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Military Orders and the Town (Twelfth to Early Fourteenth Centuries). Urban Commanderies Case in the Rhône River Low Valley*

[in corso di stampa in "Chronica. Annual of the Institute of History of the University of Szeged",
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Military orders historiography had for a long time favoured rural commanderies, examined in monographs or local case studies¹. That is to forget too quickly that those orders had from their beginnings penetrated the town, and that their presence and economic influence in urban areas, even if it didn't obtain the magnitude of many rural houses, were, in proportion, far from immaterial. Of course, military orders' existence in urban environment has not been totally forgotten, but it is in an irregular manner only, through cross topics² or cases studies³. Nevertheless it deserves a systematic approach for the establishment characteristics. Also deserving consideration are the arrival in town of those orders and the reasons for this choice which, in the spiritual context in which the orders appear, were far from obvious⁴. Besides, this consideration takes place in a present research trend which was begun thirty years ago by the mendicant orders and medieval

* This article was published in 2002 in *Les Annales du Midi* (n° 239, p. 275-292). I thank Marie-Claude Bressan for its French translation. The bibliographical references have been revised.

¹ To enter into details of a bibliographical review would bring us too far, so impressive is the abundance of local or regional studies, often of uneven quality, dedicated to the countryside investment by the Temple and Hospital orders. Let us say only that the most recent thesis about military orders in the French space focuses entirely on rural establishment. This is the case with the works of A.-R. CARCENAC, *Les Templiers du Larzac*, Nîmes, 1994 ; M. MIGUET, *Templiers et hospitaliers en Normandie*, Paris, 1995 ; L. VERDON, *La terre et les hommes en Roussillon aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles. Structures seigneuriales, rente et société d'après les sources templières*, Aix-en-Provence, 2001 ; and V. BESSEY, *Les commanderies de l'Hôpital en Picardie au temps des chevaliers de Rhodes, 1309-1522*, Millau, 2005.

² Several studies, still isolated, are concerned with military orders in urban areas. These are treated through these topics : relations between them and the lay elites (for exemple E. MASCHKE, "Deutschordenbrüder aus dem städtischen Patriziat", *Preussenland und Deutscher Orden*, Würzburg, 1958, p. 255-271 ; P. PIRILLO, "Terra Santa e ordini militari attraverso i testamenti fiorentini prima e dopo la caduta di San Giovanni d'Acri", *Acri 1291. La fine della presenza degli ordini militari in Terra Santa e i nuovi orientamenti nel XIV secolo*, Perugia, 1996, p. 121-136), with the communes (D. JACOBY, "Les communes italiennes et les ordres militaires à Acre. Aspects juridiques, territoriaux et militaires", in M. BALARD (ed), *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*, Lyon, 1989, p. 193-214) or with the specific features of the urban lordship (L. VERDON, "La seigneurie templière à Perpignan au XIII^e siècle", in N. COULET, O. GUYOTJEANNIN (eds), *La ville au Moyen Âge*, t. 2, *Sociétés et pouvoirs dans la ville*, Paris, 1998, p. 221-228).

³ The urban commanderies monographs have been a scholarly tradition in all European countries since the nineteenth century to which eminent specialists still devote themselves, for exemple A. DEMURGER, "Les Templiers à Auxerre (XII^e-XIII^e siècles)", in P. BOUCHERON, J. CHIFFOLEAU (eds), *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen Âge. Études offertes à Jean-Louis Biget*, Paris, 2000, p. 301-312.

⁴ For the moment, to our knowledge, only a few German researchers have been interested in a global way in relations between military orders and the town but primarily for the late Middle Ages : U. ARNOLD, *Stadt und Orden. Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Ordens zu den Städten in Livland, Preussen und im Deutschen Reich*, Marburg, 1993 ; or K. BORCHARDT, "Urban Commanderies in Germany", in A. LUTTRELL, L. PRESSOUYRE (eds), *La Commanderie, institution des ordres militaires dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris, 2002, p. 297-305.

urbanization's studies which carefully investigate interrelations between monastic orders and urban environment⁵.

Divided between the Toulouse county in the west of the Rhône river, the county and the Provence marquisate in the east, the low valley of the Rhône river does not show any kind of specific politic cohesion (fig. 1). Still, an important urban tradition left there by the Roman mark and a rich Temple and Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem houses network more over, make it an advantageous field for analysis⁶. If a global and exhaustive study about the Provençal town's monastic existence remains to be done, important foundations, back in the late Antiquity or carolingian period and established in the heart of the urban system like Saint-Gilles in the same named borough, Saint-Laurent in Avignon, or else in the periphery like Saint-Victor in Marseille, Montmajour in Arles or Saint-André de Villeneuve near Avignon, to mention only those famous names, calls to mind that the links between monks and town were already traditional here when military orders arrived⁷. At the opposite of what one can observe for other French regions or even for the rest of the Provence area where their existence is mostly a rural one, the implantation of the two main international military orders in Low Rhodanian Provence and in Mediterranean Languedoc doesn't neglect urban sites since ten Templars commanderies out of fifteen houses to which one can give this status are located in town. It's also the case for six commanderies out of sixteen for the Hospital. The concern is to propose a first assessment, inevitably temporary, on those urban commanderies and which neglects a lot of aspects. The circumstances of the brothers' arrival in town, their material hold in the urban system, but also their economic and religious presence in the urban society, are the objects to which we will turn our attention.

