

# **Ghost Commandery: Shaping Local Templar Identity in the Cartulary of Provins**

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In 1133, in the presence of the retinue of the Count of Champagne, the Count of Brie, and more than twenty other men and women from the Champagne nobility, Drogo of Pierrefonds presented a knife to the Knights of the Temple of Solomon.<sup>1</sup> This knife gave tangible form to the orally pledged gift that André, the seneschal of the Count of Champagne, gave to the Templars.<sup>2</sup> The gift itself, a castle in Baudement along with fields, meadows, bridges, and servants, was made for the salvation of André's soul and especially for his son William, who was himself a Templar. André's gift was recorded in a charter, which was copied into the cartulary of the Templar Commandery (or House) at Provins nearly eighty years later.<sup>3</sup> The use of a

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Carrière, ed., *Histoire et cartulaire des Templiers de Provins avec une introduction sur les débuts du Temple en France* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1919), No. 81. The cartulary is found in the Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), S5162B, but I cite the published version in the remainder of this article.

<sup>2</sup> For the use of physical objects in land transactions, M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1993), 254–66; Jacques le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 244–48, 354–60.

<sup>3</sup> The commandery, or house, was the administrative unit for a group of Templars living in western Europe. There were a series of houses, some of which were not houses at all but churches or chapels. The term "commandery" was how the Hospitallers organized their properties in the early modern period, though it is now applied to the earlier Templar period discussed here. In the documents used here, the term used is always *domus* or house. There would

cartulary to compile older records was, of course, nothing new. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many monasteries recommitted their written records to a consolidated manuscript book (codex).<sup>4</sup> In some cases the copied records were preserved; in other cases they were destroyed. The copying of records could be used both to define geographic space and interests and to emphasize the institutional history of the copiers. What makes the case of this cartulary particularly interesting is that the Templar house in Provins was not established until 1193, sixty years after André's gift. In 1133, there were no Templars living in Champagne at all.

The case of André's gift was not unique. Altogether, eleven records from the Provins cartulary not only predate the production of the cartulary, but also the very founding of the Templar commandery.<sup>5</sup> In some cases, the utility of these documents is readily apparent; they record lands or rights that were later assumed by the house at Provins once it had been established. In other cases, they record transactions that took place with other Templars in the area who had nothing to do with the house at Provins, yet were nevertheless preserved in its records. Whatever the case, these records present an opportunity to examine the Knights Templar in a new way. Any medieval charter represents both an economic transaction and a social relationship.<sup>6</sup> It produces a snapshot of the singular event or agreement involving lands or goods and people. Similarly, a

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also have been one commandery in each of the very large provinces that served as the main provincial headquarters. The order's central headquarters were in Jerusalem until it was captured in 1187.

<sup>4</sup> Constance B. Bouchard, "Monastic Cartularies: Organizing Eternity" and Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Towards an Archaeology of the Medieval Charter: Textual Production and Reproduction in Northern French *Chartiers*," in A. Kosto and A. Winroth, eds., *Charters, Cartularies and Archives: The Preservation and Transmission of Documents in the Medieval West* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2002), especially 24-27, 44, 59.

<sup>5</sup> *Histoire et cartulaire*, Nos. 20, 57, 81, 82, 83, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 37.

cartulary was the physical evidence of the the singular event of the preserving of records and the social relationships that those records were understood to symbolize. Thus, the cartulary from Provins attests to the past social and economic relationships most important to the Templars in Provins at the time of its production in 1212. In addition to recording assets, it also functions as a form of corporate memory as it was contained in the Order's documents.<sup>7</sup>

Ascertaining the early history of the Templars is a difficult and uncertain task at best. Most of what is known of the Order's foundation comes from only three extant narratives by Walter Map, William of Tyre, and Michael the Syrian.<sup>8</sup> All three chronicles were produced long after its foundation, however. Indeed, most were completed in the 1190s after the loss of Jerusalem to Saladin and around the same time as the founding of many Templar houses in the West. The rule of the Temple was compiled in 1129 but was probably destroyed and does not survive in any twelfth-century manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> The only surviving contemporary sources for the early history of the Templars are the letters of Hugh the Sinner and Bernard of Clairvaux, both of which may only relate to the Order indirectly.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For monastic corporate memory, Sharon Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 151-52; Amy Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 2-4, 19-22.

