

Military Orders and the Town (Twelfth to Early Fourteenth Centuries)

Urban Commanderies Case in the Rhône River Low Valley*

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The historiography of the military orders had for a long time focused on rural commanderies, both in monographs and regional studies.¹ It was soon forgotten that these orders appeared in urban space and that their presence and economic influence in urban areas was significant, even if they do not seem as important as many rural houses. Of course, the presence of the military orders in urban environment has not been totally forgotten as proved by scholarly works concerning such topics² or by relevant case studies.³ Nevertheless, it deserves a systematic

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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 Templars and the Hospitallers. The most recent thesis about military orders in the French territories focuses entirely on rural establishments. 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 undiscovered – focused on the military orders in urban areas. These are treated through these topics: relations between them and the lay elites (for example E. Maschke, “Deutschordenbrüder aus dem städtischen Patriziat,” in *Preussenland und Deutscher Orden*, Würzburg 1958, 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, 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, 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*, Vol. 2, *Sociétés et pouvoirs dans la ville*, Paris 1998, 221–228).

approach for the establishment of its characteristics. The arrival of these orders in the towns also deserves consideration and the reasons for their choice – in the religious context in which these orders appear – were all but obvious.⁴ Moreover, this consideration refers to the present research trend which began thirty years ago with studies focusing on the mendicant orders and on medieval urbanization which carefully investigated the interrelations between the monastic orders and urban environment.⁵

The lower valley of the River Rhône – which divides Toulouse County on the west and the county together with the Marquisate of Provence on the east – does not show any kind of specific political cohesion (Fig. 1). Yet an important urban tradition, left behind by the Romans, is to be found here, what is more, the network of the commanderies of the Temple and that of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem make it a prosperous field for analysis.⁶ Even though no overall studies have been published so far on the monastic presence in Provençal towns, it should be born in mind that very important foundations can be found in cities like Saint-Gilles, Saint-Laurent in Avignon, or in others on the periphery, for instance, at Saint-Victor in Marseille, at Montmajour in Arles or at Saint-André de Villeneuve near Avignon, to mention only the well-known ones – when the military orders arrived.⁷ As opposed to what can be observed in other French regions or even in the rest of the Provençal region, where their presence was mostly rural, the settlement of the two main international military orders in Low Rhodianian

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

⁴ For the time being only a few German researchers showed an interest in global way relating to the military orders and the towns 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, 297–305.

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), 335–348, et "Ordres mendiants et urbanisation de la France médiévale. État de l'enquête," *Annales ESC* 25 (1970), 924–946. The Lille congress on *Les moines dans la ville*, Université catholique de Lille-Université de Picardie, 1996, provided an overview of these questions primarily for France and Northern Europe. In Italy the research has been focused 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), 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.

Provence and in Mediterranean Languedoc did not skip urban sites since ten Templar commanderies out of fifteen houses were located in town. It was also the case for six commanderies out of sixteen of the Hospital. The overall goal of the present study is to propose a temporary and inevitably limited assessment on urban commanderies. The circumstances of the arrival of the brethren in towns, their material holdings in the urban system, and also their economic and religious presence in the urban society are the subjects of the present study.

The characteristic features of the settlement of the military orders in towns

The arrival of the military orders in southern France, as in the rest of the Western Europe, was accomplished in successive waves. Unfortunately, the establishment of a house and/or that of a commandery was never illuminated accurately in the sources because the first deeds, in the majority of the cases, had been lost and the brethren were not circumspect enough to keep records of their foundations and their belongings in the very beginning. One must then be contented with the first mentions which often appear just a few years after the very arrival of the orders. The Hospitallers' progression in the region is well known: from Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, where one of the first houses in the West was established in 1113, the Order turned towards Arles (c.1115-1120) and later into the direction of eastern Provence (Gap, in the beginning of the twelfth century, Manosque, c. 1127), for instance, towards Languedoc.⁸ The second wave of establishments in the 1170-1180s enabled it to settle in the Marquisate of Provence and in particular in Orange, Avignon and Cavaillon.⁹ It was also the town what the Order of the Temple, upon its arrival, fixed as the first donation which assured the presence of the Order in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and in Orange in 1136, from where the Temple expanded immediately towards the countryside (Richerenches, Roaix, c. 1136-1138).¹⁰ The Hospital seems to have progressed from a permanent position: the commandery of Saint-Gilles soon assumed a leading role in the developing priory,¹¹ while the Temple relied on travelling missions charged with soliciting the first donations. The Templar brother Arnaut de Bedos, who established the first commanderies in the Marquisate of Provence in 1136-1138 moved to Uc Rigaut, probably being commissioned by Hugues de Payns to develop the order in southern France and in Catalonia. It seems certain that the activity of Bernat Roland, a brother who was in charge of the management in Richerenches and in Roaix, was the initiating cause of the arrival of the Templars to Arles where he

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

⁹ D. Le Blévec, "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, 17-61.