Modes and characteristic of the urban military orders implantation

The coming of military orders in the South of France, as in the rest of the Western Europe, has happened in successive waves. Unfortunately, the creation of a house is never illuminated with exactness by the sources because the first deeds, in the majority of the cases, have been lost and the brothers were not worried about the memory of their foundations and their preservation. One must then be satisfied with the first mentions which appear probably most of the time a few years after the operative coming of the orders. The Hospitallers' progression in the region is well known : from Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, which receives one of the first house in the Occident since 1113, the order swarms to Arles (c. 1115-1120) and then in the direction of East Provence (Gap, in the beginning

⁵ J. LE GOFF, "Apostolat mendiant et fait urbain dans la France médiévale : l'implantation des ordres mendiants. Programme-questionnaire pour une enquête", *Annales ESC*, 13 (1968), p. 335-348, et "Ordres mendiants et urbanisation de la France médiévale. État de l'enquête", *Annales ESC*, 25 (1970), p. 924-946. The Lille congress on *Les moines dans la ville*, Université catholique de Lille-Université de Picardie, 1996, is an overview of these questions primarily for France and north Europe. In Italy, where because of the important fact, the research has been concentrated on the religious orders *inurbamento* in the north and the centre, one can refer to C. CABY, "Les implantations urbaines des ordres religieux dans l'Italie médiévale. Bilan et propositions de recherche", *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* (1999), p. 151-179.

⁶ D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple dans la basse vallée du Rhône (1124-1312). Ordres militaires, croisades et sociétés méridionales*, Lyon, 2005.

⁷ About the beginning of these foundations : E. MAGNANI SOARES-CHRISTEN, *Monastères et aristocratie en Provence (milieu X^e-début XII^e siècles)*, Münster, 1999.

of the twelfth century, Manosque, c. 1127) like the Languedoc⁸. A second wave of creation in the 1170-1180 years enables it to be within the marquisate of Provence and in particular in Orange, Avignon and Cavaillon⁹. It's also upon the town that the Temple order, in its arrival, fixes its choice as the first donation assure its presence in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and in Orange since 1136, from where it expands immediately towards the countryside (Richerenches, Roaix, c. 1136-1138)¹⁰. If the Hospital seems to have progressed from a permanent position, the house of Saint-Gilles soon assuming a leadership duty within the context of the prospective Priory¹¹, the Temple has relied on travelling missions charged with soliciting the first donations. The brother Arnaut de Bedos who established the first houses in the Provence marquisate in 1136-1138 succeeds to Uc Rigaut, probably commissioned by Hugues de Payns to develop the order in the South of France and in Catalonia. Locally, it seems certain that Bernat Roland, a brother who carries responsibilities in Richerenches and in Roaix, is the initial cause of the Templars' arrival in Arles where one finds him in 1143, and maybe in Saint-Gilles¹². Unfortunately it is impossible to know if the order's messenger's presence in a given site answers to a set strategy of implantation or to an invitation from an ecclesiastical or local lay authority desirous of attracting there the brothers. From those first centres, the Temple quickly swarms to the east (Bayles, near Aix-en-Provence c. 1143, and then towards Var and Alpes-Maritimes since the 1160 years) as they do towards west (Montfrin, Gard, 1146). The second wave foundations which touch Avignon (c. 1170), Tarascon (c. 1192), then Cavaillon and Fos (c. 1200) also disperse from Arles, while the spreading from Saint-Gilles enables establishment of a net of minor rural houses. This short chronological outlook invites two remarks. The first one is that the Temple arrives in some sites where the Hospital has already been strongly established for about twenty years (Saint-Gilles, Arles, Cavaillon). In many cases, Templars will be very backward compared to a direct opponent on patrimony already well organized with a sure local influence. The second one is that if most of the foundations appear in the second half of the twelfth century, the first commandery established (Arles, Saint-Gilles) will definitively stay the richest and the most important in the house's hierarchy of the two orders.

The order's presence in a site is always consecutive to an initial donation which shows the part sometimes precursory of the local landlords. But in the urban environment properly so called, the sources provide too uneven a light to enable drawing a social and political profile of those benefactors¹³. Only great families, who imitate in that way the

⁸ D. SELWOOD, *Knights of the Cloister. Templars and Hospitallers in Central-Southern Occitania (1100-1300)*, Woodbridge, 1999, p. 50-57.

⁹ D. LE BLEVEC, "L'Hôpital de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem à Avignon et dans le Comtat Venaissin au XIII^e siècle", *Des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem de Chypre et de Rhodes hier aux Chevaliers de Malte aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1985, p. 17-61.

¹⁰ J.-A. DURBEC, "Les templiers en Provence. Formation des commanderies et répartition géographique des biens", *Provence historique*, 9 (1959), p. 13-18.

¹¹ P. SANTONI, "Les deux premiers siècles du Prieuré de Saint-Gilles de l'ordre de l'Hôpital de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem", *Des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem...*, *op. cit.*, p. 114-183

¹² D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 88-90.

¹³ Thus, the first foundations which have brought the Temple to Saint-Paul (1136), to Orange (1138) and to Arles (1143-1156) emanate from several persons of whom we know little, if they have to be classified in the little knighthood or among simple allod-owners still numerous in Provence, D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 125-129.

support granted to the military orders by the counts of Provence and Toulouse, are well documented¹⁴. It is the case for the princes of Orange from whom it's possible to follow the privileged links with the military orders, first under the Nice house which settles the Temple in Orange and which then leaves to the Hospital the coseigniory on the town (1215), and then under the Baux house where ongoing relations are more or less serene between the two orders¹⁵. Like in the rural environment, where the attraction of the aristocracy to this new monasticism seems clearer, it looks like the crusade ideal carried by those orders had had an attractive power with several families whose members have followed Raimon de Saint-Gilles in the Orient¹⁶. If the dominant aristocracy has been able to give an impulse to the brothers' arrival, their supporting role is relayed once these are settled by persons of too often unknown extractions, but who seem to belong to this urban knighthood so characteristic of meridional France like north-centre Italy. Thus, the charters reveal the activity of some protectors who, acting as procurers, buy lands on behalf of brothers, sometimes with their own funds, make donations of lands, lend money, or else finance building repairs intended for the brothers. Those persons who, without the texts using the exact word, can appear like orders' "friends", seal their collaboration with spiritual links, either taking the complete habit like Brocard at the Hospital of Avignon (1199), or joining their confraternity and giving them all their goods at the end of their lives like Catalan to the Temple of Tarascon (1202), or by electing their cemetery as a burial-place, like Peire de la Milice, protector of the Temple of Avignon (1270)¹⁷.

