter. The Barcelona version of the Order's customs asserts that if it

[147] In a mid-thirteenth-century ruling relating to the Teutonic Order in Prussia, it was decreed that "letters are to be dispatched to the East every year, and in the second or third year a brother is to be sent in person to report on the state of the land and the community of the convent" (*omni anno mittantur littere ad partes transmarinas, et in secundo vel tercio anno mittatur frater personaliter de statu terre et communitate conventus*): *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 161–62; and *Visitationen im Deutschen Orden im Mittelalter*, ed. Marian Biskup and Irena Janosz-Biskupova, 3 vols. (Marburg, 2002–2008), 1:3–5 (doc. 2).

[148] Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 288.

[149] See, for example, Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 326–27.

[150] RT, 78, 92–95, 105 § 83–84, 107, 111, 130; and CN, 50, 66, 68, 78 § 6–7, 46, 52, 83.

[151] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 326–27.

[152] ACA, CR, Pergaminos, Jaime II 2071–73.

[153] RT, 83 § 93; and CN, 54 § 18.

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was thought that the master was sending a brother overseas of out of ill will and unjustly, the convent could overrule him.[154] This suggests that at other times the master took the initiative, and the convent would become involved only if it considered the master's actions to be unreasonable. Certainly, in practice brothers appear to have been sent to the West on the master's decision. In August 1291, Theobald Gaudin wrote that "by our special license" (*de nostra licentia speciali*) he was sending Bernard of Fuentes and Peter of Santjust back to Aragon because of their infirmity.[155] He also acted without the general chapter in allowing brothers to travel out to the central convent whenever they wished. This privilege was accorded to Peter of Santjust by Theobald Gaudin in 1291 and to Berenguer Guamir, commander of Barcelona, by James of Molay in 1305.[156] When Peter, probably also in 1305, expressed a wish to cross to Cyprus and to serve in the central convent, James summoned him to the East, but as a special favor, he left the decision to the brother's discretion. The master was again acting on his own initiative.[157]

In some military orders the alienation of property required the approval of a general chapter.[158] Templar regulations on this issue are not explicit, stating merely that the master should not give or sell lands without the consent of the chapter, but as the clause in question uses the word "convent" in relation to other matters, it could be concluded that alienation required the approval of the general chapter.[159] The evidence relating to procedures for alienating in practice is, however, not consistent. In April 1292, the master and convent gave the Aragonese provincial master permission to alienate Puigreig and La Zaida.[160] On the other hand, as has been shown, the exchange of Tortosa was discussed at the chapter at Montpellier, but the document authorising the transaction was issued in the name of the master and convent.[161] Furthermore, when Berenguer of Cardona was named as visitor in the Iberian peninsula in 1300, the powers granted to him included that "of selling, alienating, pledging, and exchanging

[154] CRT, 24 § 45; and CN, 358.

[155] Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, 1:21 n. 3; and FL, 160 (doc. 1).

[156] FL, 160–61 and 164 (docs. 2, 3, and 9).

[157] FL, 164 (doc. 10); ACA, CR, Cartas Reales Diplomáticas, Jaime II, Templarios, 334 and 363; and Alan Forey, "The Career of a Templar: Peter of St Just," in *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, Presented to Malcolm Barber*, ed. Norman Housley (Aldershot, 2007), 183–94, at 188. Compare CH, 2:536–61 (doc. 2213 § 89).

[158] CH, 2:31–40 (doc. 1193); Lomax, "Algunos estatutos primitivos," 493; and Carlos de Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas en la edad media (siglos XII–XV)* (Madrid, 2003), 303 and 309.

[159] RT, 79 § 85; and CN, 50 § 8.

[160] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 405–406 (doc. 36).

[161] Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les terres de l'Ebre*, 2:197–98 (doc. 171); and FL, 161–62 (doc. 4).

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our possessions" (*vendendi de bonis nostris, alienandi, contrahendi et permutam trahendi*).[162] It seems that in practice the alienation of property was not the exclusive preserve of the general chapter.

Some recruits were probably admitted in general chapters, just as they were in provincial assemblies and in more local chapters, although it is difficult to provide clear examples.[163] Like local and provincial chapters, the chapter general also had a disciplinary function. Some faults were presumably brought before the general chapter in the first instance, but many cases heard there had been referred to it from elsewhere. The Barcelona manuscript of Templar regulations, for example, mentions a case in Catalonia of forged papal seals. It was first brought before the Aragonese provincial chapter, but was then referred to a general chapter presided over by the master Thomas Bérard.[164] On another occasion a commander who had caused the death of a nobleman's horse in Cyprus was similarly judged by the chapter general in Acre, while a brother who had been captured at Gaza in 1244 and allegedly forced to convert to Islam also had his case deferred to the general chapter.[165] Yet, although this was a fairly common procedure, some referrals were apparently brought before the central convent rather than the general chapter. The killing of Christian merchants by three brothers in the province of Antioch was, for example, heard by the convent, which sentenced them to be expelled and whipped through the streets of Antioch, Tripoli, Tyre, and Acre.[166] There was no requirement that referrals should always be taken to the chapter general. In sum, although the functions of a Templar general chapter clearly included a wide range of activities, there are nevertheless problems in defining the precise extent of its powers. Furthermore, some regulations were not always observed in practice, and it would not be surprising if, over a lengthy period of time, regulations were subject to reinterpretation.

Seals

The sources for some military orders, including the Teutonic Order, Santiago and Santa María de España, contain references to a capitular seal.[167] These are

[162] Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón*, 414–15 (doc. 44).