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

¹¹ 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*, 114-183.

was known to stay in 1143, and maybe in Saint-Gilles.¹² Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct the activity of any representative of the order in a given region, who was in charge of creating a strategy of the settlement or responded to a call from an ecclesiastical or local lay authority who wanted the brethren to establish a new community. From these first centers, the Temple quickly progressed towards the east (Bayles, near Aix-en-Provence c.1143, and then towards Var and Alpes-Maritimes from the 1160s) as well as towards the west (Montfrin, Gard, 1146). The second wave of foundations which concerned Avignon (c. 1170), Tarascon (c. 1192), and later Cavaillon and Fos (c. 1200) also started from Arles, while the expansion from Saint-Gilles enabled the establishment of a net of minor rural commanderies. This brief chronological overview implies two remarks. The first one is that the Temple arrived at some sites where the Hospital had already been firmly established for about twenty years (Saint-Gilles, Arles, Cavaillon). In many cases, the Templars found themselves in a disadvantageous situation when compared with their rival who were already well organized with a reasonable local influence. Second, that even though most of the foundations took place in the second half of the twelfth century, the first established commanderies, like Arles and Saint-Gilles undoubtedly remained the richest and the most important ones in the hierarchy of the houses of the two orders.

The presence of the orders in a site is always preceded by an initial donation which served from time to time as a precursor of the role of the local landlords. But in the urban environment the sources provide a rather uneven insight while attempting to draw the social and political profile of the benefactors.¹³ Only the donations of great families are well documented which may shed some light on the support granted to the military orders, for instance, by the counts of Provence and Toulouse.¹⁴ It was the case with the princes of Orange when it is possible to follow the chain of privileges given to the military orders. First, under the Nice family which settled the Temple in Orange and which later conferred the seigniorial rights to the Hospital (1215), and then under the Baux family the relations between the two orders were more or less unperturbed.¹⁵ Like in the rural environment, where the attraction of the aristocracy to this new "way" of monasticism seemed clearer. It looks as the ideology of the crusade carried by those orders

¹² Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 88–90.

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

¹⁴ About the respective roles of families of earls and old aristocracy: D. Carraz, *ibid.*, 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 (henceforth: CaRi), xlvi–xlvii. And about the close links between Orange's princes and the Hospital: F. Mazel, *La noblesse et l'Église en Provence, fin Xe-début XIVe siècle. L'exemple des familles d'Agoult-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*, Paris 2002, 298, 353–355, 465–467.

had a deep impact on several families whose members have followed Raimon de Saint-Gilles in the Orient.¹⁶ If the dominant aristocracy was able to give an impulse to the arrival of the brethren, their supportive role was related once they had been settled by persons of often obscure extractions. But they seem to belong to the knightly layer of urban society which was characteristic of southern France as in northern-central Italy alike. Thus, the charters reveal the activity of some proctors who purchased lands on behalf of the Orders, sometimes on their own expenses; they made donations of lands, lent money, or supported them by different financial means such as construction and repair needed by the brethren. Those persons who may appear like the "friends" (*amici*) of the Orders confirmed their collaboration with spiritual links, either by taking the full habit as did Brocard at the Hospital of Avignon (1199), or by joining their confraternity and bequeathed them all their goods upon their deaths, like Catalan to the Temple of Tarascon (1202), or by choosing the cemetery of the Orders as their burial-place, like Peire de la Milice, protector of the Temple of Avignon (1270).¹⁷

As opposed to the role played by the nobles, bishops more often took the initiative to settle the brethren of the military orders in their cities. The donation of a church or chapel meant almost always the first step towards the founding of a new house. The orders arrived in a favorable moment for Provence as the reform movement just reached the region. Thus it was the case of Arles where the church of Saint-Thomas in the district of Trinquetaille first was granted to the Hospital by a noble layman, Peire Guilhem de Meynes, around 1110-1116. But having looked at the claim of the chapter house concerning this church, it seems that the Hospital preferred to purchase it back from the church of Arles before the final confirmation of ownership by Archbishop Atton and his successors.¹⁸ From this original centre, the Order promptly raised a house which first appeared in 1140.¹⁹ Sometimes, the episcopal action was much more decisive: in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, Bishop Pons de Grillon was dissatisfied with the support he gave to the Templar establishment in Richerenches; he also made a preliminary donation to Arnaut de Bedos by giving him the church of Saint-Jean, along with the adjacent *palacium* and the surrounding locations.²⁰ In other cases, the bishop was sa-

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

¹⁷ About Brocard: D. Le Blévec, "L'Hôpital," 19-24. About the others: Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 554-557.

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

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

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 gotten, in part, into lay

tified with a land-donation thus furthering the establishment of a house as was maybe the case with the Temple in Avignon.²¹ No doubt, the reform ideal which deeply rooted in the soul of many Provençal prelates did stimulate the response to those Orders also born from this spiritual premises. It indeed appears that a new generation of bishops, originating from monastic and canonic circles between 1060 and 1130 created an especially favorable context for the establishment of the military orders in the area.²²

In cases of urban houses the location was dependent on the very first donations. Thus these sites show characteristics which were also those of the religious institutions which fitted themselves into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries expansion of urban space. Commanderies were mostly located in the periphery of old centers in quarters characterized by fast urbanization, near the surrounding town-walls when those were already erected, preferably near the gates. In Arles, the Temple house, mentioned from 1146 onwards, can be found in the Bourg Neuf, a northern quarter of the town which was parceled out in the beginning of the twelfth century and which was encircled by a rampart from the end of the century.²³ The commandery, located near the banks of the Rhône river, laid outside of the precinct but near the gate which bore the name of *porta de militia* (Fig. 2).²⁴ These sites at the edge of the center were not so far as to be disadvantageous: a gate and the proximity of a busy road made attainable for the brethren the landed property located in the suburban country; it was also a sort that could attract the faithful and the travelers into the church of the commandery and it made the collection of the passage tax easier.²⁵ Finally, these locations still not accessed by the urbanization offer more possibilities for extensions. Therefore in Saint-Gilles, the Templars and the Hospitallers shared with each other an islet on the Rhône river in front of the city where their commanderies were sheltered behind large enclosures including vineyards and gardens.²⁶

hands and thus be restored at the order's arrival, M. Bois, *D'Augusta Tricastinorum à Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux*, Lyon 1992, 164–166.

