



Nobly Born

Stephen Dafoe

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The Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Templar of Solomon, popularly known as the Knights Templar, was the most famous and infamous of the crusading military orders. Created in the aftermath of the First Crusade, (1096-1099) the Templars were established to ensure the safety of the large numbers of European pilgrims, who flowed towards Jerusalem after its conquest. The Templars were an unusual Order in that they lived both an active and contemplative life; making them effectively the first warrior-monks in the western world. As such the Templars quickly expanded beyond their role as protectors of pilgrims and played a vital role in many battles of the Crusades. Although they suffered more defeats than celebrated victories, the Templars are remembered as Christendom's most fearless military force. Through innovative financial techniques that could be considered the foundation of modern banking and the use of a well established network of land holdings, the Templars in many ways resembled today's multi-national corporations. The Order's highly organised infrastructure, coupled with influential patrons, allowed the Order to gain great wealth and power in a relatively brief period of time. This rise in power and prosperity continued until the Templars ran foul of King Philip IV of France, who arrested the Templars on October 13, 1307 on a variety of heretical charges. Philip had the Templars tortured in order to extract confessions of guilt and many of their number were ultimately burned at the stake. Under the influence of King Philip, Pope Clement V disbanded the Order on March 22, 1312. In *Nobly Born: An Illustrated History of the Knights Templar*, noted expert Stephen Dafoe explores the Order from its origins through to its dissolution, set against the complex political and sociological backdrop that was the middle ages; a period of history where enemies could become allies at the drop of a hat. Individual chapters examine: -The factors that led to the First Crusade as well as a detailed account of the capture of Jerusalem.-The origin of the Templars between the years of 1118 - 1120 AD.-The Order's rise to papal favour and power and their commercial activities.-The day to day life of the Templar in the convent.-The military structure and discipline of the Order in the field.-The major battles fought by the Templars during the Crusades.-The downfall of the Order following the loss of the Holy Land in 1291.-The legacy and mythos of the Templars that has developed since their demise. Alongside the author's well-researched and comprehensive text is a superb illustrative content, vividly portraying the life of the Templars during this remarkable period of history.

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