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THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

SPIRITUAL IDEALS AND POLITICAL REALITIES:
INQUISITORIAL MOTIVATIONS IN THE TRIAL OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR IN
THE BRITISH ISLES 1307-1312

BY
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BURLINGTON, VERMONT

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CHAPTER I. DOMINICAN INQUISITORS AND THE CONTEXT OF THE TEMPLAR TRIAL, 1307-1312

The Downfall of the Templars in France

The secretive arrests, trial, and subsequent suppression and dissolution of the Knights Templar in the early fourteenth century remain events of endless fascination and speculation. The Order of the Templars, founded in 1119, began as a group of religious knights, who dedicated themselves to protecting Christian pilgrim routes in the Holy Land. The Order's size and scope greatly expanded throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and by the beginning of the fourteenth century, it had become a massive international organization—an organization that was deeply embedded in the financial and political affairs of Europe's monarchies. Despite their increasingly important role as international bankers, the Templars' primary purpose continued to be the protection of the Holy Land. When, in 1291, Muslim forces finally drove the Templars out of Acre, the last major crusader foothold in the Levant, they were effectively “cut adrift from the main purpose of their existence”¹ and this left them vulnerable to predation by an unscrupulous and cash-hungry French monarchy.

While historians delight in debating the details of the suppression and its historical implications, there is general consensus on the fundamental facts of the case.² It is almost universally agreed that the sole instigator of the Order's downfall was France's king Philip IV (abetted by his ministers), who ordered the simultaneous arrest of

¹ Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

² Barber's *The Trial of the Templars* remains the standard work on the subject and has supplied the core of this paper's information on the events of the trial in France.

every Templar brother in France on October 13, 1307.³ Clement V, the somewhat hapless pope whose political struggles with Philip pre-dated the Templar affair, was drawn into the morass once Philip presented the arrests and confessions to him as a *fait accompli*.

Philip had hoped for a swift conclusion to the trial for two reasons: first, the more quickly the Order was dissolved the more quickly he could avail himself of its wealth; and second, the longer the affair dragged on the more likely it was that objections would be raised concerning his unprecedented and legally dubious actions (or worse, that a proper defense of the Order would eventually be mounted). To speed things along, torture was freely applied, and confessions secured,⁴ however, due to unforeseen resistance from Clement and from the Templars themselves, and much to Philip's chagrin, the trial ended up dragging on over months and years. In 1310 when something resembling a spirited defense began to be mounted in France, Philip quickly moved to quash it, ordering fifty-four brothers who had recanted their confessions to be burned at the stake as a brutally clear, and ultimately successful warning to those who remained: This is what happens to those who recant their confessions.⁵ The wholesale burning of fifty-four men at one time was an act as unprecedented as it was brutal.⁶

³ Julien Théry, "A Heresy of State: Philip the Fair, the Trial of the 'Perfidious Templars,' and the Pontificalization of the French Monarchy," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 39, no. 2 (2013): 117-148.

⁴ Sean Field, "Torture and Confession in the Templar Interrogations at Caen, 28-29 October 1307," forthcoming in *Speculum*.

⁵ This horrifying tactic was very effective in breaking the defiant will of the French brothers, but as we shall see, it may have backfired in its effect on those brothers residing in the British Isles, encouraging them to stand firm and resist confessing at all costs, lest they decide to recant and be burned as contumacious heretics.

⁶ Bernard Gui, for instance, handed over only forty-two people to be burned at the stake during the entirety of his tenure as an inquisitor—a period of seventeen years spent in the Languedoc, a region Gui and his contemporaries believed to be *the* hotbed of heretical activity on the continent. Karen Sullivan, *The Inner Lives of Medieval Inquisitors* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 126. And Sean Field,

The Arrest of the Templars in the British Isles

The spectacular nature of the suppression in France, in conjunction with the long-running and overarching struggle for power between the French monarchy and Papal authority, has had a tendency to overshadow other, smaller trials that were taking place elsewhere. But the Templars were indeed an immense international organization, and in November of 1307, in an effort to reclaim the initiative from Philip, Clement issued the bull *Pastoralis Praeeminentiae*, demanding that all Christian kings arrest the Templars residing within their territories. This order was generally followed all over Europe, even where rulers expressed initial skepticism at the charges. In England, Edward II had been on the throne less than half a year at the time this bull's issuance. Despite his apparent belief in the Order's innocence and his general reticence to act on the king of France's orders, he was ultimately unwilling to ignore a direct papal command and finally arranged for the arrest of every Templar brother living in England, Ireland, and Scotland; this took place in January 1308.⁷

Interestingly these arrests were not secretly arranged, as they had been in France. The English, Irish, and Scottish brothers knew very well what happened to their French brethren, and yet very few of them (only four),⁸ attempted to run before the arresting officers arrived. This attitude continued after their arrest, when many of the Templars were allowed the freedom of the castles in which they were kept. The grand preceptor of

writing about the "great inquisition" of 1245-1246 in the Lauragais region, notes that out of 207 surviving sentences, not one is a death sentence, concluding that "executions for heresy were thus the exception rather than the rule." Sean L. Field, citing Mark Pegg's work on the 'great inquisition' in *The Beguine, the Angel, and the Inquisitor: the Trials of Marguerite Porete and Guiard of Cressonessart* (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 21.

⁷ There were apparently no Templars residing in Wales at this time.

⁸ Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Templar on Trial: The Trial of the Templars in the British Isles 1308-1311* (Stroud, UK: The History Press, 2009), 50-52.

England, William de la More, was even granted permission to wander outside of the city unguarded.⁹ This speaks to the trust that Edward must have placed in them, but also of their trust in him. Given every opportunity to flee, the Templars remained to face the charges against them, seemingly confident that a combination of their innocence, the English legal system, and their close relationship to the Crown would be enough to protect them. Though Edward was compelled to act by papal decree, his actions (or inaction) following the arrests would prove a major obstacle to the inquisitors' efforts to secure Templar confessions in his realm.

A Brief Historiography of the Trial in the British Isles

The trial of the Templars in the British Isles lacked many of the more horrifying and fascinating elements that have proved so compelling to scholars of the trial in France; therefore, there has been considerably less ink spilled over the events in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The unintended and beneficial consequence of this is that work on the trial in the British Isles has largely avoided being swept up in, and confused by, what Helen Nicholson has called “the mushrooming myths about the order.”¹⁰ There have been two clear subjects to which Templar historians return again and again: first, what were the motivations of the big-name actors in this drama? And second, were the Templars, in fact, guilty?

⁹ Clarence Perkins, “The Trial of the Knights Templars in England,” *The English Historical Review* 24 (1909): 432-447, at 432-3.

¹⁰ Helen J. Nicholson, “The Changing Face of the Templars: Current Trends in Historiography,” *History Compass* 8 (2010): 653-667, at 653, accessed March 18, 2015, doi: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2010.00691.x.

Clarence Perkins, whose articles focused on the economic and political activity of the Templars prior to their downfall, largely (but not entirely¹¹) dominated scholarship in this area during the early twentieth century.¹² Later historians finessed and expanded his work, including monographs by Thomas W. Parker¹³ and Evelyn Lord.¹⁴ Work has been done as well on specific aspects of the Templar trial, such as Anne Gilmour-Bryson's investigation of the trial held in London, however research into these areas has been hampered somewhat by the fact that until 2011, the proceedings had not been made available in a single, edited publication. Helen J. Nicholson's two-volume edition has amended this and has made these documents easily accessible, while her annotations provide additional insights into the context of the trial.¹⁵ Her work will undoubtedly make possible new areas of research into the trial in the British Isles, and indeed it has already borne fruit in the form of Maeve Callan's new monograph, *The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish: Vengeance and Heresy in Medieval Ireland*.¹⁶

Despite their central role in proceedings, the inquisitors who carried out the Templar trials in England, Scotland, and Ireland¹⁷ have gone largely unnoticed or unremarked by historians. This is not entirely surprising, given the paucity of

¹¹ Eleanor Ferris, "The Financial Relations of the Knights Templars to the English Crown," *The American Historical Review* 8 (1902): 1-17.

¹² See Perkins, "The Trial of the Knights Templars in England," *The English Historical Review* 24 (1909): 432-447; Clarence Perkins, "The Knights Templars in the British Isles," *The English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 209-230; Clarence Perkins, "The Knights Hospitallers in England After the Fall of the Order of the Temple," *The English Historical Review* 45 (1930): 285-289.

¹³ Thomas W. Parker, *The Knights Templars in England* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1963).

¹⁴ Evelyn Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2002).

¹⁵ Helen Nicholson, *The Proceedings Against the Templars in the British Isles, Volume 1: The Latin Text and Volume 2: The Translation* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011).

¹⁶ Maeve Callan, *The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish: Vengeance and Heresy in Medieval Ireland* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁷ The Templar brothers and witnesses who were questioned in Ireland were not Irish at all, but were rather English or Anglo-Irish Templars who had moved to Ireland to maintain the Templar preceptories there. See Callan, *The Templars, The Witch, and the Wild Irish*, 17-18.

biographical information available to us, however without these men—their beliefs, their worldviews, and their actions—the trial of the Templars would not have been possible. By closely examining the proceedings recently made available by Helen Nicholson, this thesis will shift attention away from the question of Templar guilt or innocence, and the speculation about Philip and Clement’s motives. Instead, it will focus on the Dominican inquisitors who were tasked with securing the confessions of the Templars in the British Isles: Were these men merely political actors, motivated by worldly concerns, or did they in fact believe in the spiritual righteousness of their work, seeing in the Templars a true threat to the church and her flock?

French Dominicans in England: Sicard de Vaur and Dieudonné

The two men sent by Pope Clement to the British Isles to carry out the inquiry into the Templars were both French Dominicans: Sicard de Vaur, who was a canon of Narbonne, a papal chaplain, and Auditor of Causes at the papal palace, and Dieudonné (sometimes called by the Latin form of his name, Deodatus), who was abbot of Lagny in the diocese of Paris.¹⁸ Very little is known about their lives aside from this short list of titles.

Following the trial, Dieudonné would go on to eventually become bishop of Castres. An indication that he was in fact a true believer in the anti-heresy cause and not simply a political animal of Philip IV can be seen in 1318 when as bishop, he “issued a condemnation of some beliefs ascribed to the Spiritual Franciscans, declaring them to be heretical. He died in 1327, after having set up an institution for the care of twelve paupers.”¹⁹ Sicard de Vaur’s bibliography is similarly lean. Nicholson argues that Vaur is

¹⁸ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, xii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2, n. 2.

most likely the town of Lavaur, located in the Languedoc region of what is modern day southern France, and nestled between what were at that time two major hotbeds of heresy, Carcassonne and Albi. The town's ruling family had been Cathar heretics, making it probable that young Sicard was an eyewitness to the Dominican Order's fight against heresy there. While it must remain purely speculative, it is possible that this early exposure to heresy and the Dominican fight against it shaped young Sicard's worldview and contributed to his choice of career.

These are the men whose motivations and beliefs this thesis seeks to illuminate. Though we have little in the way of biographical information about them, what we do have are the records they left behind of their inquisitorial work in the British Isles.²⁰ Heresy trials are never a one-sided affair, in which only voices of the accused are recorded. The questions asked, the minutiae upon which the inquisitors focused, their frustrations and subsequent tactical shifts, all provide evidence of the mindset of the interrogator. Understanding the motivations of these men will shed light on how their beliefs and fantasies manifested in the real world, thereby adding to and shaping our understanding of the context in which they existed and operated.²¹ By combining what little we know of their historical lives with the extant textual evidence of their literary

²⁰ Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 3-4.

²¹ For the purposes of this paper, I will be working from the position that it is truly impossible to ever know another person's lived, experienced inner world. Taking my cue from recent studies by Christine Caldwell Ames, John Arnold, James Given, and Karen Sullivan, I will rely on the texts produced by the inquisitors as well as the textual world from which they come to create a picture of a literary figure—whose written records can convey not just the their intended communication, but also hidden subtexts, unknowing expressions of thoughts or sentiments that the writer did not necessarily intend to convey. For further discussion of thought worlds, see: See Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); John Arnold, *Inquisition and Power* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); James B. Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Sullivan, *Inner Lives*.

work, and layering onto that a contextual understanding of their sociocultural traditions, we can begin to create a picture of two human beings who were swept up in one of medieval Europe's most dramatic events, firmly locating them within the social, religious, and political context of early-fourteenth-century France and the particular realm inhabited by French Dominican inquisitors at that time.

Inquisitorial Motivations, Inquisitorial Discourse

Because inquisitorial trial records are so intensely focused on the individual being questioned, it is no surprise that much of the research that has been done in this area has also tended to focus, with similar intensity, on the subject of the accused heretic. If inquisitors are written about at all, they are generally portrayed at worst as agents of terror, oppression, and sadistic violence, and at best as anonymous cogs in an impersonal inquisitorial machine. As Karen Sullivan notes:

Because...historians regard the source of the anti-heretical prosecutions of the Middle Ages as lying not in individuals but in the social, political, or textual structures these individuals inhabit, they devote relatively little attention to inquisitors, let alone to their psychological makeup, except as illustrations of discourses that extend far beyond themselves.²²

Yet while it has most often been the heretic whose beliefs, dissent, and suppression have so captivated scholars, in recent years there has been a clear new trend of historians working to understand the inquisitor on his own terms, rather than thinking about him only in terms of how he can illuminate the inner lives of those whom he persecuted.²³

²² Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 16.

²³ See: Ames, *Righteous Persecution*; Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*; Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*; Sullivan, *Inner Lives*.