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

²² Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 134–159. For a new analysis of the Gregorian crisis in Provence: Mazel, *La noblesse*, 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 arrest of the Templars, the house was still on the same site contrary to the scholarly tradition which holds that the house had 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 (henceforth: ADBdR), 56 H 5170.

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

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

The chronology and the conditions of the commanderies entering the towns show that a consistent urban establishment was present from the beginning and it really happened in the progression movement of the first military orders in the country. Whether the brethren have deliberately planned to establish themselves in such urban sites or they were driven by preliminary donations, the result was the same: one or two commanderies of the military orders appeared in each town of whatever importance along the Rhône river at the end of the twelfth century. Once established, the military orders were in general satisfied with the place they had acquired and were looking forward to increasing their influence in the town.²⁷

The influence of the military orders in the town

The presence of the order was established first of all by building complexes of which – with a few exceptions – there is nothing extant today. The possibility of an archeological excavation is rather limited; one should be contented with what texts provide, including modern studies. When they are sufficiently documented, urban commanderies appear as enclosures organized around a court. A church, a cemetery, a group of buildings consisting of more than fifteen rooms including a refectory, bedrooms of the commander and the treasurer, an infirmary, a wardrobe and appurtenances (attics, kitchen, meat-safe). The whole complex was found behind a fence also sheltering a windmill: like the Templar house of Arles, which existed between 1146 and 1309, bore the characteristic features of an important commandery.²⁸ It can often be observed that the systematic policy of a commandery concerning land purchases and even streets surrounding directly the commanderies, in order to expand the buildings but also to provide some isolation.²⁹ Thus, in 1308, the Arles residence appeared like an islet in the structure because it was surrounded by its garden, the Rhône river and the streets on both sides.³⁰ This purchasing policy thus determined the adjacent environment and notably the roads.³¹ Confirming the enclosure aspect, some of these buildings

²⁷ One rarely sees a moving of the commandery. This was the case with the Avignon Hospitallers who succeed in leaving the peripheral 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, Le Blévec, "L'Hôpital," 21–24. It would also be the case, according to the scholarly tradition, of the Tarascon Templars who, 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, Vol. 2, 103.

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

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

³⁰ ADBdR, B 433. For Avignon: Carraz, "Une commanderie," 9–10.

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

looked as though they had been designed to provide a military function, to which one attaches a rather symbolic and ostentatious intent than a real defensive one.³²

When the presence of a commandery left a manifest print in the urban landscape – one should be impressed by the width of the church of the Hospital of Aix-en-Provence or the Temple of Avignon still intact today (Fig. 3). The few studies of urban settlements made the characteristics of the possessions of the orders in towns clear.³³ They consisted of houses, gardens and orchards, usually urban and rented with lease. The way these goods were accumulated cannot be surveyed here because it might involve very different cases. Let us only state 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 was more based on purchases than on donations of the faithful.³⁴ In most of the cases, the Hospital seemed to have a determinant advantage over the Temple concerning landed properties. For example, in Avignon, taking only one type of goods, the Hospital appeared at the end of the thirteenth century as an owner of primary importance, collecting more than a hundred *quitrent* from houses dispersed in the seven parishes of the town.³⁵ As for the Templars, whose activity was restrained for a long time by the commune, they made significant purchases from 1250–1270 onwards but when they were arrested, they had only twenty houses.³⁶ Landed localization looks likely to be more the result of the appropriateness of purchases than a deliberate policy. At the very most, one can say that in Arles, of the thirty houses possessed by the Temple and leased out *intra muros*, the majority of them were gathered in the parish Notre-Dame de la Major, neighboring the resident parish of the order.³⁷ It was a quarter in expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries where there was still room for new acquisitions and buildings. It is obvious, on the other hand, that the accumulation of cultivable lands on the outskirts of the towns was sometimes formed by the site of the commandery.³⁸

It nevertheless must be noted that this typically urban patrimony was only significant in such important towns as Arles and Avignon. In small towns

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* 7 (1934), 132. The still extant archaeological vestiges also confirm borrowings from military architecture: Carraz, "Une commanderie," 9, 18; et M. Vecchione, "Un édifice templier en Provence: la tour Saint-Blaise d'Hyères," *Provence historique* 40 (1990), 57–75.

³³ Let us point out in comparison the recent adjustment for London: M. Gervers, "The Commandery as an Economic Unit in England," in *La Commanderie*, 252–258.

³⁴ Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 191–213.

³⁵ Le Blévec, "L'Hôpital," 27.

³⁶ ADBdR, B 437.

³⁷ ADBdR, B 433.

³⁸ In Avignon the 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.