But more than the infrequent action of some notables, bishops seem exactly to be the implantation's brothers starting-point in their cities. The donation of a cult place is almost always at the beginning of the founding of the house. Now, the orders arrive in a favourable moment for the Provence as the region is hit by the reform work, benefiting thus from the ecclesiastical movement's restitution. So it's the case of Arles where the Saint-Thomas church in the Trinquetaille's borough is first given to the Hospital by a noble layman, Peire Guilhem de Meynes (about 1110-1116). But seeing this cult place possession contested by the chapter, it seems the Hospital preferred to rebuy it from the Arles' church before the definitive ownership confirmation of the archbishop Atton and his successors¹⁸. From this original centre, the order raises without delay a house mentioned in 1140¹⁹. Sometimes, the episcopal action is much more decisive : in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, the bishop Pons de Grillon was not satisfied with the support he

¹⁴ About the respective roles of families of earls and old aristocracy : D. CARRAZ, *ibid.*, p. 108-121

¹⁵ About the Tiburgis I feat in favor of the Temple : marquis de RIPERT-MONCLAR, *Cartulaire de la commanderie de Richerenches de l'ordre du Temple (1136-1214)*, Avignon-Paris, 1907 (now shortened : **CaRi**), p. XLVI-XLVII. And about the close links between Orange's princes and the Hospital : F. MAZEL, *La noblesse et l'Église en Provence, fin X^e-début XIV^e siècle. L'exemple des familles d'Agoult-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*, Paris, 2002, p. 298, 353-355 et 465-467.

¹⁶ That fact is clear for castle lineages such as the Meynes, the Uzès-Posquières or the Pelet. As for Tiburgis, who has done so much for the Temple in Orange and in Richerenches and who is the daughter of Raimbaut II, probably dead in the Holy Land, D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 177-182.

¹⁷ About Brocard : D. LE BLEVEC, "L'Hôpital...", *op. cit.*, p. 19-24. About the others : D. CARRAZ, *ibid.*, p. 554-557.

¹⁸ P.-A. AMARGIER, *Cartulaire de Trinquetaille*, Aix-en-Provence, 1972 (now : **CaTr**), n° 257 (1115-1120), 258 (1129), 269 et 289 (1144).

¹⁹ Around 1144-1153, the brothers live in the house, in 1146 a *claustrum* and a cemetery appear, CaTr, n° 26, 127, 139 et 191.

gave to the Temple establishment in Richerenches ; he also has made a preliminary donation to the sender Arnaut de Bedos by giving him the Saint-Jean church, an adjoining *palacium* and surroundings locations²⁰. In other cases, the bishop was satisfied with a land's donation, favouring then the establishment of a house as was maybe the case for the Temple in Avignon²¹. No doubt the reformer ideal, which lived then in the souls of many Provençal prelates, did stimulate the response to those orders also born from this spiritual momentum. It appears indeed that the event of a new bishop's generation, coming from monastic and canonic circles between 1060 and 1130 has created an especially favourable context for the brothers' establishment in the area²².

In most of the cases, urban houses' locations depend on the chance of the very first donations. Thus these sites show characteristics which also are, for most of them, those of the religious institutions which came to fit themselves into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries expanding urban sphere. Commanderies are most of the time located in the old centre's periphery in wards determined by a fast urbanization, near the surrounding walls when those are already built, preferably near a gate. In Arles, the Temple house, mentioned since 1146, takes place in the Bourg Neuf, a north town ward which has been parcelled out in the beginning of the twelfth century and which is encircled by a rampart from the end of the century²³. The commandery, located near the Rhône river banks, stays outside of the precinct but near a gate which will keep, in a typical manner, the name of *porta de militia* (fig. 2)²⁴. These sites at the edge of the centre are not so far as to be disadvantageous : a gate and the proximity of a frequented road make attainable for the brothers the landed property located in the suburban country; it is also a sort that can attract the faithful and travellers into the commandery's church and make easier the collection of the crossing tax²⁵. Finally, these locations still not acquired by the urbanization offer more possibilities for extensions. Therefore in Saint-Gilles, Templars and Hospitallers share with each other an islet on the Rhône river in front of the city where their commanderies are sheltered behind large enclosures which can contain vines and gardens²⁶.

The chronology and the commanderies' conditions of insertion into the town show that the consistent urban establishment is present from the beginning and really

²⁰ CaRi, n° 128. The part taken in that donation by other lay owners from the town and the church's patron name would enable one to recognize among these properties the old baptistry of the episcopal palace. Those goods could have come, in part, into lay hands and thus be restored at the order's arrival, M. BOIS, *D'Augusta Tricastinorum à Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux*, Lyon, 1992, p. 164-166.

²¹ D. CARRAZ, "Une commanderie templière et sa chapelle en Avignon : du Temple aux chevaliers de Malte", *Bulletin Monumental*, t. 154 (1996), p. 8.

²² D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 134-159. For a new analysis of the Gregorian crisis in Provence : F. MAZEL, *La noblesse...*, *op. cit.*, p. 157-260.

²³ Record unearthed in Arles in 1146, *in domo militum Templi*, H. DE GÉRIN-RICARD, E. ISNARD, *Actes concernant les vicomtes de Marseille et leurs descendants*, Monaco, 1926, n° 233.