Christine Caldwell Ames, in her recent study of the “sincerely persecuting Christianity”²⁴ of the medieval Dominican Order notes: “The inclusion of inquisition within medieval models of holiness—particularly the task of the Dominican Order...and the particular ways in which inquisition and sanctity were held to interrelate disclose the ideals and aims of those who fashioned and celebrated those models.”²⁵ The Dominican Order, or Order of Preachers, was founded in 1216. Unlike other monks who sought cloistered lives of quiet contemplation, the friars of Dominic’s order were tasked with an “explicit foundational command to walk about, and seek those who go astray.”²⁶ This new effort reflected not just a growing sense of anxiety surrounding heresy, but also a growing sense that the world itself could and should be transformed into a cloister without walls: “to Dominican inquisitors, inquisition was [the apostolic vocation’s] aggrandizement and not its corruption, as they sought to assist in the Roman church’s monasticization of the world.”²⁷ The laity in this period were undergoing a process of monasticization through careful observation, confession, punishment, and penitence.²⁸ The fact that the Templars already existed in that grey area between lay and religious (indeed that they had chosen to essentially monasticize themselves) did not protect them from the zeal of persecutorial inquisitors. In fact, their high profile and their history as pious quasi-monks may have instead made them a more tempting target for inquisitors hoping to provide an example of obedience, penance, and redemption to a lay audience: “the inquisitors acted as though their penitential system were a species of theater...The

²⁴ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 180.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 146-7.

subjects of this performance were as much the members of the audience as they were the people whom the inquisitors sentenced.”²⁹

This performative aspect of inquisition, using inquisition as a tool not just for dealing with the accused heretic, but as a means of instructing and controlling the population at large, plays a prominent role in the writings of another Dominican inquisitor working in the Languedoc in the early fourteenth century, Bernard Gui. Gui’s multi-volume inquisitorial treatise, *Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis* (Conduct of the Inquisition into Heretical Wickedness) “is a useful guide to the procedure current when the Templars were brought to trial.”³⁰ But his work is more informative even than that, telling us not just about procedure and protocol, but about how Dominican inquisitors at this time thought about their work and those they persecuted. Gui’s treatises are informative not only of Gui and his own particular worldview, but can also be used, with a sensible amount of caution, to shed light on the mindsets of other Dominican inquisitors working around the same time as Gui. This is possible due to the nature of inquisitorial and Dominican textual tradition.

John Arnold has described the figure of the inquisitor as being defined, not by his actions, but by the registers in which he records the details of the heresy trials he has overseen; he both creates and is circumscribed by the discourse outside of which he and his work have no meaning.³¹ These sorts of documents grew over time into a body of inquisitorial literature that circulated amongst working inquisitors, informing their understanding of procedure and protocol, of heresy and heretics, and of their role as

²⁹ Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 73.

³⁰ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 28-9.

³¹ Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 75-90.

inquisitor. These men in turn added to the literature with their own works, reflecting both their textual inheritance and their own lived experience: “the several manuals composed between 1231 and 1331...elucidate a rich interplay of instruction and implementation, as formulae that were often based upon actual inquisitions were employed in practice and in turn appeared in trial transcripts.”³²

By the early fourteenth century, this textual inheritance had become rich indeed. Decades of concerted effort aimed at stamping out heresy in the southern Languedoc region of what is now France had produced a massive quantity of inquisitorial and anti-heretical literature. This literature was critically important in informing the self image of inquisitors, and while it is impossible to state with absolute certainty, it is likely that the inquisitors, Dieudonné and Sicard da Vaur, would have been familiar with at least some of these works, because while they carried out their work largely in Paris and the area surrounding the Ile de France, they both had originally come from towns in the Languedoc.³³ These writings shaped the worldview of the men for whom they were written. For instance, for the inquisitor Conrad of Marburg (working in the early thirteenth century), the nature of heretics and heresy could “be determined a priori, that is, through the study of literary tradition about heretics, across time and place, and through the application of that reading to a particular case.”³⁴ By the time of the Templars’ trial, heresy had been defined, classified, and categorized; this was no longer an unmapped territory through which inquisitors had to feel their way, they knew the terrain. All that remained was to destroy heresy wherever they found it.

³² Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 16-17.

³³ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 1*, 1-2.

³⁴ Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 89.

Once heresy had been thus delineated, inquisitors had little trouble seeing it everywhere. After the 1230s the church began to see heresy as something more than simply a problem of individuals. It “saw heretics as taking the form of large, international movements³⁵ like those of the Cathars (or Albigensians), the Waldensians, and the various heterodox offshoots of the Franciscans...it felt more threatened than it had felt earlier and as a result more eager to undertake severe measures.”³⁶ This anxiety, in conjunction with the strong textual discourse surrounding heresy, led to an ever-increasing zeal to persecute heretics, or as the inquisitors might have phrased it, to protect the body of the church and the souls of believers.

In the eyes of many Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment critics, the tactics proposed and carried out by Gui and his contemporary inquisitors were nothing more than exemplars of medieval brutishness and oppression. But despite the ultimately well-deserved condemnation of history, these men were working within a framework that informed their actions, and was in turn informed by those actions, as we have seen. The discovery and suppression of heretics was not an activity carried out on a whim, but was the result of genuine anxiety surrounding the safety of the church as a universal *ecclesia* (community of the faithful), and of the individual souls who constituted that *ecclesia*.³⁷

³⁵ In reality of course, it is highly unlikely that the church was ever truly threatened by large scale, organized heretical movements, and many have questioned the existence of heretics even on a small scale, see: R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), and R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012). Of course, the Templars were indeed a large, international organization, and as we shall see, the accusations against them are clearly influenced by ideas about heresy, and about Catharism in particular.

³⁶ Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 7.

³⁷ Of course there were going to be men who were drawn to the work for reasons other than spiritual zeal, up to and including sadistic tendencies, however there is simply no surviving evidence that the inquisitors, Sicard and Dieudonné, carried out their inquisitorial duties in any way that could be construed as remarkable or outside of contemporary understanding of acceptable inquisitorial behavior.

To the mind of a Dominican inquisitor, the ends: protecting Christians and Christianity, justified the means: coercion and violence. This anxiety can be traced back to at least the mid-twelfth century and the 1184 publication of the anti-heresy bull, *Ad abolendam*, after which “the church turned from emphasizing charity toward heretics to emphasizing zeal on behalf of the common people.”³⁸

James Given, studying the role of inquisitors working in thirteenth-century Languedoc sees inquisitorial violence and coercion as primarily a means of social control: “The inquisition, while ostensibly punishing infractions of a universal and unchanging moral order, were actually trying to impose the sectional moral vision of a dominant elite on an often recalcitrant social formation. Their punishments had as much to do with theater and propaganda as they did with justice or the reconciling of wayward souls.”³⁹ Inquisitors like Bernard Gui, who emphasized the theatrics of inquisition might seem to bear this out, but in fact, Gui’s focus on inquisition’s performative aspects can be read as a sincere concern for the saving of souls—the souls of the audience, who, having witnessed the closing sermon of a heretical trial, could be left in no doubt about what constituted acceptable belief. The public performance of penance at the close of a heresy trial served to educate, but it also acted as a unifying force, demanding the audience’s complicity in proceedings:

The final sermon of an *inquisitio hereticae pravitatis*...sought to persuade its hearers to define heretics as most serious sinners...and thus to perform a complementary task: recasting these punishments not as “cruelty,” as they may outwardly appear, but as benevolent penance that reconciled them to God for their salvation.

³⁸ Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 6.

³⁹ Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 78.

Neither “the pious” nor “punishments” were quite what they seemed to be on the surface, and it was the inquisitorial office to define both, always with the “gift of God’s grace”⁴⁰

The desire to enforce conformity to this set of acceptable beliefs and indeed to enforce belonging to the universal *ecclesia* might indeed belie a viciously totalitarian streak within the church, however it is possible to read a more compassionate motivation here as well. “The inquisitor, as Catholic clerics saw him, is someone who seeks not to kill heretics, but to save their souls, and who...avenges himself upon this heretic not by having him imprisoned and executed, but by having him brought to repentance and saved.”⁴¹ The sincere belief that salvation was possible only through the Catholic church can be seen in a case from 1325, in which an accused heretic died during his questioning (whether from natural causes or through violence is not clear). After his death, a council convened to determine whether he had died a heretic or a Catholic. Caldwell Ames uses this incident to illustrate the complex nature of sacramental versus judicial confession, but we can also see in it a genuine concern over the state of this man’s soul at the time of his death. A generous reading of the event shows not just concern, but also hope—a hope that the man’s salvation might yet be possible, despite his death.⁴²

Political Pressure and Inquisitorial Complicity

As we have seen, the men who self-selected to become Dominican inquisitors often did so out of an abundance of spiritual zeal. This intense spirituality, however, did not inoculate them against the grubby, earthly concerns of Capetian realpolitik. Philip the

⁴⁰ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 44.

⁴¹ Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 123.

⁴² Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 179.

Fair's attack against the Templars, was "not only illegal but difficult even to conceptualize within the worldview held by most contemporaries. To demonstrate the exceptional necessity of such a measure, irrefutable proof of the reality and enormity of the Order's crimes had to be obtained as quickly as possible."⁴³ Fortunately for Philip, Dominican inquisitors in early-fourteenth-century France had already become inextricably entangled with royal administration. William of Paris, a French Dominican and inquisitor of France, was "so closely involved with the royal power that he held the position of royal confessor. In an effort to meet the ever-growing administrative needs of the French monarchy, the inquisitors were becoming, through their leader in France, another arm of state power."⁴⁴ With the power of inquisition at his disposal, Philip must have felt confident that his plans for dismantling the Order and acquiring its wealth would quickly come to fruition; he certainly needed them to.

The beginning of the fourteenth century was a time of severe economic hardship for Philip IV, as he tirelessly worked to bring various regions of modern day France under his direct control.⁴⁵ Philip's government was relentless in its pursuit of cash, targeting laymen and the clergy alike.⁴⁶ When this proved insufficient, he targeted France's Jewish and Lombard populations, despoiling them of everything he could before arresting them, in the case of the Lombards, or expelling them, as was the case for the Jews.⁴⁷ This pattern would be repeated with the Templars, however the Templars were

⁴³ Théry, "Heresy of State," 118.

⁴⁴ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 61.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-52.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 52-3.

not a marginalized group, as the Lombards and Jews were. The loss of the Holy Land may have made them vulnerable, but they remained a protected religious order.

Pawns in a Game of Kings and Popes

Many historians have argued that financial need was the main motivating force behind the attack on the Templars. And the pattern outlined above does indeed seem to bear this out. His actions following the arrests, however, highlight another of Philip's overriding preoccupations: his ongoing power struggle with the papacy. The century leading up to Philip's reign was a period of increasing monarchization of the papacy, which saw a number of very powerful popes claiming that their role as head of the universal *ecclesia*, or body spiritual, gave them temporal authority even over sovereign princes. At the same time, the French monarchy, under the care of Philip's Capetian predecessors, had been undergoing a similar process of sacralization, by which the kings of France had been steadily and increasingly asserting their own claim over the spiritual welfare of their subjects and their realm, a claim that directly challenged both the spiritual and the temporal authority of the papacy.

Clement's predecessor, Boniface VIII, had strenuously and perhaps intemperately asserted papal claims of temporal power, issuing the bull *Unam Sanctam* in 1302, which outlined the pontiff's position that salvation for everyone, monarchs and peasants alike, was possible only for those subject directly to the pope. In the ensuing struggle, "almost all of the French Dominicans in Paris eventually adhered to the royal position," proving their loyalty to Philip by signing a letter of adherence supporting the king.⁴⁸ Less than a

⁴⁸ Field, *The Beguine, the Angel, and the Inquisitor*, 71.

year later, one of Philip's most trusted advisors led an army into Anagni, Italy, where they confronted and arrested the pontiff. He would almost certainly have been dragged back to France to face trial, had not the townspeople of Anagni intervened to free him. In the event, he died several weeks later, but even his death could not put him beyond the reach of Philip's ire, and he was posthumously charged with holding heretical beliefs, and with being a sodomite, amongst other things—charges that Philip would re-deploy four years later in his case against the Templars.

The very public humiliation of his predecessor must have weighed heavily on Clement's mind as he pondered his next move upon receiving the surprise news of the French Templars' arrests.⁴⁹ Despite functioning as a military order, the Knights Templar was technically a religious order and as such, was under the direct protection and jurisdiction of the papacy. For a secular monarch to arrest and torture the protected members of a religious order was an outrageous affront to papal authority. But having been presented with an overwhelming number of confessions, and being keenly aware of Boniface's fate, Clement opted to join what at that moment in time appeared to be an unbeatable opponent. If the members of the Order were hoping that their status as a protected religious order would rouse the pontiff to their defense, they were to be sorely disappointed: "Clement was fully prepared to sacrifice the Order [in order to protect the papacy] with the consequence that from this time it became little more than a pawn in the continuing conflict between pope and monarch."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

The speed with which confessions had been extracted from the French Templars was no accident. Philip's case against the Templars was based solely on rumors and vehement suspicion (rumors and suspicion that many have argued originated from within the French court itself) and as such was extremely weak. Obtaining confessions and presenting the pope with seemingly irrefutable evidence was Philip's only viable course of action once the arrests had taken place.⁵¹ Philip's nervousness with regard to the dubious legality of his actions was soothed somewhat by the complicity of France's Dominican inquisitors, who acted as the king's accomplices in this matter. The king's royal confessor and inquisitor of France, William of Paris provided the French monarch with the guise of legitimacy, creating a largely fictional narrative of papally-sanctioned inquisitorial investigation, in which the king was simply following up on William's request, a convenient legal loophole that has been described as "duplicitous" and "a patent distortion of the truth."⁵²

As Given has noted, "it is clear that at times Philip and his advisors carved out a zone where the normal rules of politics did not apply, where fear and force, even if garbed in a cloak of legitimacy, prevailed."⁵³ Carving out such a zone required an infrastructure that supported Philip's use of fear and force. Without the consent, whether explicit or tacit, of persons at all levels of Philip's bureaucracy, the king's threats would have been toothless, his political machinations fruitless. So the question that we must ask of France's inquisitors is: Why would men who, having chosen to follow a particularly righteous spiritual path, align themselves with such a worldly political animal? The

⁵¹ Ibid., 67.