(Orange, Cavaillon, Tarascon), possessions of urban houses had 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 supposedly exceeded the urban goods. The partial impression about the urban goods management is a certain lack of dynamism. Thus, contrary to what can be observed in other towns of Western Europe,³⁹ the orders do not seem to have played a determinant role in the urbanization process by arranging allotments, except maybe in case of Avignon (Fig. 3).⁴⁰ However, it might have been reflected essentially in their economic activity which was essentially reflected in the encashment of term leases, even if the brethren did attempt to vary their incomes by granting themselves a share of tolls on men and merchandise.⁴¹ The sources reveal little traces of commercial activity and they do not shed light on the way the houses could have contributed to the logistic support of the Holy Land. The military orders wanted to be present in all the urban districts along the Rhône river. The proximity of the river (to Arles, Saint-Gilles, and Avignon) reveals the use of those navigable roads for men and merchandises heading towards the embarkation places towards the Middle East, primarily Marseille and Saint-Gilles.⁴²

The needs of the Middle East directly leads us to the recruitment point considering that it was also among the duties of the western commanderies. The statistical social approach on the personnel which constituted these religious communities helps to understand the urban implantation mode of the military orders. One can observe the low number of these houses: just when they were arrested (after 1307) six Templars were found in Arles, two in Avignon, and only one in Fos, while the important Saint-Gilles commandery housed twenty-four brothers

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'École des Chartes* (1974), 86-87. And for Perpignan: Verdon, "La seigneurie," 223; and Tortosa: J. Fuguet Sans, *L'arquitectura dels Templers a Calalunya*, Barcelona 1995, 73.

⁴⁰ The order possessed many gardens in the Estel where also appeared a few houses at the end of the thirteenth century, 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 (*Bilan scientifique du SRA*, DRAC PACA, 1993, 199). Unfortunately no source reveals whether the allotment idea should be attributed to the Temple or rather to the Hospital which has inherited the possessions of the Templars.

⁴¹ The Hospitallers in Avignon and the Templars in Tarascon collected a tax on a salt loaded boat, ADBdR, 56 H 4224 et 56 H 5170. In Saint-Gilles, Templars also collected 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), 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 M. Balard, ed., *Les ordres militaires et la mer*, (130^e Congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, La Rochelle, 21 avril 2005), Paris 2009, 21-45.

who lived in fifteen rural buildings in different places of the district.⁴³ The Hospital seems to have succeeded in maintaining a more favorable situation; the inquiry in 1338 provides more possibilities for comparison of a few components.⁴⁴ It is premature, however, to draw conclusions from these figures, of a loss of interest from the urban populations where recruitment was possible for the military orders, particularly for the Temple. Recruitment was mostly based on the economic and political matters which were especially linked to the orders.⁴⁵ Did the brothers, who populated the urban commanderies, only come from urban areas? Judging from the list of brethren, the members of urban knighthood were rather poorly represented.⁴⁶ Can one deduce that the orders recruited primarily from the lower strata of the population and thus it is necessarily less documented? It is possible. The membership of the Templar community in Saint-Gilles between 1139 and 1308 shows that at least 40% of the individuals did not come from towns *stricto sensu*, even if the popularity of the house was relatively limited - out of this number, 60% of the brethren came from the Gard district or from other adjacent ones.⁴⁷ The recruitment, as far as it was still local, did not appear clearly urban. And it seems, to reinforce this impression, that orders have met more enthusiasm from *allodium*-owners and from the middle-rank rural aristocracy living in the *castra* better represented among the brethren, *confratres* and benefactors. Under these circumstances, what kind of links could military orders have built with the urban communities?

⁴³ ADBdR, B 151, B 437, 56 H 5301; and L. Ménard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et littéraire de la ville de Nîmes*, Paris 1750, Vol. 1, n° 136. These poor showings corroborate the findings in other regions, for example, Miguet, *Templiers*, 135. The situation is quite different in the first decades of the order's existence, but the explanation of the fall in recruitment would exceed the scope of this article.

⁴⁴ The figures are, for instance, 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* 45 (1995), 106.

⁴⁵ A. J. Forey, "Recruitment to the Military Orders (twelfth to mid-fourteenth centuries)," *Viator* 17 (1986), 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 cannot at any rate be a complete one because, in spite of some well-documented families, this urban *milites* class still has to be studied concerning Provence. For a synthesis, see M. Aurell, "La chevalerie urbaine en Occitanie (fin Xe-début XIII^e siècle)," *Les élites urbaines au Moyen Age*, Paris-Rome 1997, 71-118.

⁴⁷ 566 names were identified during the existence of the house out of which 228 (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 the inhabitants of Saint-Gilles in the remaining 60%.

Military orders and urban communities

The members of the military orders were first of all professed brothers aiming to play the part corresponding to this status. The attitude of the bishop, as seen above, was not unfavorable. The brethren quite easily obtained the right in each district to own a church or chapel with a cemetery. But these churches - and it is characteristic of the urban implantation - were excluded from any parochial system.⁴⁸ In spite of that, it seems that the brethren, pleading their privileges, exerted all their powers, which drew down on them thunderbolts from the bishop and the chapter. From the last decades of the twelfth century, there is no Provençal town where no conflict was observed between ecclesiastical authorities and the military orders claiming for the landed possessions of the churches, parish revenues and burial fees. Everywhere, the discontents of the bishops or those of the chapters were recurrent: the orders did not pay the burial quarter tax due to the cathedral chapter, they used excuses to attract the dying persons to their cemeteries, shroud during the interdict periods; they did not pay the tithe due to the Church, but collected it without authorization.⁴⁹ The stake was of course financial: by attracting the locals to their churches and the deceased to their cemeteries the brethren deprived other ecclesiastical institutions, primarily bishops and chapters, of large amount of incomes. So after an *entente cordiale* period, the prelates become more and more distrustful, as indicated by the increased length and precision of the interdict restriction clauses imposed on the spiritual activity of the military orders.⁵⁰ Beyond a particular ecclesiastical context which encouraged the prelates to stay more watchful of their rights and income,⁵¹ these things reveal not only the longing of the Templars and the Hopitallers show, in towns as well, a manifest religious presence but probably also a sure success among the faithful.