²⁴ *...domo Militie que est constituta supra portam civitatis Arelatis usque ad rupetam* (1197), CaTr, n° 177. In 1309, after the Templars' arrest, the house is still on the same site contrary to the scholarly tradition which holds that the house has moved inside the rampart : *domum cum orto ibi adherenti que cita est extra muros civitatis Arelatis et extra portam dicte civitatis dictam de Milicia que confrontatur ab una parte cum Rodano, ab alia parte cum via publica*, Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône (now : **ADBdR**), 56 H 5170.

²⁵ In 1156, Uc de Monteil bequeaths to the Templars a 500 sous duty collected at the Montélimar gate that they prefer, CaRi, n° 129.

²⁶ ADBdR, 56 H 124, 56 H 135, 56 H 5289.

happens in the first military orders' progression movement in the country. Whether brothers have deliberately looked to establish themselves in this or that urban site or have been attracted by preliminary donations, the result is the same : at the end of the twelfth century each town along the low Rhône river, whatever is its importance, is invested by one or even two commanderies. Once established, the military orders are in general satisfied with the place they have acquired and are looking to increase their influence in the town²⁷.

The military orders' influence in the town

The order's presence was established in the first place by monumental groups of which, with a few exceptions, there is nothing left today. The possibility of an archeological approach being rather limited, one has to satisfy oneself with what texts provide, without neglecting the modern works. When they are sufficiently documented, urban commanderies appear as closed spaces organized around a court. A church, a cemetery, a group of buildings comprised of more than fifteen rooms including a refectory, commander's and treasurer's bedrooms, an infirmary, a wardrobe and appurtenances (attics, kitchen, meat-safe), the whole thing behind a fence also sheltering a windmill : like the templar house of Arles, which appears between 1146 and 1309, characteristic of an important commandery²⁸. One observes not infrequently a house's systematic policy of purchasing pieces of land and even streets surrounding directly the commanderies, in order to expand the buildings but also to provide some isolation²⁹. Thus, in 1308, the Arles residence appears like an islet in the structure because it is surrounded by its garden, the Rhône river and the street on both sides³⁰. This purchasing policy structures therefore the proximate environment and notably the roads³¹. Confirming the enclosure aspect, some of these buildings look as though they have been designed to provide a military connotation, to which one attaches a rather symbolic and ostentatious intent than a real defensive one³².

²⁷ One rarely sees a moving of the commandery. This is the case with the Avignon Hospitallers who succeed in leaving the peripheric site for a more strategic position in the core of the urban centre at the cost of their permanent conflicts with the chapter and the prior of Saint-Pierre, their new parish, D. LE BLÉVEC, "L'Hôpital...", *op. cit.*, p. 21-24. It would also be the case, according to the scholarly tradition, of the Tarascon Temple which, fleeing a land that could be flooded on the Rhône river island, would have come nearer the ramparts, M. CONSTANTIN, *Les paroisses des anciens diocèses d'Aix et d'Arles*, Aix-en-Provence, 1898, t. 2, p. 103.

²⁸ ADBdR, 56 H 5170, 56 H 5172, 56 H 5174, 56 H 5182 et B 433.

²⁹ For Arles' commanderies : ADBdR, 56 H 31, 56 H 5170, 56 H 5174.

³⁰ ADBdR, B 433. For Avignon : D. CARRAZ, "Une commanderie...", *op. cit.*, p. 9-10.

³¹ About urban topography which has been modified by the monastic presence, the Camaldolites' case allows comparisons with an order for which urban flight is coeval with that of the military orders : C. CABY, *De l'érémisme rural au monachisme urbain. Les Camaldules en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Rome, 2000.

³² The Arles' Temple mentions a tower, ADBdR, 56 H 31. In Nîmes, the order held a tower on the Roman wall, F. MAZAURIC, "Histoire du château des arènes", *Cahiers d'histoire et d'archéologie*, t. 7 (1934), p. 132. The archaeological vestiges still standing also confirm borrowings from military architecture : D. CARRAZ, "Une commanderie...", *op. cit.*, p. 9 et 18 ; et M. VECCHIONE, "Un édifice templier en Provence: la tour Saint-Blaise d'Hyères", *Provence historique*, t. 40 (1990), p. 57-75.

If the presence of a commandery is an obvious print in the urban landscape – one can think to be persuaded by the width of the Hospital of Aix-en-Provence’s church or the Temple of Avignon still intact today (fig. 3) — the space hold of the order proceeds above all from their land patrimony’s importance. The few studies of urban implantations make clear the characteristics of the orders’ possessions in town³³. They are made of houses, gardens and orchards, usually urban and rented with lease. The way these goods have been accumulated can’t be examined here because it includes very different cases. Let’s only say that, in general, except for major shackles, all the commanderies patrimonies seem to be formed on an average of three to six decades after the arrival of the orders and that their settlement counts more on purchases than on donations of the faithful³⁴. The land hold properly so called also knows diversified situations. In most of the cases, the Hospital seems to have a determinant advantage over the Temple. For example in Avignon, taking only on a type of goods, the Hospital figures at the end of the thirteenth century as an owner of first importance, collecting more than a hundred quitrent from houses dispersed in the seven towns’ parishes³⁵. As for the Templars, for whom the activity was restrained for a long time by the commune, they make significant purchases from 1250-1270 and total, when they were arrested, only twenty houses³⁶. Landed localization looks likely to be more the result of the purchases’ opportuneness than a deliberate policy. At the very most, one can say that in Arles, of the thirty houses possessed by the Temple and shared out *intra muros*, the majority of them are gathered in the parish Notre-Dame de la Major, neighboring of the order’s resident parish³⁷. It is a ward in expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries where there is still room for acquisitions and buildings. It is obvious on the other hand that accumulation of cultivable lands on the outskirts of the towns is sometimes dictated by the commandery’s site³⁸. It nevertheless must be noted that this patrimony, typically urban, is really significant only in the important cities like Arles and Avignon. In small towns indeed (Orange, Cavaillon, Tarascon), urban houses’ possessions have a more enforced rural profile. It is clear that even in the case of the large urban commanderies, possessions, values and profitability in the countryside surroundings probably exceed the urban goods. The partial impression about the urban goods management is a certain lack of dynamism. Thus, contrary to what one can observe in other towns of Western Europe³⁹, the orders don’t look like they have played a decisive part in the urbanization progression by organizing allotments, except maybe in the Avignon example (fig. 3)⁴⁰. However that maybe, their