⁵² Field, *The Beguine, The Angel, and The Inquisitor*, 76.

⁵³ Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 283.

answer may be found in the ongoing power struggle between the papacy and the House of Capet, and in particular, the competing efforts of both to claim increasing amounts of temporal and spiritual authority.

The Ideology of a Sacral Capetian Monarchy

The royal effort to dominate the papacy and vice versa did not begin with Philip IV. Indeed, the competing ideologies of a sacralized French monarchy and a temporally powerful, monarchized papacy had been steadily growing since the Gregorian Reforms of the eleventh century.⁵⁴ In 1198, pope Innocent III, arguably one of the most powerful popes to ever sit on the throne of St. Peter, issued the decretal, *Vergentis in senium*, which formally defined heresy as treason. This made heresy “a unique betrayal of society against which exceptional methods could be justified.”⁵⁵ It did something else as well, which Innocent might not have intended and later popes certainly wouldn’t thank him for: defining heresy as a crime against the state reinforced the French assertion that theirs was a sacral monarchy—an assertion that the Capetian kings had long been cultivating. This idea was further reinforced by the French with the institution in 1229 of the law *Cupientes*, in which Louis IX of France “formally committed all royal officials not only to the prosecution of accused heretics, but to the active seeking out of heretics within their jurisdictions.”⁵⁶

Philip the Fair’s actions and religiosity could never be mistaken for those of his sainted grandfather, Louis IX. Yet even under his very worldly rule the ideology of sacral

⁵⁴ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 142.

⁵⁵ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 71.

⁵⁶ Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989), 51.

French monarchy continued to be put forth. However sincere or insincere his actual beliefs were, Philip's projected image was that of a pious, if stern, protector of both Catholics and their church, crucially including the papacy (much to the pope's chagrin) under this paternalistic umbrella. Philip's own words make explicit the image he wished to project: "we [...] are founded by the Lord upon the watch-tower of royal eminence to defend the liberty of the faith of the Church, and exert, before all the desires of our spirit, the augmentation of the Catholic faith."⁵⁷

Words alone could not make this ideology a reality. Philip needed to be seen protecting Christendom from its enemies. Whether those enemies were real or imagined was very much beside the point. Read in this light, Philip's attacks against the Jews, Lombards, and eventually the Templars can only partly be explained by deep financial desperation. That may have been their practical purpose, but their overarching ideological purpose was to bolster Philip in his effort to dominate the papacy: "over and over again enemies were created and cast in a common mold, only so their destruction could redound to the glory of the most Christian King."⁵⁸ Casting himself as God's "new vicar in France"⁵⁹ not only strengthened Philip's position vis-à-vis the papacy, it also strengthened his ability to effectively govern his territories, which at that time utterly lacked the cohesion of a modern nation state:

In an environment where real men and women remained stubbornly resistant to efforts to rule them, combating and defeating fantastic enemies had its advantages. By leveling accusations of demonology, witchcraft, and heresy, a king took on enemies that were at once terrifying but

⁵⁷ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 60.

⁵⁸ Field, *The Beguine, the Angel, and the Inquisitor*, 17.

⁵⁹ Théry, "Heresy of State", 134.

defenseless, since they were mere chimeras of the medieval imagination.⁶⁰

That France's Dominican inquisitors willingly sided with Philip IV is perhaps not so surprising now, if we accept the possibility that many of these men might have wholly believed in the message of this Capetian propaganda campaign. They may well have viewed the French king not simply as an earthly monarch, but also as a legitimate spiritual leader, divinely mandated to protect the faith. And unlike the papacy, Philip's holy mandate included control over an army powerful enough to back it up.

England's Reaction to Events in France and Reception of Sicard and Dieudonné

One man who was not in any way persuaded by Capetian propaganda was England's young king, Edward II. Edward has earned a fairly well deserved reputation as one of England's worst kings. And yet, when historians of the British Templars write about him, they tend to do so in terms that, while not glowing, at least lack the venom that characterizes much of historiography done on the man. Edward's initial reaction to the arrests and subsequent confessions of the French Templars was to flatly deny the veracity of the charges, and to send letters to the kings of Portugal, Castile, Naples, and Aragon, exhorting them to also ignore such slanders. It was only the papal bull *Pastoralis Praeeminentiae*, issued in November of 1307 that finally forced Edward to order the arrest of all Templar brothers living in the British Isles.

⁶⁰ James Given, "Chasing Phantoms: Philip IV and the Fantastic," in *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R. I. Moore*, ed. Michael Frassetto (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 272.

Malcolm Barber notes that Edward II was experiencing similar financial pain to that which spurred Philip IV's actions against the Templars in France: "on the face of it, it might be expected that when Edward II received news of the arrest of the Templars, he would have seized the opportunity to score an easy success."⁶¹ And yet, Edward remained hesitant to act. One possible reason for this was the close and mutually beneficial nature of the financial relationship between the Temple and the English Crown.⁶² But the most likely source of Edward's reluctance almost certainly stemmed from his uneasy relationship with Philip IV. Edward was new to kingship, having gained his crown less than six months before the Templar affair began, while Philip was a seasoned monarch of more than twenty years. Edward's father, Edward I, had clashed with Philip over his role as a vassal of the French king as Duke of Aquitaine, and the younger Edward similarly chafed under this vassalage. And finally, there was the matter of the impending marriage between Edward and Philip's daughter Isabella to consider. All of these circumstances left Edward in the rather unenviable position of trying to find a balance between acceding to Philip's wishes, and retaining the independence and dignity of the English monarchy.

Whatever the reasons for his obstinacy, what is clear is that Edward "delayed, obstructed, and mitigated the process in England at every turn."⁶³ Tasked with obtaining the confessions of the Templar brothers living in the British Isles, Dieudonné and Sicard de Vaur discovered themselves in a country whose king obstructed them, whose people

⁶¹ Ibid., 217.

⁶² See Ferris, "Financial Relations of the Knights Templars to the English Crown," 1-17.

⁶³ Jeffrey S. Hamilton, "King Edward II of England and the Templars," in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307-1314)*, ed. Jochen Burgdorf, Paul F. Crawford, and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 215-224, at 224.

distrusted them “as agents of foreign popes,”⁶⁴ and whose laws against the use of torture deprived them of the most effective weapon in their arsenal. “Given the nature of the charges and the admitted secrecy of the Templars, it seemed almost impossible for any evidence to be gathered by the traditional processes of English law.”⁶⁵

The history of the British Isles had created a culture of laws and traditions that were almost perfectly set up to thwart the interloping inquisitors. England, unlike France, had experienced few if any problems with heresy, and Barber notes that Sicard and Dieudonné were likely “the first and only representatives [of inquisition] in the British Isles.”⁶⁶ Because of this, these two inquisitors found themselves in a foreign land, under enormous pressure to produce results, but with “no machinery or tradition upon which to rely.”⁶⁷ As we shall see, these differences between French and English cultures, laws, and traditions resulted in naught but frustration for the inquisitors.

⁶⁴ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 221.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 221. However, in *Righteous Persecution*, Christine Caldwell Ames describes an earlier inquisitorial visit to the British Isles: “*Inquisitio* was applied to investigating heresy within the [Dominican] order, just as it was outside it. The general chapter in 1278 commanded brothers Raymond de Medullione and Jean Vigouroux to travel to England, investigating and if necessary punishing some brothers there reportedly disparaging the writings of Thomas Aquinas.” She adds that “Jean Vigouroux apparently conducted this investigation skillfully, as three years later he was named heresy inquisitor of Toulouse,” but unfortunately does not elaborate beyond that (pp. 154).

⁶⁷ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 221.

CHAPTER II. THE TRIAL DOCUMENTS

Before moving onto an examination of the trial proceedings, it will be beneficial to briefly discuss the nature of the documents themselves. The proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles have survived in five codex manuscripts, all of which have been edited and translated by Helen Nicholson in her two-volume edition:

Oxford, Bodlian Library, MS Bodley 454 (MS A in [Nicholson's] edition);

London, British Library, Cotton MS Julius B xii, fols 67r-82r (MS B in [Nicholson's] edition);

Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Armarium XXXV*, 147, formerly 3153 (MS C in [Nicholson's] edition);

London, British Library, Additional MS 5444, fols 174r-192r (MS D in [Nicholson's] edition);

London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho B iii, fols 29r-31v, 33r-34v, 36 (collated with MS D for [Nicholson's] edition).⁶⁸

Scholars of heresy trials, and the Templar trials in particular, have long been troubled by the discourses of power that define these kinds of documents. These texts must be approached with utmost care, always keeping in mind the circumstances of their creation. As we have noted, the aim of much research has until recently focused on investigating the minds and beliefs of the accused. What this thesis seeks to do is investigate the minds and beliefs of the interrogators. As inquisitors, these men could not and did not function outside of inquisitorial discourse, and so similar caution must be exercised here.

⁶⁸ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol I*, xi.

Yet these documents present us with an opportunity that has thus far been largely overlooked in Templar historiography in general, and especially in scholarship on the trial in the British Isles. As Christine Caldwell Ames has written, “the inquisitorial interrogation was a site for debating the nature of the bonds linking God to humans in the Christian faith, involving the delivery of information by the inquisitor as well as extraction of information from the accused. Questions asserted rather than merely searched.”⁶⁹ Helen Nicholson similarly notes, “Studies of heresy trials in Europe have demonstrated that inquisitorial records do not show what the accused actually believed, but the ‘Truth’ which the inquisitors wished to impose on those they interrogated.”⁷⁰ These documents are not simply a record of the beliefs (whether real or imagined), of the accused, they are also a record of the beliefs of the inquisitors: their very real fears about the spiritual safety of the church’s universal *ecclesia* in the face of heretical threats, and perhaps their more worldly, prosaic fears driven by the expectations of a powerful and vengeful French monarch.

Faciens Misericordiam

The trial documents open with a brief accounting of the men present at its outset, including Sicard de Vaur, Dieudonné, the bishop of London, and a handful of named notaries public. This opening document is intended to set the tone of the trial, and here we see the immediate introduction of the discourse of power in which the Templars found themselves trapped, in the form of a papal letter titled, *faciens misericordiam*. The letter, issued 12 August 1308, simultaneously authorizes the trial, and serves as its first and

⁶⁹ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 160-1.

⁷⁰ Nicholson, “Trends in Historiography,” 658.

most damning piece of evidence. That it was crucial to the case can be seen in its inclusion in a summary of the trial, produced after the trial had concluded. Nicholson writes that *faciens misericordiam* was included close to the beginning of the summary, under the first group of charges. “As such it not only functions as evidence against the Order, but also serves to authorize the investigation that followed, suggesting that the audience for whom the record was intended did not necessarily have immediate sight of this papal bull, and needed to be reminded of its existence.”⁷¹

Faciens misericordiam begins by asserting that the pope had been hearing hints and rumors about the Templars’ evil customs since the beginning of his pontificate, claiming:

Indeed, a while ago, when we were first promoted to be the supreme pontiff...a secret intimation reached us from certain people, hinting that the master, commanders and other brothers of the Order of the knighthood of the Temple of Jerusalem and also the Order itself...had fallen into the sinful infamy of apostasy against the same lord [Christ], the detestable vice of idolatry, the execrable crime of the sodomites and various heresies.⁷²

He insists that he did not want to believe such evil rumors about men who had devoted their lives to the protection of the Holy Land. Given the severity of the charges that follow, this opening can really only be read as an oblique and relatively limp excuse for the lengthy delay between the beginning of his pontificate and the arrest of the Templar brothers.⁷³

⁷¹ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 1, xxv-xxvi.

⁷² Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

Clement goes to great lengths to portray himself as the sole authority with regard to the Templar debacle. Relegating Philip to the role of an obedient son, Clement describes how, out of the goodness of his heart and with tears in his eyes, Philip the Fair had brought the matter to his attention:

But then our dearest son in Christ, the illustrious King Philip of France, to whom the same crimes had been indicated, not out of avarice—because he did not intend to sell the Templars’ possessions nor appropriate them, but totally kept his hand from them and had those in his kingdom administered overall by deputies who were appointed by us and administered in their individual dioceses by the prelates of the kingdom of France—but kindled with the fervour of orthodox faith on hearing the aforesaid things, following the distinguished footsteps of his progenitors [even the pope has bought into the discourse of sacral Capetian monarchy], informed himself as far as he lawfully could in order to instruct and inform us about these things, and sent much important information to us through his messengers and letters. The Templars’ disgrace over the aforesaid sins increased sharply.⁷⁴

According to Clement, Philip did not arrest the Templars of his own volition, leaving a bewildered pontiff to play catch up, but rather, he acted on behalf of the pope, gathering pertinent information and then properly deferring to papal power. The inclusion of such an extensive rebuttal against any possible insinuation that the king may have had more material motivations reads less like a defense of Philip’s actions, and more like a proclamation of a very small victory on Clement’s part, clearly asserting that it was he, and he alone who had the power to appoint deputies within France to oversee the Templars’ properties.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

The proceedings then include a second, nearly identical copy of *Faciens misericordiam*, this time copied down in a letter to his suffragans by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This copy of *faciens misericordiam* includes marginalia, presumably drawn in by the Archbishop or one of his notaries. It is telling that there is a drawn hand pointing to the lines “From these confessions, testimonies and report we found that the oft-mentioned Master and brothers in the aforesaid matters and relating to the aforesaid matters—although some of them in more and others in less—had seriously sinned.”⁷⁵ The implication of course is that the brothers and the Order were clearly guilty of the charges leveled against them, and all that remained was to get them to confess it; their guilt is a truth made explicit at the very outset of the trial. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the inquisitors were less interested, perhaps, in hearing nuanced and honest answers from the brothers, and more interested in hearing confirmation of the truth, as already expressed by God’s chosen vicar on Earth. Philip’s whispering campaign and his presentation of overwhelming numbers of confessions had succeeded beautifully.