⁴⁸ For example, when in 1169 the abbot of Saint-Gilles allowed the Templars to build their oratory, he clearly prohibited 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. When the archbishop of Arles granted to the Temple the permission for a cemetery settlement near his oratory, he specifies that no parishioner to be buried there without his consent, E. Bœuf, *Édition du chartier de l'archevêché d'Arles (417-1202)*, thèse de l'École des Chartes, 1996, n° 82 (1152).

⁴⁹ Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 463-469.

⁵⁰ In Avignon, the bishop finally allowed to the Temple to build a chapel with a cemetery only after 1273. This permission followed rude negotiations and precisely enumerated the share of the tax paid by the burial place (*mortalagium*), that 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 were also carefully 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. Chiffolleau, "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, 65-83.

Lay association was another phenomenon which may shed some light on the popularity and the efficacy of the military orders of their office structures. Entering a religious order laics devoted themselves to an institution, often providing gifts upon their entrance, making various promises out of which the most popular were obedience, recognitory tax in form of annual payment, and shrouding in the cemetery of the convent.⁵² In return for those offerings, the *confrater* or the donor (*donatus*) benefited by being offered catering or lodging but he expected in general spiritual profits by joining the liturgical community. The benefits of the affiliation were mutual. In addition to the spiritual association haloed by prestige of the crusades, the *confrater* profited by a network of fellowship and by judicial privileges which were indicated by badges on their clothes.⁵³ By those expedients, military orders secured a clientage thus founding incomes for themselves from donations and burials which could more easily avoid the claims of the bishops and the chapters. It seems that urban commanderies did not exclusively recruit their members in the towns. Many people entered the houses of the two orders in Saint-Gilles to perform their *traditio* with the commander and still lived in the neighboring *castra*.⁵⁴ The geographical area in which some parts of the *confratres* were recruited overlaps with the map of the landed estates of the professed brothers of the two houses of Saint-Gilles. Their social status remained obscure. Most of the affiliates, based on the bequeathed goods, undoubtedly originated from the knightly class or from the layer of rich land-owners, but it would be misleading to identify the source of recruitment as elite.⁵⁵ Those „affiliation contracts“ which were set among the aristocratic elite from the first year of the existence of the order, could only be found from the 1170s and decreased quite rapidly in the first half of the thirteenth century.

⁵² Here we do not intend to go into either the details from differences between *confrater* and donors (*donati*), nor into the transition from one to the other status. This definition, much oversimplified because of the different existing ranks of affiliation, must be then augmented by C. de Miramon, *Les "donnés" au Moyen Âge. Une forme de vie religieuse laïque. v. 1180–v. 1500*, Paris 1999, 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)," in A. Luttrell, F. Tommassi, eds. *Religiones militares. Contributi della storia degli Ordini religioso-militari nel medioevo*, Città di Castello 2008, 171–190.

⁵³ The privileged status that the *confratres* could expect of that kind of adhesion is well demonstrated by a sentence by the synod of Arles (1263) condemning the military orders which, in addition to the insignia of their religion, conferred on their *familiares* 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*, Vol. 3, 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" of the confraternity were specifically written with the aim to keep track of the belongings or duty donations accompanying the religious deed. It is likely that the *traditio* of persons of modest resources was not registered in writing.

Despite the areas of obscurity, the overall goals seem to be a perfect adaptation between the aristocratic or land-owner urban elites and these orders: they knew how to meet the spiritual expectations of these townsmen.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the attitude of the urban authorities towards the military orders was more nuanced, ranging between mistrust and open hostility. From the point of view of the communes, what could be the orders' participation in the „common wealth“? Did they answer at least to their vocations? By their charitable activity, which is difficult to precisely evaluate the period prior to the papal investigations in 1338 and in 1373, the Hospitallers seem to have followed their hospitaller mission.⁵⁷ But it was not the only one in this situation: their commandery was one of the dozens of other charitable institutions in towns as Avignon or Arles also had – and public welfare seems to have played a less important role in its success. The military activity seems almost non-existent – except perhaps in some coastal towns which still sporadically experienced Saracen attacks.⁵⁸ One could raise questions concerning the penetration of fusion of the commanderies 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 dangerous competition. In Arles the commune has introduced several means to stop the purchases of the lands of religious houses.⁵⁹ 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 the orders and the commune has affected commercial activity and the lucrative traffic of the pilgrims.⁶⁰ Finally, everywhere, from the second part of the thirteenth century, members of the communities tried to hinder the grazing activities of the commanderies by regulating access to the communal pastures to prevent overgrazing.⁶¹ Sometimes, the latent tension esca-

⁵⁶ About the manner in which the new orders of the twelfth century knew how to satisfy the traditional spirituality of the Provençal nobility: Mazel, *La noblesse*, 404–409.

⁵⁷ D. Le Blévec, *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, 68–124. With regard to the Temple, it was not 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 allowed them to build fortifications on the seaside, Carraz, “*Causa defendende*,” 26–28.