<sup>8</sup> *Chronique de Michel le Syrien. Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-99)*, ed. and trans. J. Chabot (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905), 3:201-03; William, Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943) 1:524-27.; Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, C. N. L. Brooke, and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> J.M. Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars: The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar* (Woodbridge, GB: The Boydell Press, 1992), 11.

<sup>10</sup> The authorship of Hugh the Sinner has never been proven definitively and does not express much beyond the anxieties of some of the early membership. Bernard of Clairvaux's text was reported to be about the Templars, but it was written before he had ever seen what the Order was; it is

This dearth of evidence necessitates the use of diplomatic sources to obtain information on the organization and the social and economic interactions of the early Order. Yet evidence from these sources has proved problematic as well. In the past two centuries, interest in the Templars has produced numerous studies of their landed estates and edited editions of their surviving cartularies.<sup>11</sup> These accounts offer a detailed but nevertheless incomplete economic history of the Order. It is especially difficult to find comprehensive economic information for the Templars. While individual documents provide figures, many Templar records remain lost, including their central archive. The nearly three hundred pre-1150 documents from across Europe that the Marquis d'Albon compiled in his *Cartulaire general* (1910) provide comparatively little narrative information on the character of the Order. D'Albon's broad approach to the Order's records results in an immense prosopographical and economic resource, but it also risks having

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more a statement about an ideal of knighthood than about the particular Templars. For Hugh the Sinner, Dominic Selwood, "*Quidam autem dubitaverunt*: The Saint, the Sinner, the Temple and a Possible Chronology," in Michel Balard, ed., *Autour de la première croisade*, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996); Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. M. Conrad Greenia (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2000), and *The Letters of Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. B. S. James (London: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998), 65.

<sup>11</sup> On the landed properties of the Templars, Elena Bellomo, *The Templar Order in North-west Italy (1142–c.1330)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Damien Carraz, *L'ordre du Temple dans la basse vallée du Rhône (1124–1312): Ordres militaires, croisades et sociétés méridionales* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2005); Alan Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); André Goineaud-Bérard, *Templiers et Hospitaliers en Périgord* (Périgueux: Pilote édition, 2002); Delphine Maire, *Les Templiers dans le diocèse de Langres: Des moines entrepreneurs aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Langres: Dominique Guéniot, 2004); Laure Verdon, *La terre et les hommes en Roussillon aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles: Structures seigneuriales, rente et société d'après les sources templières* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2001).

our understanding of the Templar organization skewed by medieval documentary conventions.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, the majority of documentary records for the Templars and well over half those compiled by d'Albon represent southern French properties—and this has far more to do with the survival of Roman law traditions in the south of France than with the economic structure of the Order. In the south, the early practice of using notaries to record and authorize gifts and sales produced many more written records. Despite this abundance of documentary evidence, the most prominent territory for the Order west of Palestine was located in the north in what the Templars called the province of France and particularly in Champagne.<sup>13</sup> The medieval county of Champagne was the birthplace of the founder of the Templars and the site where the rule of the Order was first written and approved by the papacy. An exploration of the Order in the north, then, must focus on the documentary evidence from these territories. While no study of the documentary evidence can provide exhaustive economic data, anomalies in the cultural production of records, such as the eleven entries in the cartulary attributed to a commandery that did not yet exist, can shed light on the social organization of the knights Templar at this provincial level.