³³ Let us point out in comparison the recent adjustment for London : M. GERVERS, “ The Commandery as an Economic Unit in England ”, *La Commanderie...*, *op. cit.*, p. 252-258.

³⁴ D. CARRAZ, *L’Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 191-213.

³⁵ D. LE BLEVEC, “ L’Hôpital... ”, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁶ ADBdR, B 437.

³⁷ ADBdR, B 433.

³⁸ In Avignon, Templars concentrated their attention on the alluvial zone close to their residence and named l’Estel. In Arles, they accumulated vines and pastures in the Trébon plain adjoining the Bourg Neuf.

³⁹ For the Temple see the Paris’ case : G. ÉTIENNE, “ Étude topographique sur les possessions de la maison du Temple à Paris (XII^e-XIV^e siècles) ”, *Positions des thèses de l’Ecole des Chartes* (1974), p. 86-87. And for Perpignan : L. VERDON, “ La seigneurie... ”, *op. cit.*, p. 223 ; and Tortosa : J. FUGUET SANS, *L’arquitectura dels Templers a Calalunya*, Barcelona, 1995, p. 73.

⁴⁰ The order possessed many gardens in the Estel where at the end of the thirteenth century there also appear a few houses, ADBdR, 56 H 5202 et B 437. At the end of the thirteenth and at the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, a borough which has been the object of a partial excavation appears in that same zone

economic activity sums up essentially in the emphyteutic leases encashment, even if the brothers did attempt to vary their incomes by granting themselves a share of tolls' on men and merchandise⁴¹. The sources have little traces of commercial activity and don't give any illumination on the way that houses could have contributed to the logistic support of the Holy Land. Their willingness to be present in all the urban districts along the Rhône river, and to research, as far as possible, the proximity of the river (Arles, Saint-Gilles, Avignon) speaks to the use of those navigable roads for men and merchandises heading towards the embarcation places bound for the Middle East (principally Marseille and Saint-Gilles)⁴².

The Middle East's evocation brings us directly to the recruitment point considering that that was also the western commanderies' mission. The statistical social approach on men who constitute these regular communities enables us to begin to understand the urban implantation mode of the military orders. One first notes the poor number of these houses: just when they were arrested one finds six Templars in Arles, two in Avignon, only one in Fos, while the important Saint-Gilles commandery welcomed twenty-four brothers who lived in the fifteen rural buildings in place in the district⁴³. As regards the Hospital it seems to have succeeded in maintaining a more favorable situation, even if one has to wait for the 1338 inquiry to have a few components for comparison⁴⁴. It is delicate, however, to deduce too quickly from these numbers, of a loss of interest from the urban populations where recruitment is possible for the military orders, particularly for the Temple. Recruitment depends indeed too narrowly on the economic and political matters which are especially linked to the orders⁴⁵. Are the brothers who people the urban commanderies only coming from urban areas? Judging from the brothers' roll, the urban knighthood members are rather poorly represented⁴⁶. So does one deduce that the orders levy above all from the population's strata of modest

(*Bilan scientifique du SRA*, DRAC PACA, 1993, p. 199). Unfortunately no source allows us to say whether the allotment idea should be attributed to the Temple or rather to the Hospital which has inherited the Templars' possessions.

⁴¹ The Hospitaliers in Avignon and the Templars in Tarascon collect a tax on salt loaded boat, ADBdR, 56 H 4224 et 56 H 5170. In Saint-Gilles, Templars also collect a toll on the merchandise floating down the Little Rhône or traveling on the Rhône River, E. BONDURAND, "La leude et les péages de Saint-Gilles au XII^e siècle", *Mémoires de l'académie de Nîmes* (1901), p. 289, art. 3 et 4.

⁴² D. CARRAZ, "Causa defendende et extollende christianitatis. La vocation maritime des ordres militaires en Provence (XII^e-XIII^e siècle)", in N. FAUCHERRE (ed), *Les ordres militaires et la mer, (130^e Congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, La Rochelle, 21 avril 2005)*, Paris, CTHS, to be published.

⁴³ ADBdR, B 151, B 437, 56 H 5301 ; and L. MENARD, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et littéraire de la ville de Nîmes*, Paris, 1750, t. 1, n^o 136. These poor showings corroborate the findings in other regions, for example, M. MIGUET, *Templiers...*, *op. cit.*, p. 135. The situation is quite different in the first decades of the order's existence, but the point concerning the fall in recruitment exceeds the scope of this article.

⁴⁴ The effectives are for example the following : 18 brothers in Arles, 13 in Avignon, 6 in Fos, 6 in Orange, N. COULET, "Les effectifs des commanderies du grand-prieuré de Saint-Gilles en 1373", *Les hospitaliers du XII^e au XVI^e siècle, Provence historique*, t. 45 (1995), p. 106.

⁴⁵ A. J. FOREY, "Recruitment to the Military Orders (twelfth to mid-fourteenth centuries)", *Viator*, 17 (1986), p. 159.