Clement describes:

...clamorous reports from the said king, and from dukes, counts, barons, and other nobles and also from the clergy and people of the said kingdom of the French...we sorrowfully relate that it reached our hearing that the Master, Commanders, and other brothers of the said Order and the Order itself were ensnared in the aforesaid crimes and many others. The aforesaid things seemed to be proven to a certain extent through many confessions, attestations, and depositions of the aforesaid Master and many Commanders and brothers of the aforementioned Order, made, held and received in the presence of many prelates and the Investigator of heretical depravity in the kingdom

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

of France, and written down in notarial attestations shown to us and our brothers.⁷⁶

When read with Clement and Philip's ongoing struggle in mind, Clement's words are ripe with subtext. "After these confessions and testimonies [of the Master and his Commanders], on bended knee and with hands clasped, humbly and devoutly with great shedding of tears, they sought the Cardinals to give them absolution from the excommunication that they had incurred for the foregoing things."⁷⁷ This was granted to them. But can we see here an unintentional sign of Clement's thoughts about his own authority? It is perhaps telling that he describes them as being concerned about their excommunicate status, a status directly connected to his own authority, but any real concern about the actual state of their immortal souls is notably absent.

The Eighty-eight Charges Against Individual Persons

Sicard and Dieudonné arrived on England's shores armed with a list of charges that had been developed through the interrogation of the French Templars.⁷⁸ Their goal was to achieve the same results with the Templars in the British Isles, as had been achieved in France. The list of eighty-eight charges⁷⁹ lays out with bullet point clarity the charges about which each brother must be questioned. The list is long and feels rather bloated, and one gets the sense that this is quite intentional, as if the inquisitors wanted the very weight of the list itself to act as additional evidence against the accused. An examination

⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁸ For a complete list of the eighty-eight charges, see appendix 1.

⁷⁹ There are, in fact, only eighty-seven charges. In the numbered list, there simply is no 67th charge. Nicholson notes: "in the interrogations that follow in MS A, the charges numbered [on the list] as 68-76 are numbered 67-75." (p. 15, n. 60.) This appears to be nothing more than a scribal error.

of the first and arguably the most serious of the charges provides us with an example of this kind of padding:

- First, that in their reception, and sometimes afterwards and as soon as they had the opportunity, they used to deny Christ, or Jesus, or the Crucified, or sometimes God, and sometimes the Blessed Virgin, and occasionally all the male and female saints of God, induced or instructed by those who were receiving them;
- Also, that the brothers as a whole did this;
- Also, 3rd, that the majority of them [did];
- Also, 4th, that occasionally they also [did this] after their reception;
- Also, 5th, that the receivers told and instructed those...who were being received that Christ—or sometimes Jesus, or sometimes the Crucified—is not true God...⁸⁰

While legal writing does tend toward this sort of layering in an attempt to preempt the accused exploiting any legal loopholes or technicalities, this sort of verbose complexity can also be used to confuse or entrap those who are not well versed in it. The repetition of these sorts of accusations could additionally be intended to catch the accused out in a lie, even if that lie was in reality a simple misstatement or misunderstanding of the meaning of the charges.

The list has a certain kitchen sink feel to it, including many, if not most of the accusations that had been created and refined by decades of anti-heretical literature. To the charges that the brothers denied Christ are added the following: that the brothers believed Jesus to be a false prophet; that they spit on, urinated upon, or trampled the cross or an image of Christ; that they adored (worshiped) a certain cat; that they did not believe

⁸⁰ Ibid., 12.

in the sacraments of the Church and that their priests did not perform mass using orthodox words; that the Grand Master or other authority figures in the Order could absolve brothers from sin;⁸¹ that they engaged in homoerotic acts at their reception and homosexual acts thereafter; that their receptions were held in secret; that they worshiped an idol in the form of a head, which they believed could perform miracles; that they touched this head with cords, which they then wore continually about their waists; that they sought to gain land and wealth in an unchristian and illegal manner; that any who spoke about these things or did not comply with them would be killed or imprisoned; and that the brothers in France had “in great multitude” confessed all of this before “eminent persons” including the pope himself.⁸²

This list of charges, which was to form the basis of the Templars’ interrogations, contains a fascinating mix of truths, half-truths, and fabrications. Many of the charges stem from actual practices of the Order: for instance, the brothers did indeed wear a cord around their underclothes at all times, however this had nothing to do with idol worship, but was rather a means of ensuring that their bodies remained decently covered at all times, including while they slept.⁸³ These sorts of practices take on a more sinister appearance when viewed with an eye trained by decades of anti-heretical inquisitorial literature. The training of the inquisitors, combined with the pope’s preamble had made it nearly impossible for the Templars’ practices to appear anything other than heretical.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Amongst all of the charges, this is the only one that appears to have been at least partially true. The testimonies of a number of brothers indicate some real confusion on this point.

⁸² Ibid., 12-16.

⁸³ Ibid., 15, n. 57.

⁸⁴ Malcolm Barber, “The Templars and the Turin Shroud,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (1982): 206-225, at 217.

The Letter of Summons

What immediately follows the list of charges is a letter from the two inquisitors addressed to the Archdeacon of London, instructing him to read out a summons at the church of St. Paul in London (and to have the same summons read out at other churches throughout the city), during high mass the following Sunday. The letter both proclaims the inquisitors' authority over proceedings, and reiterates the weight of the charges against the Templars:

Since the brothers and individual persons of the Order of the knighthood of the Temple are said, according to popular opinion and public rumour, to have been infected with the horrible sin of apostasy and the detestable vice of idolatry, as well as various execrable heresies and errors, we, following the papal mandate and pastoral duty of our office, intend to proceed against and inquire into the brothers and individual persons of the aforesaid Order of the City and diocese of London and others living there or perhaps brought there, either wearing the aforesaid Order's habit or walking about after throwing off their habit, as it is fitting on the aforementioned grounds.⁸⁵

Sicard and Dieudonné's summons calls for every Templar to appear before them in person in London's episcopal hall on 20 October 1309, and is the first introduction of these men's own writing into the proceedings. They write, "...we have chosen that day as an incontrovertible date because a swift settlement requires it and the case is very dangerous for the whole of the orthodox faith."⁸⁶ While it is impossible to know exactly what was in the minds of these men when they penned these words, it is difficult not to see the two elements of their inquisitorial lives—their spiritual calling, and their

⁸⁵ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

accountability to an impatient king—in tension with one another within that single sentence.

Pre-Trial Testimonies and the First Round of Sworn Interrogations

On 23 October, 1309, the testimonies of three Templars brothers were taken.

Interestingly, they were not taken under oath, and the document states that they were taken “as a precaution,”⁸⁷ but a precaution against what remains unclear. The three men questioned were Brother William Raven, Brother Hugh of Tadcaster, and Brother Thomas of Chamberlain. There is a marginal gloss alongside the beginning of William Raven’s entry, which reads, “First cross-examination, taken to be on the safe side not on oath, followed by two more.”⁸⁸ The designation of this testimony as a cross-examination is perplexing, as these testimonies took place before the trial proper had begun. What purpose did these pre-trial testimonies serve for Sicard and Dieudonné?

James Given, writing about inquisitorial use of protocols in the Languedoc, notes that inquisitors’ registers and protocols were designed “as part of an analytic strategy designed to enable [inquisitors] to act more effectively, to exert power in a more concentrated and efficient way.”⁸⁹ Thomas Krämer, in his examination of the same techniques within the context of the Templar trials has noted that “the order in which persons were interrogated did not come about by chance... apparently the royal officials found it easier to get a ‘confession’ from an older than from a younger man.” This results

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁹ Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 26.

in the last man questioned being “put under the highest possible pressure”⁹⁰ under the weight of all previous confessions. Interestingly, quite the opposite appears to be the case with the trial in the British Isles. The first three men questioned were relatively young (though they were not the youngest, nor the most recently received). It is possible, though not provable that the inquisitors marked these young men early on as being particularly suggestible.⁹¹ Yet if the inquisitors hoped to wrest immediate confessions out of these three men, they were soon to be disappointed, as these men’s pre-trial testimonies and their later testimonies taken under oath were in almost every respect unremarkable.

Despite their lack of success garnering quick and easy confessions, or perhaps because of it, we can begin to see here, even before the sworn testimonies have begun, the development of areas of specific interest to the inquisitors. Deprived of confessions, Dieudonné and Sicard had begun instead to build up their case against the Templars in the British Isles. The first three men questioned were not interrogated on the bullet point list of eighty-eight accusations. Instead, the inquisitors focused on their receptions to the Order, searching for ways to tie English Templar practices to the heretical practices previously confessed by their brothers across the English Channel.

The first brother questioned was William Raven. According to his testimony, Brother Raven had been received into the Order by William de la More five years prior to

⁹⁰ Thomas Krämer, “Terror, Torture, and the Truth: The Testimonies of the Templars Revisited,” in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars*, ed. Burgtorf, Crawford, and Nicholson, 71-86, at 77.

⁹¹ This is borne out to some degree later in the trial by Sicard and Dieudonné’s own actions. As we shall see, they singled out individual Templars and worked to induce them to leave the Order. Generally these men were young and had been recently received. Perkins notes: “if these...new brethren...had been subjected to such indignities at initiation as the papal charges represent, is it unreasonable to suppose that they would have gladly accepted the first opportunity of desertion?” Perkins, “The Trial of the Knights Templars in England,” 434. That none of the men denounced their Order speaks volumes about the veracity of the charges.

his arrest, and he insisted that around one hundred secular persons had been present at his early-morning reception, though he had sworn his actual oath in a ceremony attended only by brothers and a priest. This is remarkable because many of the accusations against the Order stemmed from their supposed secrecy, and in particular, their secrecy surrounding the receptions of new brothers.⁹² Very few brothers would claim a similarly public reception.

With the second man examined, Brother Hugh of Tadcaster, the inquisitors begin to press their case that Templar practices were uniformly imposed and carried out throughout the order, clarifying that the Order's procedures and rites were indeed imposed from the top, and could be expected to be the same in every preceptory, regardless of time or place. Hugh's testimony ends with a list of the brothers whose receptions he had witnessed, and the words "and the brothers of the said Order were not received in any other way."⁹³

The third man questioned in this manner was Thomas the Chamberlain. His testimony closely echoes that of both Raven and Tadcaster, but here we can see the interrogators explicitly seeking a link between Templar practices in France and those in the British Isles, whereas in the previous two testimonies, it is possible that the information could have been supplied by the accused unprompted. For the first time we see the inquisitors explicitly asking about reception practices: "Asked if there was the same method of receiving brothers in the Order [everywhere], he says yes, he believes

⁹² Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 22.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

so...He says also that he reckons that the same method is [employed] for receiving brothers on this side of the sea as is used overseas, and the same method of making profession.”⁹⁴

Thomas of Champerlain’s pre-trial testimony provides a further insight into the inquisitorial mindset preparing to carry out this trial. We can get a sense of the inquisitors’ preoccupations not only by looking at the answers they explicitly sought out and emphasized, but also the answers they downplayed, and even dismissed out of hand. In Thomas the Chamberlain’s testimony the inquisitors’ total lack of interest in anything beyond their official line of enquiry becomes evident: “He recited a great preamble about how the brothers were pre-examined, and about chastity and that they should not have personal property and so on.”⁹⁵ There can be a lot hidden within those three words, “and so on.” This sort of exonerative information did not fit into the case that these men were attempting to build against the Order, and was therefore intentionally abbreviated and ignored.

Within the transcript of the first round of questioning it is possible to see the discursive power of decades of inquisitorial literature. The Dominican Order, with its mandate to seek out and root out heresy, had become throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries something of a medieval think tank on all things heretical. As we have seen, many instructional manuals were produced by Dominican inquisitors during this time. These were intended to guide other inquisitors in their work, alerting them to various aspects of heretical thought, and, importantly, to the many ways in which heretics

⁹⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 24.

might attempt to keep their beliefs and actions secret. Although it had not yet been produced at the time of the Templar trials, one of the most influential of these inquisitors' manuals was Bernard Gui's handbook for inquisitors, the *Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis*. As Edward Peters has noted, "the practice of inquisitorial activity, whether episcopal or papal, [had grown] be remarkably consistent by the first quarter of the fourteenth century."⁹⁶ Gui's work was born out of that same inquisitorial discourse that would certainly have informed other, earlier manuals, and which would have also informed the monastic educations of Sicard and Dieudonné. It therefore provides us with a clear example not only of how inquisitorial procedure was taking shape in the Languedoc around this time, but also of how the very specific worldview of the Dominican Order was in large part responsible for shaping that procedure. Gui, a skilled historian in addition to being a prominent inquisitor, presents a case study of heretics as masters of manipulation, whose every turn of phrase has been calculated to confuse, dissemble, and mask their true beliefs. Any inquisitor who had read this treatise or others like it would surely be on guard against such falsities.