⁵⁹ The urban statutes enacted between 1162 and 1202 prohibited all religious houses to purchase any lands on the Arles territory by any reason, C. Giraud, *Essai sur l'histoire du droit français au Moyen Age*, Paris 1864, Vol. 2, 239, art. n° 168. And in 1229, the podestà prohibited 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, 56.

⁶⁰ In 1230, the two orders complained to the high constables of the Kingdom of Jerusalem that the commune had prevented them from holding their boats in the sea-port for the transporting of merchants and pilgrims, H. Gérin-Ricard-Isnard, *Actes*, n° 470 et 485.

⁶¹ In Arles, the urban statutes defended themselves from the herd encroachments of the military orders on the communal pastures, Giraud, *Essai*, 239, art. n° 164. These measures were renewed in 1225 and 1228, while the succession of cases erupted at the end of the century, ending with the setting of boundaries on the pasture, E. Engelmann,

lated into violence by urban crowds whose borders were poorly established. This disagreement – undoubtedly 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 in 1249.⁶² This matter can be interpreted as a revenge of some notables indebted to the orders,⁶³ but also as a result of the struggle led by the town against Charles of Anjou whose inclination towards the Templars and Hospitallers was suspected. Additionally, this violence did not affect the ecclesiastical circles, which also competed with the brothers.⁶⁴ In a context where the initial economic difficulties of the late Middle Ages were outlined, but which is also troubled by the consequences of the Albigensian crusade strong standing in Provence of the Angevin dynasty, the military orders clashed with urban communities that were more organized and envious of their economic situation as well as their political prerogatives. Also, the initial enthusiasm easily gave way to general mounting tensions perceptible from the first third part of the thirteenth century.

To sum up, what conclusion can be drawn concerning the settlements of the military orders in the towns of the Rhône river low valley? Having a closer look on their distribution in the area, it seems that some bishoprics fully expelled them. Thus the bishops of Vaison and Uzès who did not hinder their acts of charity but exclusively limited them to the rural sites, made efforts to keep these orders out of their cities. With regard to the diocese of Carpentras, it proved to be almost impenetrable. Towns were still found where military-religious brethren were present but they seem to occupy a marginal position or at least faced serious resistances. In Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, the bishops constantly questioned the first large donation of Pons de Grillon to the Templars and it seems that they suc-

Zur städtischen Volksbewegung in Südfrankreich. Kommunefreiheit und Gesellschaft. Arles (1200–1250), Berlin 1959, 127; et ADBdR, 56 H 5177, 56 H 5190, 56 H 5301.

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), 386–389. About the context of the opposition of the communes to the ecclesiastical power: J. Chiffolleau, "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, monarchisme et théories politiques*, Lyon 1994, Vol. 2, 680–692.

⁶³ The economy of the military orders on the Arlesian territory particularly proceeded towards very profitable activities, like the salt-mine exploitation and the ovine breeding also carried on by the patrician families. Some of those members, knights and *probi homini*, became indebted to the orders from the beginning of the thirteenth century, E. Engelmann, *Zur städtischen*, 81–84.

⁶⁴ As the matter revealed in the 1229 regulation. One learns there that the canons and other Arlesian clerics apparently sheltered by the archbishop, 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 request of the archbishop, which demonstrates the imbrications of the religious, economic and political stakes.

ceeded in supplanting them from the city centre.⁶⁵ The order indeed chose to invest the antique suburban site of Saint-Vincent, but above all it concentrated its development in the country, as the large Richerenches commandery proves. In Saint-Gilles, the Temple and the Hospital subjected themselves to severe restrictions imposed by the Benedictine abbot, the mighty lord of the town, and for the greater part continued their territorial expansion beyond the walls and above all towards the hinterland of Gard and Camargue. In the eyes 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 benevolent princely authority. At any rate, the presence of the military orders was everywhere hit by contests rooted in religious and economic interests in competitive situations which became general for control of souls and for the exploitation of land as well as commercial incomes. In fact, comparing this exploitation to the deep entrenchment of many commanderies in the countryside, the integration of the Templars and the Hospitallers into the towns seems after all quite incomplete. Given these facts, one could draw a subtle conclusion about the urban presence of the orders. Yet, their commanderies all invested large agglomerations in the region and no site with a strategic interest - passage road, active harbor, political capital - was lost to them. In Arles, Saint-Gilles, Avignon or Marseille, their houses took part in the most important economic centers inside a network set by each order, but also scaled to the local activities. Everywhere they claimed to exercise a real spiritual function often with success, as the vitality of their lay association and the frequency of burial in their cemeteries prove. The presence of the Templar and the Hospitaller *militia* in towns of the low Rhône river was manifested in an undeniable economical influence, important religious and charitable activity and a probable political role.

In many ways, the military orders seem to have taken over the role of the traditional monastic communities established in town - but should be evaluated the religious and economic acquisitions. The urban area enables then to attribute importance to the hitherto neglected characteristic features of the military orders: that of a transitional model between traditional monasticism 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 well as their institutional organization - centralized, international and directly linked to the papacy - these orders reveal indeed the spiritual revival instigated by the mendicant movement. A systematic study of the military orders *inurbamento* on a larger scale would probably contribute to our knowledge of the urban societies between the Gregorian crisis and the arrival of the mendicant orders and then help to define the religious transformation in the given period.

⁶⁵ Carraz, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 143-144.