⁴⁶ One can always find some brothers coming from important lineages as the Porcelet, the Baux or the Amic, but their presence, though they are noticed, is not necessarily in a proportion signifying a generalized infatuation of the urban aristocracy for the military orders. This approach can not at any rate be a complete one because, in spite of some well-documented families, this urban *milites* class is still awaiting a detailed study in Provence. For a synthesis : M. AURELL, "La chevalerie urbaine en Occitanie (fin X^e-début XIII^e siècle)", *Les élites urbaines au Moyen Age*, Paris-Rome, 1997, p. 71-118.

resources, so necessarily less documented? It's possible. The membership of the templar community in Saint-Gilles between 1139 and 1308 shows that at least 40% of the individuals don't come from town *stricto sensus*, even if the house's popularity is relatively limited – out of this number, 60% of men come from the current Gard district or from other adjacent ones⁴⁷. The recruitment, if it is still local, doesn't appear then as clearly urban. And it seems, to reinforce this impression, that orders have met more enthusiasm from allod-owners and from the mid rural aristocracy living in the *castra* rather better represented among the brothers, confratres and benefactors. Under these circumstances, what kind of links could military orders have forged with the urban communities?

Military orders and urban communities

The military orders' members are first religious people and have been aiming to play the part corresponding to this status. The bishops' reception, as we have seen, was not unfavourable. The brothers obtained quite easily in each district the right to own a cult place with a cemetery. But these churches – and it's characteristic of the urban implantation – was systematically shut out from any parochial office⁴⁸. In spite of that, it seems that the brothers, pleading their privileges, have exerted all their powers, which had drawn down on them thunderbolts from the bishop and the chapter. From the last decades of the twelfth century, there is no Provençal town where one doesn't observe at least one conflict between ecclesiastical jurisdiction and military orders claiming cult places' possessions, parish fees and burial fees. Everywhere, the bishops' or chapters' discontent are recurring : the orders don't pay the burial quarter tax due to the church cathedral, use subterfuges to attract the dying persons to their cemeteries, shroud during the interdicted period, don't pay the tithe due to the Church, collect without autorisation...⁴⁹ The stake is of course financial : the brothers by attracting the living persons to their churches and the dead ones to their cemeteries, deprive other ecclesiastical institutions, primarily bishops and chapters, of large incomes. So after an "entente cordiale" period, the prelates become more and more distrustful, as indicated by the increased length and precision of the interdiction restriction clauses imposed on the spiritual activity of the military orders⁵⁰. Beyond a particular ecclesiastical context which

⁴⁷ Five hundred sixty-six names have been found during the life of the house of which two hundred twenty-eight (40%) have a name shape connected with the name of a site which is not Saint-Gilles. Of course, nothing enables us to know the portion of Saint-Gilles' inhabitants in the 60% remaining.

⁴⁸ For example, when in 1169 the Saint-Gilles' abbot allows the Templars to build their oratory, he clearly prohibits them from admitting persons other than the brothers and their *familia* to their service, from conferring sacraments, from collecting oblations, and from asking for tithes or any parochial duties, ADBdR, 56 H 5289. And when the Arles' archbishop grants to the Temple the permission for a cemetery settlement near his oratory, he specifies that no parishioner should be inhumed there without his consent, E. BŒUF, *Édition du chartrier de l'archevêché d'Arles (417-1202)*, thèse de l'École des Chartes, 1996, n° 82 (1152).

⁴⁹ D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 463-469.

⁵⁰ In Avignon, the bishop finally allows to the Temple to build a chapel with a cemetery only after 1273. This liberality comes after rough negotiations and enumerates precisely the share of the tax paid by the burial place (*mortalagium*), of legacies and of oblations that the order will return to the chapter or to the parish, while cautioning him strictly against any attempted fraud. The spiritual duties are also carefully

encourages the prelates to stay more watchful of their rights and money⁵¹, these things reveal not only the Templars' and Hospitallers' yearning to show, in town as well, a real religious presence but probably also a sure success among the faithful.

The confraternity is another phenomenon which reveals the military orders' popularity and the efficacy of their officering structures. Let's remember entering a religious order a layman or laywoman gives himself to the institution, more often with goods, making various promises of which the most popular are obedience, recognitory tax annual payment and shrouding in the monastery cemetery⁵². In return for those promises, the confrater or the donat benefits by knife, fork and spoon or lodging but he waits overall for spiritual profits coming into the liturgical community. The benefits of the affiliation are two-sided. In addition to the spiritual association haloed by prestige of crusades, the confrater profits by a network of fellowship and by juridical privileges which are conveyed by badges on their clothes⁵³. By those expedients, military orders secure a clientele assuring themselves incomes from donations and sepulture which can more easily avoid the claims of the bishops and the chapters. The self donation doesn't occur in town only, but it's possible that the more specifically urban forms of sociability have facilitated the launch of that sort of structure. Unfortunately, a precise sociological explanation on confratres encounters, as in the brothers and most of the benefactors cases, the misappreciation of these urban population settings for the central Middle Ages. At the most, one can say that urban commanderies don't recruit their affiliated members exclusively in town. Many people go to the two orders' houses in Saint-Gilles to do their *traditio* with the commander and still live in the surroundings *castra*⁵⁴. The geographical area in which a part of the confratres recruitment is done cross-checks, like that of the brothers, the ownership map of the two houses of Saint-Gilles. The social status remains uncertain as to the setting. Most of the affiliated, according to the patronymics and to the bequeathed goods, are indubitably sprung from chivalrous or rich allod-owners' circle, but it would be tricky to decide too quickly on an "elite recruitment"⁵⁵. Those "affiliation

limited considering that the brothers find themselves prohibited from preaching and from conferring sacraments except to their community including the *familia*, AD Vaucluse, 1 G 5, fol. 17.