To understand how each of these eleven records could have been used by the Order, we must first turn to the cartulary itself. The cartulary can be fairly easily divided into two parts, each of which contains a variety of charters recording gifts and sales of lands and rights organized in no particular order. It is important to note that these two parts of the cartulary were produced at two

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<sup>12</sup> Le Marquis d'Albon's *Cartulaire générale* compiles 626 records relating to the Templars. He draws from all geographical regions and includes letters, papal bulls, and charters. Many of the records are copied from copies made between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries. For many of these copies, the original document no longer exists. Few of the records provide descriptive accounts of the Order or its organization.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Fossier, "Les Hospitaliers et les Templiers au nord de la Seine et en Bourgogne (XIIe–XIVe siècles)," *Flaran* 6 (1984): 15.

different times. The oldest part comprises folios twenty-one to twenty-three. This section was produced well after the commandery was established, most likely around 1212. It contains copies of records from as early as 1127, all of which seem to have been written into the cartulary around 1212. Ten of the eleven documents predating the founding of the commandery are contained in this section. The rubric, hand, and script in this part are markedly different from the rest of the codex. This section has been inserted into the larger, newer section of the cartulary that was likely produced in 1243. The new section of the cartulary contains records only from 1212 to 1243 with two exceptions. The first is a copy of the donation of a house in Provins in 1193 by a certain Henry Bristaud.<sup>14</sup> This donation also appears in the older part of the cartulary and was almost certainly a foundational charter for the commandery; thus, it is not surprising that copies of it appear twice, one in each part. Its duplication, however, reveals that these two sections of the cartulary were once two different volumes. The other exception involves the property of Bristaud's house before it was donated to the Templars and illustrates the function of records copied into the cartulary.

The act of creating the cartulary involved an element of choice. Which charters would be transcribed?<sup>15</sup> It is entirely possible that the availability of documents limited this choice, that is, the Templars in Provins simply copied whatever charters they happened to have at that moment. This does not make the documents they transcribed any less significant; they still represent an active choice to preserve the record and indicate which records the commandery may have possessed when the cartulary was produced. With one exception—an 1159 document recorded both in the cartulary and preserved as a loose charter in the commandery at Troyes—it is impossible prove that any of the records in the cartulary were authentic.<sup>16</sup> The question of

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<sup>14</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, Nos. 7 and 84.

<sup>15</sup> Bouchard, "Monastic Cartularies," 22-27.

<sup>16</sup> AN, S4955 n°7: *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, No. 91.

authenticity, while important to the analysis of the dated records in the cartulary, has no bearing here if we consider what those records meant when the cartulary was produced, that is, each record authentically represents the intentions of the commandery in 1212. Thus, whether randomly or deliberately selected, forged or authentic, when considered together with the contemporary intact charters from Provins and other nearby commanderies in Champagne, the copies of earlier records represent a production process in 1212—one in which each of the recorded documents can transmit particular information about the relatively young commandery in Provins.<sup>17</sup> The cartulary's records present an inventory of the documents the commandery had access to and chose to preserve at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

In the case of most of the eleven early charters, the gifts were not given to either individual Templars or even to particular Templar houses. Rather, it is most common to see them addressed to the Order as a whole or to God and the Order. In 1159 and again in 1164, Count Henry of Champagne confirmed a gift from his father to the "brothers of the Temple."<sup>18</sup> He used this phrase in any records he authorized related to the commandery at Provins.<sup>19</sup> A few of these eleven charters were even more specific, referring to the Order's roots in Jerusalem. The earliest document explains that in 1127 Count Theobald of Blois gave to the knights of the Temple of Solomon all that he had in Barbonne, Sézanne, and Chantemerle for the salvation of his soul.<sup>20</sup> This charter would have been especially important to the Order in the region. It directly connects Theobald, who was the first Count of Champagne and a major early patron of the Order, to the house in Provins. Theobald's father, Stephen, had gone on the first crusade and died in battle in the east after his

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<sup>17</sup> For the reproduction of records in cartularies, Bedos-Rezak, "Towards an Archaeology," 44.