Given that Dominican inquisitors were well trained and schooled in the art of inquisition, it is highly likely that Sicard and Dieudonné were familiar with these types of treatises. And so it should not be at all surprising that Thomas of Chamberlain's spirited defense of his Order and its members' practices was dismissed out of hand. Thomas's testimony is not unique. The third sworn witness, William of Scotho, also appears to have tried to exonerate the Order with his testimony, only to have it cut short: "Interrogated about the method of reception, he said that he promised obedience, chastity and to live

⁹⁶ Peters, *Inquisition*, 68.

without personal property, and many other things which are not pertinent to the investigation.”⁹⁷

Other regularly repeated phrases also bear extra scrutiny here, in particular, the phrase, “he and the others believe just as the Holy Church believes,”⁹⁸ or “he believes...just as other Christians believe,”⁹⁹ or some slight variation thereof, which appear repeatedly in the transcripts during questioning about Templar priests and their belief in the sacraments of the Holy Church. In all likelihood, these were indeed honest and innocuous statements of orthodox belief, however when viewed through an inquisitorial lens, they can very easily be interpreted as a smooth-talking trick, a smokescreen for nefarious and heterodox opinions. As Given has shown, Bernard Gui’s inquisitorial handbooks clearly detailed for other inquisitors the slippery nature of a heretic under questioning:

When he is questioned about the faith which he holds and believes, he replies, “I believe all that a good Christian should believe.” Pressed as to what he means by “a good Christian,” he answers, “One who believes as the Holy Church teaches us to believe and hold.” When asked what he calls the Holy Church he replies, “Sir, what you say and believe to be the Holy Church.” If he is told, “I believe the Holy Church to be the Roman Church, over which presides our lord pope and other prelates subordinate to him,” then he responds, “That I do believe,” meaning that he believes that I believe this.¹⁰⁰

A textbook example of this appears in the testimony of Brother William of Scotho, who, when interrogated on whether or not the French Templars had confessed almost to a man

⁹⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁸ The eighth sworn witness, Brother Thomas of Toulouse, Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 43.

⁹⁹ The fifth sworn witness, Brother William of the Forde, Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 39.

¹⁰⁰ Bernard Gui, *Practica inquisitionis*, 253. Translation from Wakefield and Evans, eds. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 397-98. Quoted in Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 46-47.

to the list of errors described by *faciens misericordiam*: "...he said that he knew nothing, except that he believes that papal letter that says that they confessed speaks the truth, that is, that they confessed."¹⁰¹

Four days into the interrogations brings the testimony of the first sworn witness. This witness, Brother Ralph of Barton, does indeed follow the pattern illustrated by Given and Krämer, of inquisitors choosing an older accused¹⁰² as the first interrogation of the day, though in this instance it was an unsuccessful tactic, as Ralph refused to admit any wrongdoing whatsoever. Here we begin to see the inquisitors asking and noting the answers to every bullet point on their list of eighty-eight charges. This did not take place with the three unsworn brothers, who had only been questioned largely about their receptions. Interestingly, Nicholson notes, "although the Templars were accused of denying Christ, the inquisitors nevertheless believed that they would respect an oath given on the Gospels."¹⁰³

Throughout the proceedings are marginal glosses indicating particularly important bits of information or testimony. They often consist of the single word "look" or "note," but can also be a drawn hand pointing at a line of text, or even a line drawn vertically down the margin, indicating the importance of an entire section of text. These glosses appear on both MS A and MS B, indicating that they were intended as cross-referencing tools for the inquisitors themselves, while also serving as guideposts, drawing

¹⁰¹ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 35-6.

¹⁰² Brother Ralph of Barton had been received into the Order fifteen years prior to his arrest.

¹⁰³ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 26.

the attention of those reading the transcript after the trial to what the inquisitors believed to be the most pertinent pieces of testimony.

Within the first round of questioning the most commonly glossed answers by far are those concerning items thirty-four and thirty-five in the list of charges: “that during the reception they made those whom they were receiving swear that they would not leave the Order...[and]...that they immediately regarded them as fully professed.”¹⁰⁴ Thirteen times the scribe marks these answers with “note” or “look,” while the next most commonly noted answers (concerning the vehement suspicion under which the Order had fallen) are marked only five times. Why were the inquisitors so concerned with the lack of a probationary period, and the brothers’ inability to leave the Order?

That they were extremely interested in brothers being able to leave the Order is additionally attested to by the fact that they spent a considerable amount of time, fruitlessly as it turns out, pressuring younger, more recently received brothers to quit the Order. No explicit reason is given for this. It seems likely that their motives were driven by two factors: a desire to save those who, having been recently received might not be as tainted by heresy as those more deeply embedded in the Order, and also the hope that a young, impressionable brother might be convinced to condemn the Order and its practices if and when he was free of its influence. As it happened, they were unable to get any young recruits either to quit the Order or to admit to the existence of heretical practices, let alone condemn them. The thirty-first sworn witness was a young man named Brother Thomas of Loudham, who had been received a mere eleven days prior to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

his arrest. Had he been subjected to the kinds of shocking practices laid out in the eighty-eight charges, it would be surprising for him to reject such an opportunity to distance himself from the Order. Upon being exhorted to leave his brothers, he replied “that he would not, notwithstanding the fact that he had sufficient [means] to be able to live outside the Order.”¹⁰⁵

In addition to marginal glosses, Sicard and Dieudonné made use of other tools that had been developed by inquisitors to aid in their efforts to stamp out Catharism in the Languedoc. The ability to archive, retrieve, and cross-reference information was a particularly powerful tool developed by inquisitors throughout the thirteenth century, and one that was employed throughout this trial. For instance, the inquisitors inserted into MS A the testimonies of eight brothers who had been previously questioned in the French province of Cleremont about their receptions into the Order by the second sworn witness, Himbert Blanc, Commander of the Auvergne. Many of these “indicated that [Himbert] had been involved in blasphemous procedures,” thereby causing the inquisitors to consider him “highly suspect.”¹⁰⁶ However staunch the denials by the Templars in the British Isles, and however many exonerative details they could provide, the forced confessions of their brothers in France lay like a shadow over every interaction between the interrogators and the interrogated.¹⁰⁷

The forty-fourth witness, Brother John of Stoke, provides the most interesting testimony in this first round of questioning, both for his interrogators as well as for

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., xviii.

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Were the Templars Guilty?” in *The Medieval Crusade*, ed. Susan L. Ridyard, (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2004), 71-86, at 77.

modern readers. His questioning took place more than two months after the testimony of the forty-third witness had been given. Nicholson notes that the reason for the gap was that John and another brother, Michael of Baskerville, had simply ignored the summons to appear before the inquisitors, and so had to be located, arrested, and brought to trial.¹⁰⁸ John of Stoke's testimony is different from that of his fellow deponents. Before being asked the familiar list of charges, he is questioned about any deaths that may have occurred "from the time when he was received in houses where he stayed," and he replies that he knew of one Brother Thomas of Osney, who had died at Warwick, and he names the men who attended to the burial. "Interrogated on others whom he saw buried, whether they were buried in the same way, he says that they were. Interrogated on whether they received the ecclesiastical sacrament: he replied that they did, and from a brother chaplain."¹⁰⁹ After then answering the normal set of trial questions, he was also examined extensively about the death of a brother named Walter Bachelor. This testimony is marked with a vertical line running down the margin, with an additional drawn hand pointing to its beginning, indicating that this testimony was of particular importance to the inquisitors.

The Death of Walter Bachelor

Walter le Bachelor, as his name is sometimes written, was a Templar knight and master of Ireland from 1295 to 1301. He was brought to the New Temple in London after allegedly stealing property from the Order, where he was apparently starved to death

¹⁰⁸ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, 98, n. 308.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

inside a cell so small he could not lie down in it.¹¹⁰ John of Stoke testified to being one of the men, along with Brother Ralph of Barton, who carried Walter's body out to be buried. The inquisitors seized upon this, pressing John of Stoke for more and more detail about Bachelor's death, his status within the Order at the time of his death, and the manner of his burial. The reason for their tenacity is not immediately obvious, though Callan argues that "the inquisitors seized on his death as the one possible proof that the Templars killed their members, as was alleged of them in the papal bull..."¹¹¹ The bull, however, asserts that the Templars killed those who revealed secrets of their receptions, while John of Stoke clearly states that Walter was considered excommunicate and punished because he had "pilfered the goods of the house." Because of this, he was not buried wearing the habit of the Order, nor was he buried in the Order's cemetery, but rather "in an open space in the house at London." Just before his death he had confessed to a priest of the Order, and John believed he had likely received a communion wafer, though he is not certain on that point.¹¹²

Testimonies of Clerical and Lay Witnesses

Why had this line of questioning suddenly appeared with John of Stoke's testimony, and why were the inquisitors so interested in pursuing it? The answer lies within the two-month gap between John of Stoke's interrogation and the interrogation of the previous witness, Brother William of Welles. During those two months, Sicard and Dieudonné had not been inactive, but had spent their time questioning certain members of the clergy and laity about their knowledge of Templar affairs, "as it was admissible to use *fama* (public

¹¹⁰ Callan, *The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish*, 37-38.

¹¹¹ Callan, *The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish*, 37-38.

¹¹² Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 95.

reputation) in a heresy trial, the inquisitors also fell back on rumours and anecdotes against the Order of the Temple reported by outsiders.”¹¹³ The summary of these first testimonies of outside witnesses survives only in a single copy recorded into MS A, following the testimony of witness forty-seven, Brother Walter of Rockley. While it is not clear how exactly these clerical and lay witnesses were selected, Nicholson points to a document issued by the archbishop of York on 2 January, 1309, which included a papal bull that threatened excommunication for any person with knowledge of Templar activities who failed to disclose it to the investigators.¹¹⁴ In May of the following year the archbishop of York was again tracking down potential witnesses, “instructing his official to question the parish priests, monks and friars who used to hear the Templars’ confessions, clergy and laity who were in the Templars’ service, and their household servants and friends.”¹¹⁵

There were seventeen clerical and lay witnesses questioned initially, with a wide variety of personal backgrounds: from a humble chandler to notaries public and priests. Some of these men were familiar with the Order of the Temple, while others had so little contact with the brothers that they seemed genuinely confused as to why they were being questioned. Amongst the witnesses, very few are able to provide the inquisitors with anything concrete. Of the seventeen, only four are able to answer that they believed the causes of the secrecy surrounding the reception of new brothers to be dishonorable, and none of these four provides a specific reason for that belief.

¹¹³ Ibid., xxx.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., xxx-xxxi.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., xxx.

The most interesting of the seventeen is the eleventh witness, Lord John of Hoddington, rector of the church of St Mary le Strand. Before the inquisitors begin asking him the first of their listed questions, they ask Lord John “whether he knows whether the Templars have committed the crime of idolatry or have denied God” “he says that he knows nothing except what rumour says. Interrogated about the time of the rumour, he says that he does not know.” He then goes on to say that he knows that receptions are held in secret, and believes it to be due to an “iniquitous” cause rather than an honorable one. What comes next provides us with a small hint at the inquisitors’ frustrations due to their lack of progress. Rather than asking Lord John about his own beliefs or knowledge, as the question was written and as it had been put to the other witnesses, the inquisitors ask this witness “whether *anyone* has suspicion against them from this [secret receptions]: he replied that yes [emphasis added].”¹¹⁶ Having gotten next to nothing from their interrogations of the witnesses, both Templar and lay, the inquisitors appear to have abandoned the wording of the question, which clearly asks for the belief or knowledge only of the witness being questioned. There is more than a whiff of desperation attached to that one little word: “anyone.” Though this witness thinks that the Templars are secretive for dishonorable reasons, and that this is a widespread belief, he disappoints the inquisitors again by noting that as far as he knows, Templar beliefs about the ecclesiastical sacraments are perfectly orthodox: “he says that he has often helped them to celebrate [the sacraments], and he knew that they celebrate [them] just like the rest of priests”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 110.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 110.

These initial testimonies were relatively benign, however later witnesses would provide far more damning, if un-provable, testimonies about the Order and certain individual Templars. MS A, fols 91r–100r appears to be a summary of evidence collected against the Order, drawn up following the completion of the trial, as it includes information about the trial in London, but also those which had taken place later \in Ireland, Lincoln, and York, meaning that this section must have been compiled after April of 1311. Nicholson argues that fols 91r-99v of this document, before being inserted into MS A, had been drawn up as a “formal compilation of evidence against the Templars presented to them on 22 April, while the final testimony on fls 99v-100r was added in response to the Templars’ intention to defend themselves in court.”¹¹⁸

This section of the proceedings begins with a paragraph in which Sicard and Dieudonné claim to have “fully proven”¹¹⁹ many of the charges. Their proof consists of the confessions obtained through torture of the French Templars, and in particular, the confessions of the Grand Master and the Commanders of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Poitou. Having at least gotten the Templars in England, Ireland, and Scotland to largely agree that there was only one method of reception within the Order, and that “the same observances were enjoined on the received brothers everywhere in the aforesaid Order,”¹²⁰ the inquisitors could claim that they had proven that the brothers in the British Isles were indeed lying when they denied that their receptions had been blasphemous or heretical. Rather unsurprisingly, this logic was not allowed to work in the opposite direction: given that the method of reception was the same throughout the Order, and that

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 186, n. 1.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 186.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 186.

the brothers of the British Isles had been received in an appropriate manner, it would follow that the French brothers had also been received without heresy and obscenity. Inquisitorial discourse did not tend to allow for such broadly exonerative leaps of logic.