⁵¹ J. CHIFFOLEAU, "Les transformations de l'économie paroissiale en Provence (XIII^e-XV^e siècles)", in A. PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, V. PASCHE (eds), *La parrocchia nel Medio Evo. Economia, scambi, solidarietà*, Rome, 1995, p. 65-83.

⁵² Here we don't go into either the details of differences between confrater and donats nor into the change from one to another status. This definition, much oversimplified because of the different existing ranks of affiliation, must be then completed by C. DE MIRAMON, *Les "donnés" au Moyen Âge. Une forme de vie religieuse laïque. v. 1180-v. 1500*, Paris, 1999, p. 87-165 et 324-332 ; et D. CARRAZ, "L'affiliation des laïcs aux commanderies templières et hospitalières de la basse vallée du Rhône (XII^e-XIII^e siècles)", *Sacra Militia*, n° 4, to be published.

⁵³ The privileged status that the confratres could expect of that kind of adhesion is well demonstrated by a sentence by the Arles synod (1263) condemning the military orders which, in addition to the insignia of their religion, confers on their familiars distinctive signs giving them the benefit of their exemptions and immunities from the prelates, J.-H. ALBANÈS, U. CHEVALIER, *Gallia Christiana Novissima. Archevêché d'Arles*, t. III, Valence, 1901, n° 1233, art. 12.

⁵⁴ For the Temple : Néjan (1170, CaTSG, fol. 97v), Nîmes (1181, CaTSG, fol. 129-129v), Aubais (1191, CaTSG, fol. 115v-116v ; 1196, CaTSG, fol. 138-138v), Vallabrègues (1202, 56 H 5302), Montfrin (1245, 56 H 5297).

⁵⁵ The entrance "contracts" in confraternity were specifically written to keep track of the belongings or duty donations accompanying the religious deed. It is likely that persons of modest resources *traditio* have not been registered in writing.

contracts" which appear among the aristocratic elite from the first year of the order's existence, are widely seen only since the 1170's and rarify pretty quickly in the first half of the thirteenth century to leave the place, at least at the Hospital, to the donats.

In spite of the areas of obscurity, the main idea looks like a perfect adaptation between the aristocratic or landed urban elites and these orders: vectors for a kind of chivalrous ideal, above all they knew how to answer the spiritual expectations of these townsmen⁵⁶. On the other hand, the urban authorities position towards the military orders has been more nuanced, shifting between mistrust and open hostility. From the communes' point of view, what could be the orders participation in the "common wealth"? Did they answer at least to their vocations? By its charitable activity, which is not easy to evaluate precisely before the 1338 and 1373 pontifical investigations, the order of St. John seems to have followed its hospitaller's mission⁵⁷. But it wasn't the only one in this situation – its house was one of ten to fifteen other charitable ones that towns like Avignon or Arles could count – and public welfare seems to have played a small part in its success. As regards the mission of protection, it appears, unsurprisingly, almost non-existent – except perhaps in some coastal towns still sporadically the objects of the Saracen attacks⁵⁸. One could question this commanderies fusion into the social and political life of the low Rhône river. On the other hand, the consulates seem to have felt the economic expansion of the commanderies as a potentially menacing competition. In Arles, in context often troubled and stressed by the ambient anticlericalism, the commune has decreed several measures to stop the purchases of religious houses' lands⁵⁹. If military orders are not clearly mentioned, their prosperous economic and financial situation made them, more than any other institution, capable of expanding their possessions. In Marseille, the competition between orders and commune has affected commercial activity and the lucrative traffic of the pilgrims⁶⁰. Finally, everywhere, from the last part of the thirteenth century, communities' residents have tried to hinder the pastoral activities of the commanderies by regulating access to the communal pastures to prevent overgrazing⁶¹. Sometimes, the latent tension has degenerated into violence by

⁵⁶ About the manner in which the new orders of the twelfth century knew how to satisfy the traditional spirituality of the Provençal nobility : F. MAZEL, *La noblesse...*, *op. cit.*, p. 404-409.

⁵⁷ D. LE BLEVEC, *La part du pauvre. L'assistance dans les pays du Bas-Rhône du XII^e siècle au milieu du XV^e siècle*, Rome-Paris, 2000, p. 68-124. As regards of the Temple, it has not been particularly distinguished in that matter, but that was not its basic role.

⁵⁸ For example, in 1224, the lords of Toulon who established the Templars in their town allow them to build fortifications on the seaside, D. CARRAZ, "*Causa defendende...*", *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ The communal statutes written between 1162 and 1202 prohibit any religious house from purchasing any lands on the Arles territory by any means whatsoever, C. GIRAUD, *Essai sur l'histoire du droit français au Moyen Age*, Paris, 1864, t. 2, p. 239, art. n° 168. And in 1229, the podestà prohibits the donation *inter vivos* or the bequeathing to a religious house a building located in the town territory, L.-M. ANIBERT, *Mémoires historiques et critiques sur l'ancienne république d'Arles*, Arles, 1781, p. 56.

⁶⁰ In 1230, the two orders complain to the high constables' Kingdom of Jerusalem that the commune prevents them from holding their boats in the sea-port for the transporting of merchandise and pilgrims, H. DE GÉRIN-RICARD, E. ISNARD, *Actes...*, *op. cit.*, n° 470 et 485.

