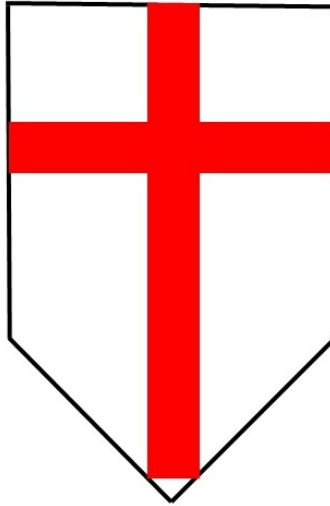


Templars



I'm working on my new novel, *The Tachi*. It will be Book IV of the Rainey Chronicles and tells the story of how Angus Rainey, the first Rainey, got the sword. It will take him east along the Silk Roads and back. I've done a lot of research for this book. Part of the research was expanding my knowledge of the Templars who make an appearance at the beginning of the book.

The Knights Templar were a powerful order during medieval times. Formed in 1118, they gained Papal support at the Council of Troyes in 1128. In theory, the Templars answered only to the Pope. In reality, since they formed without Papal blessings, they really answered only to themselves. In 1312, when the Pope withdrew his support, they were not abolished since the Papacy never formed them in the first place. At the time, there were thousands of Templars throughout Europe. Their main reason for existing (crusading in the Holy Land) no longer existed. They had been reduced to money lenders but still were extremely rich and powerful.

When King Philip of France, who controlled the Pope through shady dealings, wanted to confiscate the Templars wealth (he owed them enormous amounts of money), he charged them with heresy among other grievous crimes. Viewed from a historical perspective, the heresy charge was legitimate. The Grand Master Jacques de Molay admitted that the Templars did not believe Jesus was a god. Hadn't since the birth of the Order. So the question is, how did they get Papal support in the first place?

The answer is very complex. It begins with the first ten years of the Templars, where the original nine knights (eleven if you count two major French noblemen who joined in 1120 and 1125) did nothing but dig in the old Temple of Jerusalem. What they found has been speculated on for centuries, but their power increased exponentially because of what they found.

I recently finished a book by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas called *The Second Messiah*. It was a fascinating read about the research they undertook on the Templars. One of the premises, based on history, was that there were two Christian churches soon after Christ was crucified on the cross. The first, which became the founding of the Roman Catholic Church, was led by Paul. The second, known as

the Jerusalem Church, was led by James, Jesus' brother. It was through Paul that Jesus was venerated as the Son of God, creating the religion that has dominated Europe until Martin Luther had a problem with it (that's another story). The Jerusalem Church was more concerned with the message Jesus had been promoting during his ministry. No son of God stuff, strictly the message of how to live your life so you may be reborn in heaven. It was really an offshoot of Judaism and was never intended to be taught to the Gentiles. Paul, however, promoted the Son of God theme to the Gentiles, giving his religion a greater reach. James and the Jerusalem Church ran into a very large roadblock in the name of the Roman Army.

The Jewish people began revolting against Roman rule about 66 AD. By 70 AD, the Roman Army had invaded Jerusalem, destroying the temple and dispersing the Jewish people all over the empire. As the temple was being destroyed, it is said that the Jerusalem Church hid many of their writings and sacred objects deep within catacombs under the temple. While Paul's church continued on, James' church was virtually snuffed out.

Knight and Lomas surmise that the original Templars were descendants of the priests of the Jerusalem Church. Their ten year digging expedition was to recover these ancient writings and objects. With them, the Templars would have evidence of the true Christian faith, contrary to the teachings of the Roman Church. They had leverage. With it, they gained Papal support and almost two hundred years of power and prestige.

It kind of makes sense. I've never been a big conspiracy theory kind of guy, but the one Gospel (and the oldest of the four) written during the Roman invasion of 70 AD was Mark. It has no Christmas story and originally did not have a resurrection story either. The two major pillars of the Roman Church are missing!! Mark was likely written by someone in the Jerusalem Church and for centuries, it was the only link to that group allowed by the Roman Church. It makes you think.

Isn't history great?