The testimonies of outside witnesses included in this section contain some of the juiciest tidbits of the trial, what Perkins has called “remarkable productions of overheated imaginations, based largely on the secrecy of the Templar ceremonies.”¹²¹ And yet, for all their salaciousness, these stories amount to nothing more than gossip, rumor, and innuendo, much of which cannot withstand even the slightest scrutiny. Lord William of the Ford testified that he heard from William de Reynbure (deceased), that he had heard from Brother Patrick of Ripon (also deceased), that upon his reception to the Order he had been forced to deny God and Christ and to spit upon an image Jesus on the cross. He had also been forced to worship an idol in the form of a calf. He had also heard from this same brother that the Templars practiced homosexuality with one another.¹²² Another witness, Richard Berards, tells of a recently deceased Templar priest (unnamed, of course), who admitted while on his deathbed that he had not actually consecrated the Host during mass for at least twenty years.¹²³ A Carmelite brother, Robert of Maidensford reported that he had heard from “certain reporters whose names he is ignorant of,” that a “certain servant of a certain Templar” had complained in front of many witnesses that his nameless master had been killed by his fellow Templars, due to his refusal to be received in a profane manner.¹²⁴ Regardless of whether or not *fama* was acceptable in a heresy trial, this sort of second- and third-hand information reported about

¹²¹ Perkins, “The Knights Templars in England,” 440.

¹²² Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol 2*, 191.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

people whom death and/or anonymity had placed beyond the inquisitors' questions had to have been a source of some anxiety for Sicard and Dieudonné. Indeed, as we shall see, in their later summaries of the trial they went to great lengths to bolster much of this rather flimsy testimony.

Re-questioning the Templars and the Trial in Ireland and Scotland

Having completed their first round of questioning, and armed with new and deeply troubling information from their interrogations of the clergy and laity, the inquisitors re-questioned many of the Templars using newly developed sets of charges. Anne Gilmour-Bryson has noted that “this persistent addition of new allegations is a feature of the English trials.”¹²⁵ The list of charges constituting the second round of interrogations was set out on 29 January, 1310. It consisted of twenty-four newly developed questions, many of which concerned some of the more severe allegations asserted by the lay witnesses, including charges of idol worship, sodomy, and the confusion over absolution.¹²⁶ The remaining charges were designed to ensure that should any single brother agree to any of the charges, his fellow Templars and the Order as a whole could then be reasonably considered equally guilty of the same.

It is clear that the inquisitors had hoped that by presenting the Templars with a list of new, more serious charges, which had been developed after speaking with people in the Templars' own communities, the pressure would begin to build on the accused and they would break from fear. Instead, they were confronted with as staunch a resistance as

¹²⁵ Anne Gilmour-Bryson, “The London Templar Trial Testimony: “Truth”, Myth or Fable,” in *A World Explored: Essays in Honour of Laurie Gardiner*, ed. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Victoria, Australia: University of Melbourne History Department, 1993), 44-61, at 51.

¹²⁶ For a complete list of the twenty-four charges, see appendix 2.

ever, and in fact, we can begin to see some of the Templars showing their absolute disgust with the entire process and with the inquisitors themselves. Brother William of Egeldon is not shy of voicing his dislike for the inquisitors: “Also, interrogated on the 22nd charge...he replied that not before the arrival of the Inquisitors, nor does he yet believe that any good man has suspicion against them. Also, interrogated on the 23rd charge...he says that that suspicion is over the contents of the bull, since the Inquisitors came.”¹²⁷ Brother William Skothow echoes this sentiment. Sicard and Dieudonné were learning just how different England was from France when it came to the powers of inquisition. Whereas in France the inquisitors had been co-opted as a tool of royal power, in England, these men were regarded as suspicious interlopers and “as agents of foreign popes.”¹²⁸

For all their gossip-gathering and careful wording, the inquisitors, lacking the weight of state backing, were simply unable to apply enough pressure to crack the resistance of the brothers in the British Isles. At most, they were able to prove with a reasonable level of certainty that a number of brothers were confused about whether or not the Grand Master or other high-level Templar could absolve brothers from their sins, or could only forgive their transgressions against the Order and its Rule.

It is entirely understandable that many brothers, who were not necessarily well versed in the most up-to-date theological teachings of the church, might have been a little hazy on the details about exactly who was authorized to absolve whom. Many brothers when questioned appeared to be confused about whether or not the Grand Commander or

¹²⁷ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 126.

¹²⁸ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 221.

other notables were able to absolve them of their sins during Chapter meetings. For his part, the Grand Commander of England, Brother William de la More, steadfastly denied that he or anyone else who was not a priest ever absolved the brothers of their sins, and nor did he imply to his brothers that they could:

...interrogated what words the president of the Chapter says when a brother has earlier acknowledged his transgression in Chapter and comes before the president with back bared, and [the president] flogs him three times with thongs. He replied that he says: 'Brother, ask God that he may remit [the punishment due] to you'. And he says to those standing about, 'and you, Brothers, ask God that he may remit [the punishment due] to him. And say the Lord's Prayer'. And he says that he does not say more, except that he should take care not to sin again. Also, interrogated whether he says: 'I absolve you or remit you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen', he replies that he does not say that.¹²⁹

The source of this confusion clearly stems from the Commander's duty to forgive brothers' transgressions against the Order. The inquisitors were similarly interested in the idea that brothers were not permitted to confess to any clergymen outside of the Order itself. This sort of secrecy smacked of dark dealings and hidden heretical beliefs. Yet it likely stems from the Order's own papally-approved Rule, which early on allowed clerks to be admitted to the Order who were independent of the local bishop. In 1286, these clerks were granted the power to absolve their brothers. "In accordance with this, the Rule of the Temple in its latest form provided that, if a brother chaplain were at hand, no brother might confess to an outside priest without special permission."¹³⁰ Barber notes

¹²⁹ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 175.

¹³⁰ Perkins, "The Knights Templars in the British Isles," 211.

that a lack of priests available in the Order (“there were only 8 among the 144 Templars questioned”¹³¹) may have led to the absolution confusion:

in the twelfth-century Rule the master in chapter gave brothers a penance to perform for their sins, and even though he was not a priest, nothing strange was seen in this. The real mistake of some of the Templars seems to have been their failure to adapt these early practices to the Church’s sacramental theory...the effect was that some Templars thought that their preceptor was giving them a general absolution for their sins, even if they had not confessed them, and some admitted this, apparently without being a ware of the development of theological opinion on the whole subject.¹³²

While there was indeed a general consensus among the accused that the Order’s practices and Rule were observed everywhere throughout the Order, none of the men questioned would admit to any wrongdoing or illicit rituals (notwithstanding the relatively benign misunderstanding of absolution as noted above), thereby turning the inquisitors’ plan on its head. If it is agreed that every Templar follows the same practices, and some admit to performing blasphemous acts, the Order as a whole is tainted. But if it is agreed that every Templar follows the same practices, and every Templar describes those practices as licit and orthodox, the Order as a whole ought to be vindicated. Of course, as we have seen, vindicating the Order was not part of these men’s programming; neither their core spiritual beliefs, nor their political mandate would allow it.

The Problem of Torture

Multiple times during this second round of questioning, the inquisitors were subjected to some rather pointed, if subtle jabs by the accused. The Templars in the British Isles were

¹³¹ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 229.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 228-9.

very well aware that their French brethren, whose confessions were being employed with full force against them, had been tortured into making those confessions. Unsurprisingly, all of the brothers, when asked if they wished to stand on the “spontaneous confessions and depositions” of the other brothers, agreed that they wished to do so only for those that showed the Order in a positive light. Brother William of Chelesey went further, stating that “he does not wish to stand on the testimonies of those who are outside the kingdom of England, but yes, [he does], on the statements of those who are from the kingdom of England.”¹³³ John of Stoke put an even finer point on it when he testified that he wished “to stand on the depositions and confessions of all, except of those who are under the king of France’s power,”¹³⁴ meaning that he stands on the testimonies of his brothers in the British Isles, but that he knows the French testimonies were forced under duress and were therefore untrue.

Much has been written on the problematic nature of torture in the trials of the Templars. Malcolm Barber has suggested that “modern research into the effects of psychological pressure and torture can help historians in their analysis of the confessions arranged before them.”¹³⁵ Writing about the debate surrounding torture’s effects on the validity of Templar testimony, Nicholson adds:

The fundamental issue here is whether evidence extracted by torture and the threat of torture is accurate. Those who accept the evidence given by the Templars who were tortured or threatened with torture do not discuss the extensive scholarly psychological research that shows that torture does not lead those being interrogated to tell the

¹³³ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 142.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹³⁵ Malcolm Barber, introduction to *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307-1314)*, ed. Burgtorf, Crawford, and Nicholson, 1-8, at 4.

truth, but only to say what their interrogators wish to hear, and to endorse material suggested to them by their interrogators...John Arnold, a leading scholar in this area, has argued that inquisitorial records are a ‘discourse of power’, which cannot be taken at face value: the inquisitors in effect created an alternative reality to which the accused must conform or be condemned as obdurate heretics.¹³⁶

The debate surrounding torture’s effects on testimony has focused almost entirely on how modern historians ought to handle this difficult material when examining it for clues about the deponents’ actual beliefs. Because the focus of this particular thesis is on the interrogators rather than the interrogated, we can safely sidestep that debate entirely, but that does not mean that we can simply ignore the effect of torture on this trial. The question that must be asked here is, what role did torture play in the worldview of these inquisitors? As we shall see, they certainly pressed hard for its use in England, despite its common-law prohibition there.

Helen Nicholson sees the inquisitors’ demand for the right to apply torture to the Templars as strictly pragmatic and politically motivated, writing, “it is important for modern readers to remember that...the inquisitors’ concern was to present confessions rather than obtain evidence of the truth.”¹³⁷ But what if Sicard and Dieudonné believed confession and the truth to be one and the same thing? As we have seen, these men were certainly not divorced from worldly, political concerns. Their role within the machinery of Capetian state power has been well documented. Yet we have also seen that their choice of career as Dominican inquisitors indicates a foundational belief in the power of the Holy Church, and her ever-broadening powers to discern heterodox thought from

¹³⁶ Nicholson, *Proceedings*: vol. 2, xli.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, lix.

orthodox. Christine Caldwell Ames has written extensively on this, and has noted that “inquisitors patently located torture within their Christian spiritual geography of Christianity.”¹³⁸ These men were not modern scholars, with access to modern psychological studies. They were engaged in a simultaneous struggle to both stamp out heresy and to expand the church’s power over an increasingly monasticized society. Ames argues that the monasticization of the laity would have included the imposition of monastic corporeal punishments (*vexatio*) on the non-religious: “like Reginald of Orléans brutally beating the ‘demon’ of stubbornness out of impenitent friars, *vexatio* was believed to unlock gates that only sin had built: the pride and truculent disobedience that alone could explain a pertinacious refusal to accept the authoritative wisdom of Peter’s clergy.”¹³⁹ Thus it is impossible to read these men’s repeated requests for torture to be used on the Templars in the British Isles as simple political expediency or sadistic cruelty.

Dieudonné and Sicard had been able to achieve little since their arrival, and began pressing Edward II to allow them to proceed against the Templars “according to ecclesiastical constitutions, which meant the use of torture,”¹⁴⁰ and “on 15 December 1309, Edward issued instructions that the interrogators should be allowed to torture the Templars if necessary and, on 8 February 1310, he wrote that the knight William de Dien [or Dene] had been appointed to oversee the proceedings against the Templars and help the inquisitors—that is, to oversee torture.”¹⁴¹ In August 1310, Edward tried again, writing a letter requesting that the Templars of Lincoln be sent to London and allowing the

¹³⁸ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 167.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁴⁰ Barber, *Trial of the Templars*, 221.

¹⁴¹ Nicholson, *Knights Templar on Trial*, 99.

inquisitors “to do what seemed suitable ‘following ecclesiastical law’—in short, they were to allow the Templars to be tortured.”¹⁴² Getting approval for torture and implementing it were two very different things, however. While the Lincoln Templars were transferred to London, the Edward’s request to allow ecclesiastical procedures had to be reiterated on 6 October and again on 23 October, showing that his request had likely been ignored. Sicard and Dieudonné plainly believed that their failure to produce results similar to those achieved in France was attributable to their inability to have the Templars in the British Isles tortured, and they plainly believed the blame for this lay at the feet of the English king and his ministers.¹⁴³

There is still much debate as to whether or not torture was ever used in the trial in the British Isles. As we shall see, in the final re-questioning of the Templars, the inquisitors were finally able to produce three, somewhat tepid confessions. Of those three, Nicholson argues that at least one, Stephen of Stapelbrugge, was indeed tortured, though her basis for this consists solely of the fact that he mentions during his deposition that his confession came not “from fear of death, nor from any fear of torture, but only from concern about the salvation of his soul.” That he mentions torture at all “shows he had in fact been tortured.”¹⁴⁴ The fact that Stephen of Stapelbrugge and his brethren knew very well how the French Templars had been treated, weakens this argument somewhat. Clarence Perkins posits that many, if not all of the Templars were tortured toward the end

¹⁴² Ibid., 121-2.