⁶¹ In Arles, the urban statutes defend themselves from the herd encroachments of the military orders on the communal pastures, C. GIRAUD, *Essai...*, *op. cit.*, p. 239, art. n° 164. These measures are renewed in 1225 and 1228, while the succession of cases erupts at the end of the century, ending with the setting of boundaries on the pasture, E. ENGELMANN, *Zur städtischen Volksbewegung in Südfrankreich. Kommunefreiheit und Gesellschaft. Arles (1200-1250)*, Berlin, 1959, p. 127 ; et ADBdR, 56 H 5177, 56 H 5190, 56 H 5301.

urban crowds whose outlines are poorly established. Here, rancor doubtless caused by a certain economic pressure from the military orders, may have been accompanied by political differences supported by a deep anticlerical reaction. That is what the Arlesians' aggressions against the interests and the brothers of the Temple and the Hospital seem to indicate, probably during 1249⁶². This matter can be understood as a revenge of some notables indebted to the orders⁶³, but also as a result of the struggle led by the town against Charles d'Anjou of whom closeness with the Templars and Hospitallers was suspected. Additionally, this violence doesn't spare the clerical circles, which are also competing with the brothers⁶⁴. In a context where the first economic difficulties of the late Middle Ages are outlined, but which is also troubled by the consequences of the Albigensian crusade strong standing in Provence of the Angevin dynasty, the military orders have clashed with urban communities more organized and envious of their economic situation as well as their political prerogatives. Also, the first enthusiasm has easily given way to a general mounting tensions perceptible from the first third part of the thirteenth century.

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At the end of this short paper, what inference can one draw about the military orders' settlements in the towns of the Rhône river low valley? Observing the cartography of their presence in the area, one sees that some bishoprics have totally escaped them. Thus Vaison and Uzès' bishops, who have not been stinting of acts of charity but exclusively limited them to the rural sites, took care not to introduce orders into their cities. As regards the Carpentras' diocese, it remained almost impenetrable. One still finds towns where monk soldiers are present but seem to hold a marginal position or are at least facing serious resistances. In Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, the bishops have constantly questioned the first large donation of Pons de Grillon to the Templars and it seems they have succeeded in supplanting them from the city centre⁶⁵. The order has indeed chosen to invest the antique suburban site of Saint-Vincent, but it has above all concentrated its development in the country, far from these shackles, as the large Richerenches commandery proves. In Saint-Gilles, the Temple and the Hospital had

⁶² D. CARRAZ, "Les ordres militaires face aux crises politico-religieuses de la basse vallée du Rhône (seconde moitié du XII^e-XIII^e siècle) : un jeu ambigu ?", *L'anticléricalisme en France méridionale (milieu XII^e-début XIV^e siècle)*, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 38 (2003), p. 386-389. About the context of the communes' opposition to the ecclesiastical power : J. CHIFFOLEAU, "Les Gibelins du royaume d'Arles. Notes sur les réalités impériales en Provence dans les deux premiers tiers du XIII^e siècle", in P. GUICHARD (ed), *Papauté, monachisme et théories politiques*, Lyon, 1994, vol. 2, p. 680-692.

⁶³ The economy of the military orders on the Arlesian territory has particularly proceeded towards very profitable activities, like the saltworks exploitation and the ovine breeding also carried on by the patrician families. Some of those members, knights and *probi homini*, have become indebted to the orders from the beginning of the thirteenth century, E. ENGELMANN, *Zur städtischen...*, *op. cit.*, p. 81-84.

⁶⁴ As the matter revealed by a 1229 regulation illustrates. One learns there that the canons and other Arlesian clerics, apparently sheltered by the archbishop, have invaded the Hospital's Saint-Thomas church, breaking down the gates, attacking the bells and taking sacred objects, ADBdR, 56 H 5021. The same deed reveals that the podestà has attacked the Hospital's possessions at the archbishop's request, which demonstrates, if need be, the imbrication of the religious, economic and politic stakes.

⁶⁵ D. CARRAZ, *L'Ordre du Temple...*, *op. cit.*, p. 143-144.

submitted themselves to severe restrictions imposed by the Benedictine abbot, all-powerful lord of the town, and have for the greater part continued their territorial expansion beyond the walls and above all towards the Gard and Camargue hinterland : in the face of a weakened or a willing authority, the orders had full discretion to develop themselves, as was the case for the Hospitallers of Orange who found there a diminished episcopal power and a conciliatory princely authority. At any rate, presence of the military orders has everywhere been hit by contests pitting religious and economic interests in competitive situations which became generalised for control of souls and for the exploitation of land and commercial incomes. In fact, comparing this exploitation to the deep entrenchment of many commanderies in their countrysides, Templars' and Hospitallers' integration into the town seems after all pretty incomplete. Given these facts, one could draw a nuanced conclusion about the orders' urban presence. Yet, their commanderies have all invested large agglomerations in the region and no site with a strategic interest – passage road, active harbour, political capital - has been lost to them. In Arles, Saint-Gilles, Avignon or Marseille, their houses played the part of the most important economic centres inside a network set by each order, but also scaled to the local activities. Everywhere they had claimed to exercise a real spiritual function often with success, as the vitality of their confraternity and the frequency of sepulchral choices in their cemeteries prove. The presence of templar and hospitaller *militia* in those low Rhône river towns has manifested itself by an undeniable economical influence, important religious and charitable activity, a probable political role.

In many ways, the military orders seem to take over the traditional monastic communities established in town – but one must precisely evaluate the religious and economic hold. The urban area enables then to place in a prominent position a characteristic of the military orders which has not yet been stressed: that of a transitional model between traditional monachism of Benedictine obedience and the new concept of regular life brought by mendicant orders. In many aspects of their urban presence – strained relations with other ecclesiastical authorities, overtures towards the lay circles, yearning to play a religious part – as their institutional organization – centralized, international and directly linked to the papacy – these orders announce indeed the spiritual revival instigated by the mendicant movement. A systematic study of the military orders *inurbamento* in a bigger scale would probably contribute to knowing a little better the urban societies between the Gregorian crisis and the arrival of the mendicant orders and then to define the religious transformation in that hinge period.

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