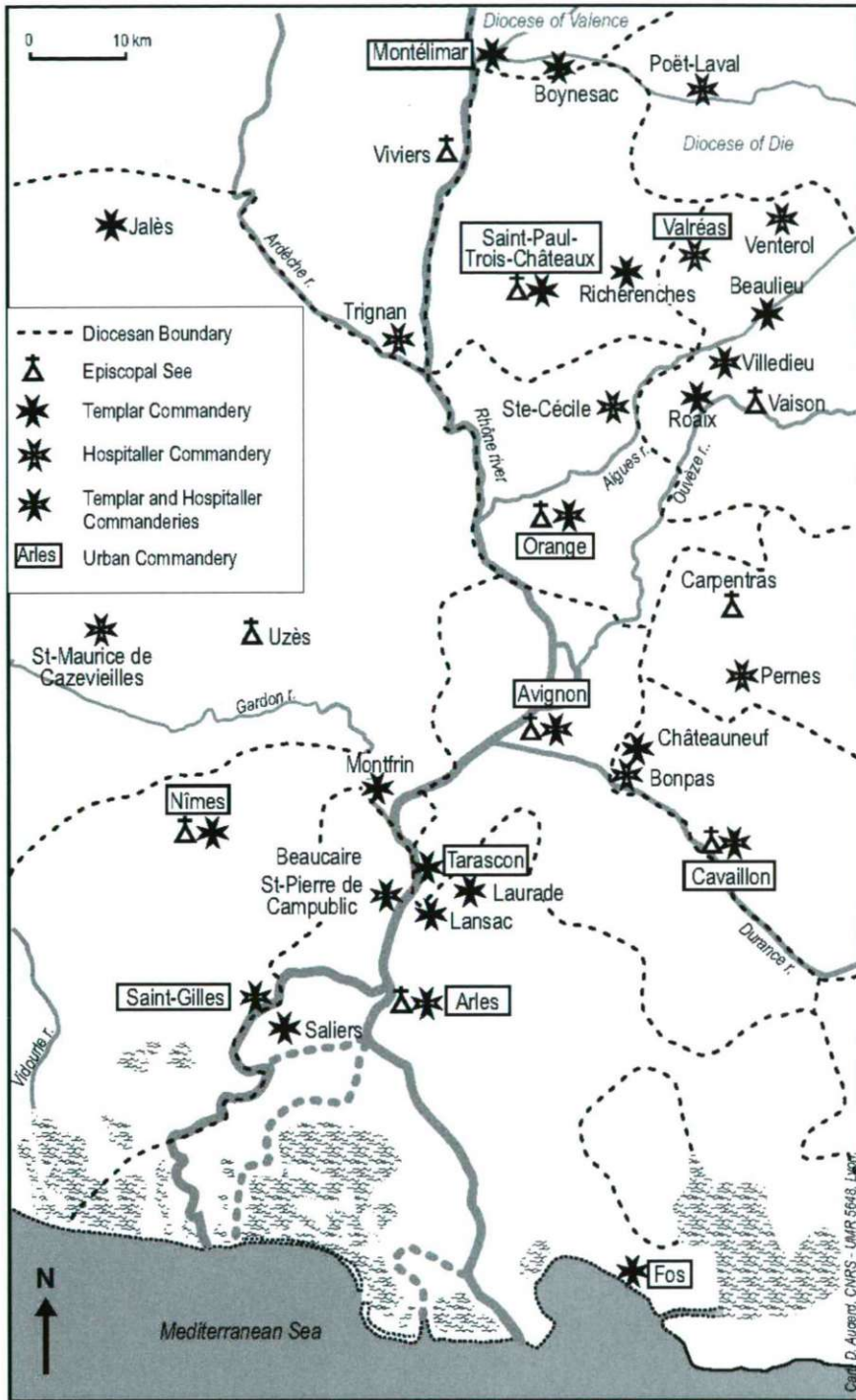


Fig. 1

Templar and Hospitaller Commanderies in the Lower Rhône Valley, c. 1200

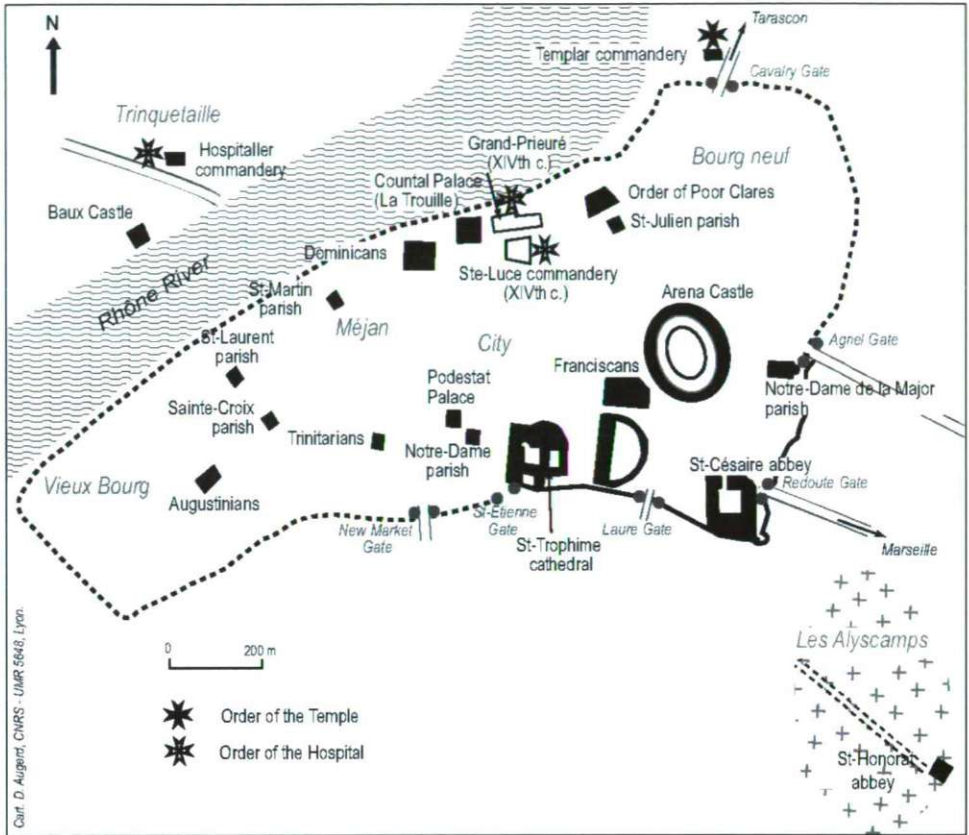


Fig. 2
ARLES in the Thirteenth Century

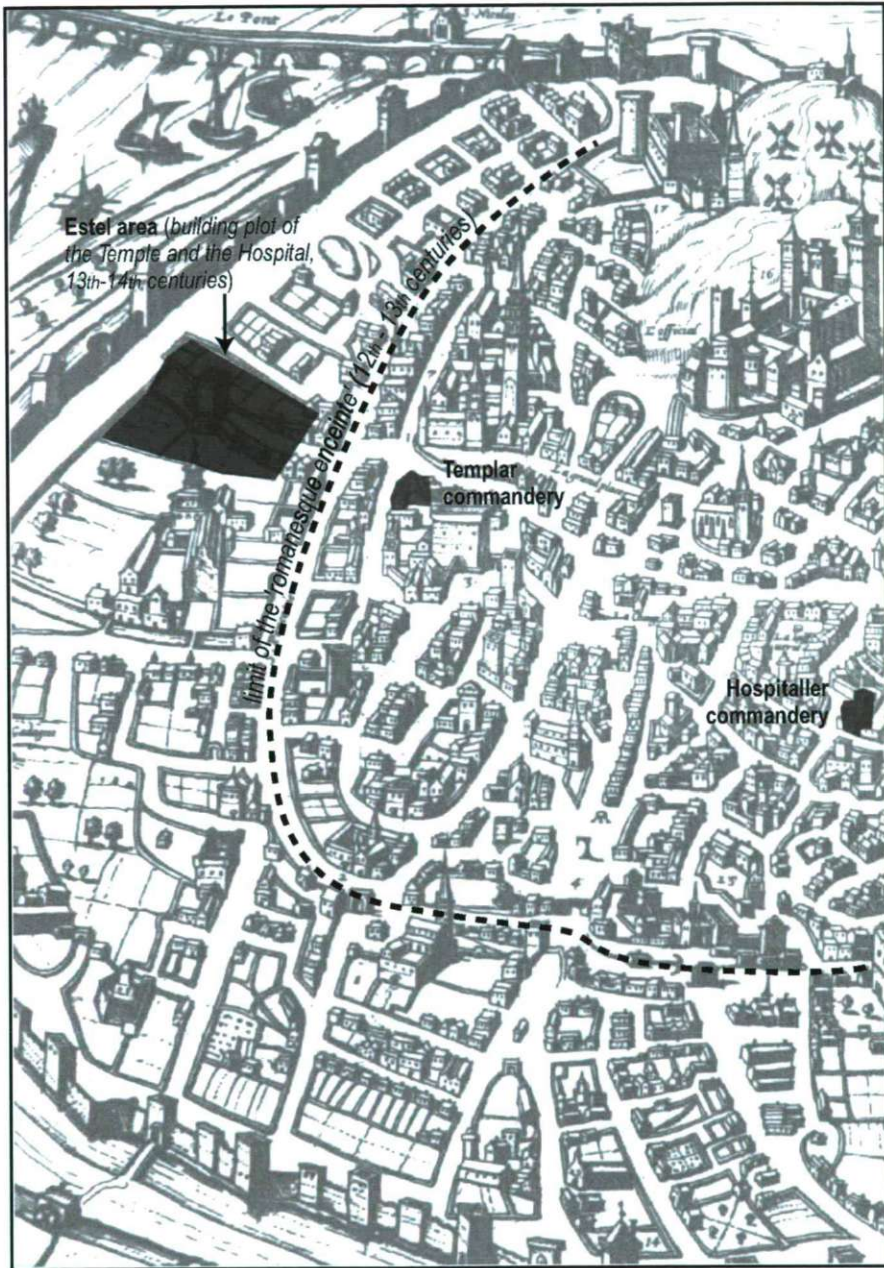


Fig. 3.

The Military Orders in Avignon

(detail of the „Plan aux personnages”, published in G. Braun, F. Hogenberger, *Urbium proecipuarum mundi theatrum colonia*, 1572 (Avignon, bibliothèque municipale, Est. Atlas, 104/1). In Avignon, the Templars are on the limit of the „romanesque enceinte”, near the gate of *de militia* and the Rhône river. The Hospitallers are in the heart of the city, in the St. Pierre parish, near the Jewish area where they rent several houses.