¹⁴³ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, xxiv. They may have been right. Christina Allen notes that the man Edward appointed to oversee the torture of the Templars was William de Dene, the same William de Dene that Edward had sent to Philip IV in 1307 to try to convince him of the Templars’ innocence. “This makes one wonder how seriously Edward ever intended to enforce the use of ‘ecclesiastical constitutions’ against the Templars in England.” Christina Allen, “When Common Law and Canon Law Clash: The Subtle English Resistance to the Use of Torture in the Templar Trials of England,” (M.A. Thesis., University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2013), 45.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholson, *Knights Templar on Trial*, 177.

of the trial, and points to a summary at the end of the Bodleian MS (MS A in Nicholson's edition and in this thesis), in which the writer describes "severe and cruel laymen using judgment of blood who were sent to terrify the Templars and induce them to disclose the truth."¹⁴⁵ Because of this, he marvels, "it is a wonder, not that three Templars confessed, but that More, Blanke, and the great bulk of the brothers refused to do likewise."¹⁴⁶ And yet, the repeated complaints of the inquisitors that they were unable to find anyone to implement torture for them, and their eventual demand that the trial be moved to Ponthieu (while technically English, this county did not fall under English common law¹⁴⁷), indicate that in the end, they may in fact have been unable to actually carry out the tortures for which they had successfully lobbied.

The Confessions of Brothers Stephen of Stappelbregge,

Thomas Totti, and John of Stoke

While the debate about whether or not torture was ever used in the British Isles trial must remain an open question, what we do know is that whether through force, intimidation, or coercion, the inquisitors were eventually able to squeeze confessions out of three of the Templar brothers: Stephen of Stappelbregge, described as an apostate and fugitive,¹⁴⁸ Thomas Totty (or Totti) of Thoroldeby who had also escaped from his jailors, and John of Stoke.

¹⁴⁵ Perkins, "The Knights Templars in England," 443.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 443.

¹⁴⁷ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 223.

¹⁴⁸ Nicholson notes that Stephen of Stapplebregge was likely in Ireland at the time of the arrests, and may have avoided being questioned there with the other Templars because of his outsider status. Helen Nicholson, "The Trial of the Templars in Ireland," in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307-1314)*, ed. Burgtorf, Crawford, and Nicholson, 225-235, at 230.

After his capture by the king's officials, Stephen of Stappelbregge was interrogated and confessed to a second, blasphemous reception that took place following his first, licit one. This second reception included spitting on the cross and denying Christ, both of which were demanded of him at sword-point by the receiving brothers, one of whom, he said, was Thomas Totty. Additionally he confessed to being told that "Jesus Christ was not true God and true man...[and that] he should not believe in the sacrament of the altar."¹⁴⁹ He also confessed that sexual relations amongst the brothers were not frowned upon, but that he himself had never participated in such relations. All other allegations, he denied.

Thomas Totty's confession paints a fascinating picture. Totty, "calling on God as his witness," categorically denied the charges of having been received blasphemously and of denying Christ or God,¹⁵⁰ though he confessed to having met "four brothers of the Temple received in overseas parts by Brother Humbert Blank [Himbert Blanc, Commander of the Auvergne] whom he had received with denial of Christ and spitting over the Cross..."¹⁵¹ He likewise denied having illicit sexual relations, believing that the Grand Master or other lay Templar could absolve sin, and any charges about idolatry. Rather bizarrely, when asked whether or not he believed that the French Templars had stood before the pontiff and confessed to the myriad heinous charges against them, he responded that he did believe it, because he had been there to witness it:

he replied that what is contained in the charges was true, and he knows this well because the witness was present in the Roman court and heard the aforesaid confessions, and

¹⁴⁹ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 398.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 401.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 403.

he named a certain Geoffrey Walter Pichard, a man of great authority in the said Order and a certain other who on behalf of all the other brothers then present publicly confessed the said errors before all, adding that the Order was worse and they were worse than was said.¹⁵²

Nicholson notes that neither a Geoffrey nor a Walter Pichard appears in the transcripts of the French confessions, and that “there was no Walter or Gautier Picard prominent in the Order in France at this time.”¹⁵³ The fact that this person appears to have been invented from whole cloth, coupled with the fact that travel to and from Poitiers where the French confessions before the pope were heard in July and August of 1308 would have been near impossible for a known Templar leads one to suspect that Totty had completely fabricated this story.¹⁵⁴ This one strange bit of testimony, in which the accused appears to be making up a much more detailed story than any of the previous depositions, points to a man desperate to provide his interrogators with whatever information they wish to hear, and makes the clearest case for the argument that at least this particular brother did in fact suffer torture or the threat of torture.

Of course this must remain purely speculative, but the point is further strengthened by Totty’s next bit of testimony.¹⁵⁵ When Totty was asked

how and why he apostatized and fled from the Order, he replied that on account of fear of death, because the abbot of Lagny, at Lincoln where he examined him, asked him if he wished to confess other things, and when he replied that he did not know what else he could say unless he included

¹⁵² Ibid., 402-3.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 402, n. 23.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 403, n. 24.

¹⁵⁵ His testimony during the first interrogations of the Templars at Lincoln was similar to that of the other brothers, except that he was deemed an apostate for having fled the Order prior to the arrests. After his first interrogation, he bribed his jailor and fled again. See Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 260-262.

lies, the abbot, putting his hand on his breast, swore by God's Word that he would make him confess before he escaped from his hands, as he said.¹⁵⁶

This is a unique glimpse of Dieudonné through the eyes of one of the accused, and the portrait it paints is an intimidating one. Whether or not torture was actually used, the very threat of it in the hands of this inquisitor had been enough to cause Thomas Totty to throw off his Order's mantle and flee.

The testimony described above was given on 26 June, 1311. Two days later Thomas Totty was interrogated again, and the dramatic change in his testimony has led both Nicholson and Perkins to conclude that whatever may have happened to Totty prior to this, it is extremely likely that during this two-day period, Thomas Totty was indeed tortured.¹⁵⁷ His testimony is completely changed, and he suddenly admits to a second, blasphemous reception; he admits to spitting next to the Cross; he refuses to admit to denying the Blessed Virgin Mary, but admits that the attempt was made to compel him to do so; he admits to hearing other brothers deny Christ's divinity; he admits that the Grand Master absolved brothers from their sins; he admits that the Order and its members were completely unscrupulous when it came to acquiring wealth for the Order; and he admits that he believes all brothers have been received in the same manner as he himself was—that is, with a licit reception, followed by an obscene one.¹⁵⁸ He finishes his testimony with the pitiable sentiment, “he believes there was no one in the said Order who could

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 403.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 404, n. 28.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 406.

save his soul in the state in which he now is, unless he amends himself, because all are guilty...”¹⁵⁹

The last confession comes from John of Stoke. His earlier testimony, given during the initial interrogations of the Templars at London, was similar to that of his brethren, aside for the additional inquisitorial probing into the death of Walter Bachelor, previously discussed above.¹⁶⁰ In this new testimony, John discloses that over a year after his initial reception into the Order, he was received again in a blasphemous manner by the Grand Master himself, Jacques de Molay and others. He admitted denying Christ under duress, and with his mouth only, not with his heart. He testified that he had asked de Molay “whether this was the same method that happened to all others in the Order; the Master replied, saying that yes.”¹⁶¹ As for the rest of the charges, John of Stoke claimed ignorance, and does not appear to have been pressed further.

The Close of the Trial and the Council of Canterbury

What follows these three confessions in the proceedings of MSS A and B is the written equivalent of the closing sermon so prized by Bernard Gui for its ability to both educate the masses and elicit their complicity. Although these three brothers confessed to heresies that the others staunchly denied, their eventual public submission to the authority of the inquisitors, in front of the council of Canterbury on 27 June, 1311, ultimately reveals them to be more acceptable in the universal *ecclesia*, who better fit the new Dominican

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 407.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 411.

ideal of a monasticized laity, than their stubborn obdurate brethren.¹⁶² If their testimony is to be believed, these men had seriously erred, yes. But in so erring and repenting, they ultimately fulfilled the role that inquisition demanded; for without them, how could the inquisitors provide the faithful with an exemplar of heinous sin, pious repentance, and the benevolent mercy and redemption accessible only through the Holy Mother Church? The reconciliation of Stephen of Stapplebregge serves to illustrate the point:

The same Stephen asserted in full council and before the people of the City who had been brought in for this purpose, that everything deposed by him... was and is true, and that he persevered in every respect in that confession and had persevered until the present time, humbly confessing his error. And on bended knee, with hands clasped, by turns with repeated groaning and many tears, he sought that he should be received to the mercy of Holy Mother Church and absolved, offering himself ready to abjure the heresies of the type confessed by him and all others, and also all errors deviating from the Catholic faith, and to fulfill faithfully the penance enjoined on him for what he had done.¹⁶³

Over the next two weeks, the remaining brothers in the British Isles were paraded out in small groups, where they were publicly adjudged to have been completely defamed by various heresies (despite the only evidence against them being rumor and hearsay). Regardless of whether or not they had admitted any wrongdoing, they were made to abjure all heresies and receive penance in order to be reconciled to the church, which they all did, one imagines with a certain amount of relief that their ordeal was finally nearing its end.

¹⁶² For more on this idea, see Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 160; and Sullivan, *Inner Lives*, 136.

¹⁶³ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, 412.

Summary of the Proceedings Drawn up for the Council of Vienne
and the Dissolution of the Order

MSS C and D round out the end of the proceedings edited by Helen Nicholson. These two documents summarized the events of the trial in the British Isles, and were written up in order to be presented at the Council of Vienne. The Council was held between October, 1311 and March, 1312, at which point the Order of the Knights of the Temple was officially suppressed through the papal bull, *Vox in excelso*. It is unknown what effect, if any, these two summaries had on the outcome of the Council, though given the overwhelming weight of the confessions obtained in France, the three obtained in England appear somewhat paltry in comparison. Despite this, the inquisitors did their best to present a compelling case that the trial in the British Isles had been worthwhile, and to do this, they were apparently not above dabbling in a little bit of manipulation of the trial records. As Nicholson notes, “some of the non-Templar evidence in MS A was misrepresented in the summaries in MSS C and D to appear more reliable than it actually was.”¹⁶⁴ For instance, many brothers had been interrogated about whether or not the Templars were allowed to confess to a priest from outside of the Order. Of these, the majority had testified to some variation of the Rule, which stated that if a brother chaplain were available, he ought to be the one to hear confession, but if he were not available, outside priests were an acceptable alternative. There were four brothers in Ireland, however, who were quite confused about this matter, and did in fact testify that they were forbidden to confess to anyone but a Templar priest. When the summary came to be written, the majority of the testimonies that denied the charge were omitted, leaving

¹⁶⁴ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. 2*, xxxiii.

only the four confirmations as evidence.¹⁶⁵ While this certainly appears to be a case of the inquisitors fudging the evidence in order to bolster their case, in her introduction to the Latin text, Nicholson rather generously attributes this sort of error to the urgency that the inquisitors felt to get their summaries finished in time for the Provincial Council in London in June-July 1311.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., xxvii-xxviii.

¹⁶⁶ Nicholson, *Proceedings: vol. I*, xxvi.

CONCLUSION

Malcolm Barber's 2006 monograph, *The Trial of the Templars*, is a definitive work on the subject, and one that has guided and informed much of this thesis. At the outset, he states that his book seeks, among other things, "to examine the motivation of the chief participants"¹⁶⁷ in the Templar affair. Of course, he had in mind the big names of the era: Philip the Fair, Clement V, William of Paris, and others. What this thesis has sought to do is include among these chief participants the men without whom the trials themselves would not have been possible: the Dominican inquisitors. These men believed themselves to be the frontline soldiers in the fight against heresy. That they were perhaps also frontline soldiers in the fight between an increasingly temporal papacy and an increasingly sacral monarchy was a reality with which they had to come to terms.

Many historians have spent a considerable amount of time examining the lives and activities of history's more famous inquisitors, men like Bernard Gui, Conrad of Marburg, and Nicholas Eymerich. Men such as Dieudonné and Sicard da Vaur, when mentioned at all in histories of the Templar trials, are given at most a sentence or two, noting their names, titles, and very little else. But inquisitorial work was at the very heart of any heresy trial, and the work of Sicard and Dieudonné was at the very heart of the Templar trial in the British Isles. Understanding what drove them ought not be a mere footnote in a larger history, but in fact constitutes a fascinating story in and of itself.

Sicard da Vaur and Dieudonné were sent to England on a particularly difficult mission. Having grown up in a region where heresy was an overriding concern, both

¹⁶⁷ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 4.

spiritually and politically, and having become inquisitors themselves in a realm where inquisition was a royally supported and culturally accepted institution, they could not have been prepared for the difficulties that lay before them in the British Isles. The two men were under an enormous amount of pressure to achieve results like those achieved in France with regard to Templar confessions. Both the king of France and their own monastic mandate demanded that they bring the trial in England, Scotland, and Ireland to a swift conclusion. Yet the speed with which inquisitors in France were able to secure confessions was primarily due to their ability to torture their prisoners. Dieudonné and Sicard were supported by no such coercive infrastructure. England's common law prevented them from torturing the Templars, and even when England's king, Edward II finally relented and ordered that the inquisitors be allowed to question the Templars according to ecclesiastical law (meaning torture), there simply was no one around who was willing or trained to carry it out. Because of this impediment, the inquisitors were left utterly unable to break down the wall of resistance put up by the brothers in the British Isles until very late in the trial, when it is arguably true that at least one, if not three of the brothers were indeed tortured into confessing to transgressions similar to those of their French brethren.