<sup>18</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, No. 91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 82, 89, 91.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 93.

second trip to the Holy Land.<sup>21</sup> His uncle, Hugh, had joined the early Templars.<sup>22</sup> Theobald inherited his county shortly following his uncle's decision to join the Order.<sup>23</sup> While he would have been involved in the authorization of many early Templar documents in the region, the Order's later choice to preserve records that concerned the count's direct patronage would have had immense social significance for the local Order. The 1127 charter also pre-dates the official recognition of the Order by the papacy by two years, the same year Bernard of Clairvaux wrote *In laude novae militiae* (In Praise of the New Knighthood). Clairvaux's work distinguished the Templars from secular knights as soldiers who, by fighting the "foes of the cross of Christ," could wage twofold warfare, both spiritual and temporal, without bearing "the taint of sin."<sup>24</sup> Thus, the inclusion of this particular charter would have directly linked the house in Provins to the ideals of the earliest foundations of the Order by appropriating the Order's older records and, by extension, the personal ties between donor and patron to the new administrative establishment. These ties to the count would have been especially important in 1212 when the cartulary was written and when, during the regency of Blanch of Navarre, internal strife threatened the count's control of his territory. By connecting themselves to Theobald of Blois, the Templars could make a compelling case for support from either side of the struggle for control of the county.

Other charters forged similar links. André's gift in 1133 was made to the Knights of the Temple of Solomon.<sup>25</sup> In gifts like these, the Temple of Solomon was far more than just a formal name for the Order. This name made a specific connection to the Order in Palestine. André's gift was not a gift to the Templars in

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<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 223.

<sup>22</sup> D'Albon, *Cartulaire général*, No. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

<sup>24</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, 34, 39.

<sup>25</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, No. 81.



Champagne or even to those Templars who would have been present at the gift-giving ceremony; it was a gift of his lands to the Order in Jerusalem of which his own son was a member. Other early records make this same distinction. In a record from 1145, Witther of Barbonne gave all his vineyards and fields to the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to how these gifts connected the house in Provins with the purpose of the Order in the Holy Land, they reflect the early absence of the Order from its landed properties in the west. Despite the immense importance of western lands to the Order for recruitment, resources, and donations from the time of the Order's foundation, few Templar properties in western Europe were actually occupied by Templars before at least the late 1160s.<sup>27</sup> A monetary donation given in Laon in 1147 to the Temple of Jerusalem was recorded in a charter kept at the commandery of La Ferte-Gaucher, another Templar house in Champagne that was not established until well into the thirteenth century.<sup>28</sup> A more vivid example may be a charter written in the same year from the commandery at Troyes; in it, Theobald of Blois presented his gift of a mill to God and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>29</sup> By this time, the Templars had established their headquarters in the al-Aqsa Mosque, which they regarded as the Temple of Solomon. Theobald's gift reveals a particular dedication to the holy sites in the city of Jerusalem. His gift reveals the necessity of the Order's donors to look east for the spiritual gains associated with their patronage. The appropriation of these documents by late twelfth- and thirteenth-century Templar houses was an attempt to localize this spiritual devotion to the crusade once the Order had grown enough to expand into western territories.

The Templar organization was based in large territories. The master of the Order, along with most of its leadership, operated

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., No. 86.

<sup>27</sup> Fossier, "Les Hospitaliers et les Templiers," 16.

<sup>28</sup> AN, S5159 n°6.

<sup>29</sup> AN, S4958 n°43.

out of the Templar headquarters in Jerusalem. The western territories were divided into large provinces such as France, Provence/Catalonia, Apulia/Messina and Leon/Castile.<sup>30</sup> Each of the smaller houses in Champagne was, at least nominally, under the authority of the Templar master of France centered in Paris, but this administrative relationship emerged alongside the growth of other western Templar houses. Because so many of these early gifts to the Order were given to the Templars in Jerusalem before there were Templars in France, these properties would be later appropriated by emerging houses in an ad hoc manner as Templars began to manage their western lands in person. Thus, the first charters held by the Templar province of France but associated with lands in Champagne date to 1199, well after the initial establishment of many of the commanderies in Champagne.<sup>31</sup> The regional houses emerged and were administered largely independently from the Order's provincial authorities, and their records reflect the ways this independence influenced the Order's organization.