[163] Forey, "Templar Provincial Chapters," 291.

[164] CRT, 76–78 § 174; and CN, 302–304.

[165] CRT, 68–70, 88 § 163, and 186; RT, 296–97, 313–14 § 569, and 606; and CN, 304 § 21 and 338 § 69.

[166] RT, 289–90 § 554; CN, 290 § 6; and CRT, 55 § 129.

[167] *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Perlbach, 103 (Gewohnheiten 18); *Tabulae ordinis theutonici*, ed. Strehlke, 58–60 and 68–69 (docs. 74 and 86); Derek W. Lomax, *La orden de Santiago (1170–1275)* (Madrid, 1965), 64–65; Benavides, *Memorias de D. Fernando IV*, 2:730; Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 845 § 5 and 849 § 1; López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa*, 562, 576, 590–93, 599–600, 617–19, and 632–33 (docs. 14, 19, 34, and 41); María Carmona de los Santos, "Sellos de la orden

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not found in Templar and Hospitaller documentation, but in 1278, statutes were enacted about a seal of the Hospitaller master and convent, and in the later thirteenth century the Templars also had what was referred to as a conventual seal.[168] The legend of the Hospitaller seal included the words "BULLA MAGISTRI ET CONVENTUS." This seal was used to authenticate documents issued by the order's general chapter.[169] The legend of the Templar seal was merely "SIGILLUM TUBE TEMPLI XPISTI." This seal was appended, for example, to the document in which James of Molay and the Templar convent granted permission for the alienation of Puigreig and was presumably also normally employed at general chapters.[170]

Measures were enacted in some military orders to ensure that capitular or conventual seals were not misused. In 1274, it was decreed that Santiago's capitular seal should be held by a member of the council known as the *Trece* and not by the master, while a further decree in the following year stated that it should be in the keeping of the *Trece*.[171] In 1278, a Hospitaller statute ruled that the Hospitallers' conventual seal should be in the keeping of the treasurer under the seals of the marshal, hospitaller, and commander of Acre, as well as that of the master.[172] As a consequence of this ruling, the Hospitaller conventual seal was not in use in the closing years of the thirteenth century when the master William of Villaret was in the West.[173] No requirements of this kind have survived in Templar sources.[174] It has been seen that James of Molay had the Order's

militar de Santiago: Fuentes y datos para su estudio," in *Las órdenes militares en la Península Ibérica, 1: Edad Media*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Francisco Ruiz Gómez (Cuenca, 2000), 59–86, at 68; and Juan Torres Fontes, "La orden de Santa María de España," *Miscelánea medieval murciana* 3 (1977): 73–118, at 86.

[168] CH, 3:368–70 (doc. 3670 § 1–2); FL, 161–62 (doc. 4); and Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les terres de l'Ebre*, 2:197–98 (doc. 171). A document issued by the Hospitaller master in 1239 was sealed with the "lead seal of the chapter of our house" (*seel de plum deu chapitre de nostre mayson*), but this was probably an earlier version of the conventual seal rather than a seal of the general chapter: CH, 2:565 (doc. 2224); and Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars*, 111.

[169] Gustave Schlumberger, Ferdinand Chalandon, and Adrien Blanchet, *Sigillographie de l'Orient latin* (Paris, 1943), 244; E. J. King, *The Seals of the Order of St John of Jerusalem* (London, 1932), 23–24; and CH, 3:769–79 (docs. 4462–63).

[170] ACA, Órdenes religiosas y militares, San Juan de Jerusalén, Pergaminos, Cervera 486. See also Schlumberger, Chalandon, and Blanchet, *Sigillographie*, 249–50; and Paul de Saint-Hilaire, *Les sceaux templiers* (Puiseaux, 1991), 61.

[171] Josserand, *Église et pouvoir dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, 845 § 5 and 849 § 1; and López Fernández, *Pelay Pérez Correa*, 562 and 576.

[172] CH, 3:368–70 (doc. 3670 § 2).

[173] CH, 3:782–84 (doc. 4468).

[174] It is claimed in *The Rule of the Templars: The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar*, trans. J. M. Upton-Ward (Woodbridge, 1992), 41 n. 88.1, that the Order's lead or silver seal was kept under the keys of the master and two leading officials, but no source is quoted.

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conventual seal in his possession when he was in the West in the 1290s, and it was used to seal a document issued at the chapter held at Arles in 1296.[175] The convent was apparently willing to allow him to use it at his discretion, but he did always take counsel when he sealed documents with it while he was in western Europe.

In conclusion, clearly much remains unknown or uncertain about Templar general chapters. Yet the frequency with which they were held, their composition, and the places where they met can to some extent be discussed, although it is not always easy to reach definitive conclusions. There is also a considerable amount of information about the extent of their functions and the relative roles of the general chapter and the Order's central convent, even if at times there is ambiguity. The surviving evidence suggests that, as might be expected, there were similarities between the general chapters of the Temple and those of other military orders, especially the Hospital and the Teutonic Order. Annual assemblies, for example, appear to have been a common feature. The claim that the Hospital differed from the Temple in having a "properly representative chapter-general" is to be rejected, for the composition of the chapters of these two orders appears to have been similar. Yet further research on the general assemblies of other military orders is needed before a close comparison can be made. Unfortunately, however, only a limited amount of evidence survives about the general chapters of any of the military orders. To discuss those of some other religious orders, such as the Cistercians and the Dominicans, is a rather simpler task.

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[175] *Documentos pontificios*, ed. Domínguez Sánchez, 592–93 (doc. 623).

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