Sicard and Dieudonné's difficulties throughout this trial perfectly exemplify Christine Caldwell Ames's insight that "Dominican inquisitors...did not invent Christian worldviews of inquisition wholesale or uniquely; rather, their significance (and evidence for sincerity) comes precisely from the inheritance and manipulation of extant texts,

traditions, and ideologies.”¹⁶⁸ Throughout the trial can be found subtle evidence of the textual inheritance of the inquisitors. The influence of decades of anti-heretical writings is evident both in the way their questions were posed, and in the way their questions were re-formulated as the trial ran its course. Reading the trial transcripts with an eye on the interrogators instead of the interrogated has developed a more nuanced picture of the Templar trials than that previously put forth.

The difficulties and frustrations of these two inquisitors has helped to describe the complexity of their time—a time when politics and spirituality were inextricably bound up with one another, even as each vied to dominate the other. Yes, Philip the Fair was indeed the financially desperate instigator of the entire affair, and that pressure certainly had to have been keenly felt by our two inquisitors. And yes, pope Clement was clearly a political animal, who was ultimately willing to sacrifice the entire Order of the Knights of the Temple if it would give him the upper hand against Philip. Yet the histories that have focused in so tightly on grand narratives of popes and kings have tended to overlook the complexities of life as it was lived for everyone else. The delicate balance that the inquisitors tried to strike between their own spiritual zeal and the political realities on the ground has shown that despite the motivations of its big-name actors, the drama of the Templar trial was absolutely more complex than the mere financial needs of a king.

¹⁶⁸ Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 6.

Appendix 1

Charges against individual persons¹⁶⁹

- . First, that in their reception and sometimes afterwards and as soon as they had the opportunity, they used to deny Christ, or Jesus, or the Crucified, or sometimes God, and sometimes the Blessed Virgin, and occasionally all the male and female saints of God, induced or instructed by those who were receiving them;
- . Also, that the brothers as a whole did this;
- . Also, 3rd, that the majority of them [did];
- . Also, 4th, that occasionally they also [did this] after their reception.
- . Also, 5th, that the receivers told and instructed those who were being received that Christ—or sometimes Jesus or sometimes the Crucified— is not true God;
- . Also, 6th, that they said to those whom they were receiving that He is a false prophet;
- . Also, 7th, that they said that He did not suffer nor was He crucified for the redemption of the human race but for his own crimes;
- . Also, 8th, that neither the receivers nor those received had hope of having salvation through Him and they said this or the equivalent of similar to those whom they were receiving.
- . Also, 9th, that they made those whom they received spit on the Cross, either on a sign [of the Cross] or on a carving of the Cross and on the image of Christ, although those who were received occasionally spat next to it;
- . Also, 10th, that they made them trample that Cross with their feet;
- . Also, 11th, that the brothers themselves sometimes trampled on the same Cross;
- . Also, 12th, that occasionally they urinated on the Cross and made others urinate on it and they did this several times on Good Friday;
- . Also, 13th, that some of them were accustomed to assemble on that day or another in Holy Week for the aforesaid trampling and urination.
- . Also, 14th, that they adored a certain cat, which appeared to them in their assembly.
- . Also, 15th, that they did this in vituperation of Christ and the orthodox faith.
- . Also, 16th, that they did not believe in the sacrament of the altar [the Eucharist];

¹⁶⁹ This list of charges is copied in its entirety from Nicholson, *Proceedings vol. 2*, 12-16. Nicholson's footnotes and folio page notations have been omitted.

- . .Also, 17th, that some of them [did not believe in it];
- . .Also, 18th, that the majority of them [did not believe in it];
- . .Also, 19th, that neither [did they believe] in the other sacraments of the Church.
- . .Also, 20th, that the priests of the Order did not say the words through which the body of Christ is consecrated in the canon of the Mass;
- . .Also, 21st, that some of them [did not];
- . .Also, 22nd, that the majority of them [did not];
- . .Also, 23rd, that those receiving them [into the Order] enjoined this on them;
- . .Also, 24th, that they believed and thus it was said to them that the Grand Master of the Order could absolve them from their sins;
- . .Also, 25th, that the Visitor [could];
- . .Also, 26th, that the commanders—many of whom are laymen—[could];
- . .Also, 27th, that they did actually do this;
- . .Also, 28th, that some of them [did];
- . .Also, 29th, that even before he was arrested the Grand Master confessed in the presence of great persons that he himself had done this;
- . .Also, 30th, that during the reception of brothers into the said Order or around that time, sometimes the receiving brother and sometimes the one received kissed each other on the mouth, on the navel or naked stomach, and on the anus or the base of the spine;
- . .Also, 31st, that sometimes [they kissed] on the navel;
- . .Also, 32nd, that sometimes [they kissed] on the base of the spine;
- . .Also, 33rd, that sometimes [they kissed] on the penis.
- . .Also, 34th, that during the reception they made those whom they were receiving swear that they would not leave the Order.
- . .Also, 35th, that they immediately regarded them as fully professed.
- . .Also, 36th, that the receptions of their brothers took place in secret;
- . .Also, 37th, that that none was present except brothers of the said Order;
- . .Also, 38th, that on account of this, vehement suspicion has for a long time been developing against the brothers of the said Order;
- . .Also, 39th, that it was generally held.

- . .Also, 40th, that they said to the brothers whom they were receiving that they could have sexual relations with each other;
- . .Also, 41st, that this was allowable for them to do;
- . .Also, 42nd, that they ought to do this and submit to it from each other;
- . .Also, 43rd, that to do this was not a sin for them;
- . .Also, 44th, that they themselves of many of them did this;
- . .Also, 45th, that some of them [did this].
- . .Also, 46th, that the brothers in each province had idols, that is, heads, some of which had three faces, and someone, and some had a human skull;
- . .Also, 47th, that they adored these idols of that idol, and particularly in their great Chapters and assemblies;
- . .Also, 48th, that they venerated [them]:
- . .Also, 49th, – like God;
- . .Also, 50th, – like their saviour;
- . .Also, 51st, that some of them [did so];
- . .Also, 52nd, that the majority of them [did so];
- . .Also, 53rd, that they used to say that: the head could bring them salvation;
- . .Also, 54th, – that it could make them wealthy;
- . .Also, 55th, – that it gave them all the wealth that the Order had;
- . .Also, 56th, – that it used to make the ground sprout;
- . .Also, 57th, – that it used to make the trees bloom.
- . .Also, 58th, that they wound around or touched a head of the said idols with the cords that they wound around themselves over their shirt or skin;
- . .Also, 59th, that the aforesaid cords or others of the same length were given to each of the brothers at his reception;
- . .Also, 60th, that they did this in veneration of the idol;
- . .Also, 61st, that it was enjoined on them that they should gird themselves with the said cords as mentioned before and that they should continually wear them.
- . .Also, 62nd, that the brothers of the aforesaid Order as a whole were received in the aforesaid ways;

- . .Also, 63rd, that they did this, and did so devoutly;
- . .Also, 64th, that [they did this] everywhere;
- . .Also, 65th, that [they did this] for the most part.
- . .Also, 66th, that those who did not wish to do the aforesaid things at their reception or afterwards were killed or put in prison;
- . .Also, 68th,¹⁷⁰ that some [were];
- . .Also, 69th, that the majority [were];
- . .Also, 70th, that it was enjoined on them by oath that they should not reveal the aforesaid things.
- . .Also, 71st, that this was under pain of death or prison;
- . .Also, 72nd, that nor should they reveal the method of their reception;
- . .Also, 73rd, that nor did they dare to speak about the aforesaid things among themselves;
- . .Also, 74th, that if anyone were found to have revealed [these things], they were punished with death or prison;
- . .Also, 75th, that it was enjoined on them that they should not confess [their sins] to anyone except to brothers of the said Order.
- . .Also, 76th, that the brothers of the said Order, although aware of the said errors, neglected to correct them;
- . .Also, 77th, that they did not draw back from observing the aforesaid errors and from the community of the said brothers, although they had the means of withdrawing and of acting as aforesaid.
- . .Also, 78th, that the brothers swore to procure the augmentation and advantage of the order by whatever means they could, lawful and unlawful;
- . .Also, 79th, that they did not regard this as a sin;
- . .Also, 80th, that all and each of the aforesaid things are known and evident among the brothers of the said Order;
- . .Also, 81st, that regarding these things is public talk, general opinion and rumor both among the brothers of the said Order and outside the Order.
- . .Also, 82nd, that the said brothers in great multitude confessed to the aforesaid things both in court and outside and in the presence of eminent persons and in many public places;

¹⁷⁰ The 67th charge is simply missing from this list, making the actual count of charges eighty-seven.

. .Also, 83rd, that many brothers of the said Order, both knights and priests and also others confessed to the aforesaid errors or the majority of them in the presence of our lord the pope and the lord cardinals;

. .Also, 84th, that the same did so on oath;

. .Also, 85th, that [it was] also in full consistory.

. .Also, 86th, Enquire moreover from each brother about their receivers, the places in which they were received, the time of their receptions, and those present at their receptions, and about the method of their receptions;

. .Also, 87th, whether they know or have heard when, and through whom the aforesaid errors began and from what they had their origin, and by what cause, and the circumstances, and everything related to the aforesaid things which seems to be useful;

. .Also, 88th, enquire from each brother if they know where the said heads, or idols, or any of them are, and how they were carried and guarded and by whom.

Appendix 2

Twenty-four New Charges on which individual Templars were re-questioned and examined¹⁷¹

1. First, let them be interrogated on whether they know anything about the denial of Christ, the spitting on the cross, sodomy or idolatry or the other charges brought against them and sent under the [papal] seal.
2. Also, let each be interrogated on whether he believes that all and each of the brothers received in England or directly or indirectly subject to the Grand Commander of England, are good and trustworthy men and such as would not have deviated from the truth out of fear of the Grand Commander or of the Order, or from hatred of favour for anyone, or from any other cause; and whether he wishes to stand on their testimonies and what each of them deposed individually regarding his reception.
3. Also, whether the custom and method of receiving [brothers] in England is so similar that whoever knows the method of receiving any particular brother or brothers knows the method by which all and each of the others are received.
4. Also, whether the custom and method of receiving brothers everywhere is so similar that whoever knows the method of receiving which is used in England, knows that which is used in other places and everywhere, and vice versa.
5. Also, that all the Grand Commanders of the Order, and especially the Grand Commander of England, received their observances from the Grand Master, and all and each of the brothers of the Order of the Temple stationed in England kept them and did so in the way in which they were kept by the aforesaid Grand Master and Visitors and by other brothers in Cyprus and in Italy and in other kingdoms, provinces, and commanderies.
6. Also, that the aforesaid brothers in the present investigation received in England and elsewhere, questioned everywhere about the aforesaid observances on their own oaths by those to whom it pertains, did not conceal them, but everywhere in the investigation confessed them of their own accord.
7. Also, let each be interrogated whether he wishes to stand on the spontaneous confessions and depositions of the same [brothers].
8. Also that the aforesaid observances were given as a whole by the Grand Commander of France or the Visitor of the Order to the Grand Commander of England or his appointed deputies, in a Chapter held in the kingdom of France.
9. Also, whether when the brothers held Chapter, a bell was rung or another sign to call the aforesaid Chapter, and whether he and all and each of the other brothers, with no exception, were bound to assemble in Chapter, and they would assemble.
10. Also, whether he was present at any Chapter and did the things that the others as a whole did.

¹⁷¹ This list of charges is copied in its entirety from Nicholson, *Proceedings vol. 2*, 113-115. Nicholson's footnotes and folio page notations have been omitted.

11. Also, whether he knows or believes that al land each of the things which were done in their Chapters—the receptions of brothers, and absolutions, and in any other matters—were good and licit and were done correctly and licitly, or whether anything erroneous, illicit, heretical or corrupt was done there.
12. Also, whether the things which were done in relation to the aforementioned receptions and absolutions were done in Chapter both from statute or custom and by the approval of the Order, and of all and each of the brothers.
13. Also, whether he believes that the aforesaid absolutions have the same efficacy as they sounded [to have].
14. Also, whether the things which are contained in the book [of regulations] about confession and absolution and other things are true, and approved by the brothers as a whole, and whether he himself and others so kept them so, and in which manner they kept them.
15. Also, whether he and all and each of the others believed and said that the Grand Commander and the others could relax penances enjoined [on the brothers] by priests for their sins.
16. Also, whether he and the others believed that the Grand Commander or Visitor or other commanders, who are laymen, may absolve any layman excommunicated for throwing violent hands on any brother or lay servant of theirs.
17. Also, whether he and all and each of the others believed that any brother of theirs may absolve from the sin of perjury any lay servant, when he came to discipline in the hall and a serving brother flogged him with ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’.
18. Also, whether he and whether all and each of the others believed that absolution done by the Grand Master or Visitor or commander, who are laymen, of any mortal sin, except for simony and throwing of violent hands on the clergy, suffices for himself and others, without any other confession or absolution.
19. Also, whether they believed as a whole and so it was said among the brothers that they or their greater [brothers] or their priests could absolve the brothers and their men from sentences of excommunication laid on them by ordinary or delegated authority.
20. Also, that Brother Jacques de Molay, now Grand Master, and Brother Hugh de Peraud, Visitor-general of the Order, visited England and held Chapter meetings on their observances.
21. Also, that the aforesaid Master and Visitor and other brothers stationed in France and other Kingdoms observed the observances contained in the charges sent under papal seal, and have confessed in the trial that they and every brother individually had observed them.
22. Also, whether there was and is general suspicion among the people against all and each of them, and their profession and clandestine method of receiving.
23. Also, whether the aforesaid suspicion is about those things which are contained in the charges sent under the [papal] seal, or about other things.
24. Also, that all and each of the aforesaid things are so clear and notorious in England and elsewhere that they cannot be concealed by any subterfuge.

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