The reproduction of charters, then, can also suggest how a management structure for the local houses emerged in the absence of a strong regional presence from the upper ranks of the Order. In particular, it is clear that Templar authorities were largely absent from these local establishments because, at least in the twelfth-century records, not a single document was authorized by the Templars themselves. Not one of the surviving charters in Champagne produced prior to 1200 was even sealed with the Templar seal. The local Templars had to rely on authorities external to the Order to produce their documents, most often the counts of Champagne or the local bishop. The reliance on these external sources of authority affected the way in which the larger Order endowed a new Templar house with territorial possessions that had been donated earlier. Often, these administrative considerations were based upon the existing

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Origins of the Commandery in the Temple and the Hospital," in *La commanderie*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> AN, M1 n°2.

ecclesiastical or secular geography rather than on a system of organization designed by the Order of the Temple.

To illustrate the influence of these external authorities on the organization of Templar assets, it is useful to compare the case of Provins to three other Templar commanderies. Before the Templars established their house in Provins, they had already founded several other commanderies in the surrounding areas of the county of Champagne, three of which were Choisy-le-Temple, Coulommiers, and Troyes. Charters refer to brothers of the Temple living in the commandery of Choisy just outside of Meaux, some sixty-five kilometers northwest of Provins, in the year 1168.<sup>32</sup> Twenty-nine charters dating between 1168 and 1212 survive from Choisy-le-Temple.<sup>33</sup> All of these charters were authorized and sealed by the bishop of Meaux. In addition, most of the donations in these charters were not addressed to the Order as a whole, but to the Temple in Choisy, which indicates that this commandery probably did not appropriate any prior donations and instead only began to manage its lands in the area after the house had been founded. In the 1168 charter, the scribe refers to the Templars as "the brothers of the Temple who were in my bishopric in Choisy."<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the twenty-nine charters, two chirographs also survive from 1186 and 1188. A chirograph is a record that was written in two identical parts, side by side, on the same leaf of parchment. The word "chirographum" was then typically inscribed between the two copies of the record, and the parchment was cut through the word so that each party could have access to a copy that could be authorized by matching it to its mate.<sup>35</sup> In one of these chirographs, Stephen of Marcellin,

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<sup>32</sup> AN, S5186A n°56.

<sup>33</sup> AN, S5186A, S5186B, S5188A, S5188B, S5189A, S5190A, S5190B.

<sup>34</sup> AN, S5186A n°56.

<sup>35</sup> For the representation of two parties in documents through the use of chirographs, Bedos-Rezak, "Civic Liturgies and Urban Records in Northern France, 1100-1400," in B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson, eds., *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 38.

while departing for Jerusalem, gave a tithe as well as all his land to "lord Hugh, the master of the brothers of the temple at Choisy."<sup>36</sup> This chirograph not only clearly attests to the presence of a Templar master at this particular house, but also reveals that, from the 1180s onward, the Templars at Choisy-le-Temple maintained some kind of archive in which they could preserve their half of the chirograph. Consequently, despite its relatively close proximity, the older section of the cartulary of Provins contains no records from Choisy-le-Temple or records authorized by, or even involving in any way, the Bishop of Meaux. The lands of the commandery of Choisy-le-Temple were entirely contained within the jurisdiction of the bishop; as a result, the Templars in this area existed largely as an extension of the episcopal office. This relative independence appears unique when compared to the geographical scope of the documents contained in the cartulary. Many of its records represent lands in the regions surrounding Meaux, and some records represent lands much further away, even as far north as Reims.<sup>37</sup>

The situation in Coulommiers was quite different. There are donations made to a house of the Templars in Coulommiers, forty kilometers north of Provins, as early as 1173. These donations refer specifically to the "house of the Temple in Coulommiers," suggesting that Templars did actually live in the area at the time.<sup>38</sup> The 1173 document, which relinquishes the rights to a mill to the Templars, and a subsequent 1175 papal document, affirming the rights of the Templars to that mill, only appear as copies of records in the cartulary from Provins.<sup>39</sup> The earliest surviving charter from Coulommiers dates to 1198.<sup>40</sup> In the case of Coulommiers, despite its earlier origins, it is quite possible that some of its properties—and possibly its administration—fell under the control of the commandery of Provins once the new house had been established in 1193. Both

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<sup>36</sup> AN, S5190 n°40.

<sup>37</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, No. 82.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 88.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 88, 83.

<sup>40</sup> AN, S5176A n°2.

commanderies were in the same bishopric, and they most frequently authorized their documents through the chancery of the counts of Champagne, which would have been far more accessible in Provins, one of the county's principle cities. The reproduction of the rights from Coulommiers in the 1212 cartulary would serve as a confirmation of this organizational change.

Similarly, an 1159 charter was held both in Troyes and copied into the Provins cartulary.<sup>41</sup> In this document, Count Henry reaffirms a gift of seven marks of silver that his father Theobald had given the Templars, but he also redefines the gift as market-day tolls to be collected in Provins and Troyes. The presence of two copies of this record suggests that it continued to be relevant for houses of Templars in both Troyes and Provins, each of which would have collected the tolls in their own location. Thus, the reproduction of this record in the cartulary would have affirmed the older rights of the Order that were granted to Provins at the time it was founded.

The affirmation of re-endowed rights explains several other charters in the cartulary. In particular, two charters may represent previous agreements that could have been copied into the cartulary for their relevance when the cartulary was produced: a charter of 1171 authorized by Count Henry, in which Henry of la Borde gave a house in Provins to the Order of the Temple; and an 1180 agreement between the Templars and the Paraclete on the sale of grain.<sup>42</sup> Both the house of Henry and the lands essentially rented from the Paraclete would have come under the jurisdiction of the commandery of Provins after it was founded. By copying these records, the cartulary of Provins worked to provide the local Order with a history of its own house and landed possessions.

Non-Templar charters similarly reflected this process of utilizing records to create a historical connection to the land. In addition to the two founding charters of the house, both the new

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<sup>41</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, No. 91; AN, S4955 n°7.

<sup>42</sup> *Cartulaire des Templiers de Provins*, Nos. 89, 92.

and old sections of the cartulary contain early copies of transactions that did not involve the Templars at all.<sup>43</sup> The gift of the house situated in the valley of Saint Aygulph was witnessed by Peter Bristaud, among others, in the Count's household. Later, when Henry Bristaud gave his house to the Templars, which became their commandery, he did so "for the salvation of his soul and for the soul of his father, Peter Bristaud."<sup>44</sup> The reproduction of these older records went beyond the task of defining the land owned by the commandery. They performed a social function as well. By preserving the record of Count Henry, despite its apparent lack of any legal or economic utility given that both the donor and the recipient of the gift were dead in 1212, the Templars were able to relate the foundation of their own commandery directly back to the patronage of Count Henry through the patronage of the Bristaud family.

In the choice to preserve each of the eleven records pre-dating the founding of the commandery, the Templars in Provins shaped their corporate identity as Templars in a particular way. They reached beyond the immediate interests of the local house to reveal the institutional and historical character of the Order while simultaneously defining their geographic space and interests in the city of Provins and the county of Champagne. The local house of this international Order was not a major power in the county. The management of their land was constrained by the need to attach themselves to local authorities, whether bishop or count. Yet, despite these constraints, they utilized their documentary culture to draw social connections to their powerful patrons, the Counts of Champagne, and, perhaps more important, to reach back chronologically to the foundations of their Order and their initial ethos in the Holy Land.

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<sup>43</sup> The example from the new section, though, an 1165 gift from Count Henry to Bernard of les Granges does involve the house that later became the Templar commandery. *Ibid.*, No. 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 7, 84.