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## NON-TEMPLAR WITNESSES IN THE TEMPLAR TRIAL

### KEYWORDS

*history; the Middle Ages; military orders; heresy; rumour; Templars; trials; non-Templar witnesses*

### ABSTRACT

Although non-Templars were questioned about various matters during the Templar trial, including the location of brothers and their property, they were most frequently asked about alleged Templar wrongdoing. It was, however, only in areas where Templars denied the charges or where few Templars were arrested that many outsiders were interrogated. Varying measures were adopted to secure their assistance. Eye-witnesses often spoke favourably of the Templars' conduct, although some did express concerns. The strongest criticism was voiced by those relying on second-hand reports and rumour; but their testimony is not convincing. Non-Templars were questioned two or more years after Philip IV had initiated proceedings against the Order, and there was plenty of time for rumours to be spread and elaborated. Some non-Templar witnesses were also influenced by matters unrelated to the charges against the Templars. Witnesses in some western countries, where Templars had no military role and were known mainly as landowners, were much more hostile than those in Cyprus. It has also been claimed that it was in the interests of the orders of friars to denigrate the Templars, although this may be questioned. Non-Templar evidence, however, was of little importance in determining the fate of the Templars: it was only in the British Isles that it may have had some significance.

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Although most of the interrogations which took place during the Templar trial were of members of the Order, a considerable number of outsiders were questioned at various stages of the proceedings for a variety of purposes.<sup>1</sup> The French King Philip IV had undertaken secret inquiries about Templar houses before the arrest of the Templars,<sup>2</sup> but in some regions difficulties were encountered in locating brothers of the Order and some of their possessions. In April 1310 information was sought at Aquila, in the Abruzzi, from a group of eleven men belonging to various religious orders about the churches which the Templars possessed in the region. In July of the same year seven non-Templars were asked at Velletri if they knew of any Templars resident in the district or of any persons who were protecting or sheltering brothers, and the same questions were put to the bishop of Segni and four other clerics at Segni.<sup>3</sup> At one point the archbishop of Canterbury similarly instructed his official to ask both clerics and laymen at any meetings he held whether they knew of any Templars who had not been arrested.<sup>4</sup> When, at a later stage of proceedings, brothers were being judged at Ravenna in 1311, groups of clerics and laymen were required to swear that they considered the denials made by brothers to be trustworthy.<sup>5</sup> Compurgation was, of course, a not unusual procedure in legal processes, including heresy trials,<sup>6</sup> and it was also

<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations are used: PTBI = *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); PUT = *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, vol. 2, *Quellen*, ed. Heinrich Finke (Münster: Aschendorff Buchhandlung, 1907); TTC = *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus: A Complete English Edition*, trans. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Leiden: Brill, 1998); TTPS = *The Trial of the Templars in the Papal State and the Abruzzi*, ed. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1982); UT = *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens*, vol. 2, ed. Konrad Schottmüller (Berlin: Siegfried Mittler, 1887).

<sup>2</sup> *Le Dossier de l'affaire des Templiers*, ed. Georges Lizerand (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1964), 24.

<sup>3</sup> TTPS, 115–117, 239–244.

<sup>4</sup> *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi*, vol. 2, ed. Rose Graham, Canterbury and York Society 52 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 1240–1241.

<sup>5</sup> Renzo Caravita, *Rinaldo da Concorrezzo, arcivescovo di Ravenna (1303–1321), al tempo de Dante* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1964), 298–307 (Source edition no. 49); id., "La 'purgazione' nel processo inquisitorio: Il caso dei Templari processati a Ravenna," in *XV Convegno di Ricerche Templari* (Latina: Edizioni Penne e Papiri, 1998), 7–32; *Appendice ai Monumenti ravennati dei secoli di mezzo del conte Marco Fantuzzi*, vol. 1, ed. Antonio Tarlazzi (Ravenna: Tipografia Calderini, 1869), 603–604 no. 361, 605–607 no. 362, 615–623 no. 369, 624–628 no. 370, 629–631 no. 372. Seven were expected to swear on behalf of each Templar, but in practice usually twelve undertook this task.

<sup>6</sup> In 1215 Innocent III had ruled that those suspected, but not found guilty, of heresy should clear themselves by compurgation: Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition* (London: Edward

demanded of Aragonese Templars at Tarragona in 1312: they had to clear themselves within a month, which gave them time to find compurgators, and they all succeeded in doing so, although the names and numbers of the compurgators are not recorded.<sup>7</sup> Most of the questioning of non-Templars, however, was about their knowledge of the accusations made against members of the Order, and it is this aspect which will be examined here. Their responses have admittedly been discussed, and in some cases evaluated, in regional studies,<sup>8</sup> but it may be instructive to attempt a more general survey of their evidence.

When Clement V published guidelines in August 1308 for the procedure to be followed in establishing the validity of the charges against the Temple, he made no explicit reference to non-Templar witnesses. In the bull *Faciens misericordiam* he merely ruled that those should be summoned *qui fuerint evocandi*. He did add that witnesses who *prece vel pretio, gratia, timore, odio vel amore a ferendo testimonio subtraxerint* were to be censured, and this decree could be interpreted to include outsiders as well as Templars; but the wording is imprecise.<sup>9</sup> Some local summonses similarly made no direct reference to outsiders, sometimes repeating or adapting the wording used by Clement V. When the bishop of London and his colleagues, acting in pursuance of papal instructions, issued a summons in October 1309, it referred only to *omnes predictos Templarios qui ad hoc vocandi fuerint*.<sup>10</sup>

Arnold, 1981), 31; see also Richard H. Helmholz, *The Ius Commune in England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), cap. 2; id., "Crime, Compurgation and the Courts of the Medieval Church," *Law and History Review* 1 (1983): 13–18.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the proceedings of the Council of Tarragona, November 1312, Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón (henceforth as: ACA), Cancillería Real, Varia de Cancillería 412, fol. 4r.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Gilmour-Bryson, "Testimony of Non-Templar Witnesses in Cyprus," in *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, ed. Malcolm Barber (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 205–211; ead., "The London Templar Trial Testimony: 'Truth', Myth, or Fable," in *A World explored: Essays in Honour of Laurie Gardiner*, ed. Anne-Gilmour Bryson (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1993), 44–61; Helen J. Nicholson, *The Knights Templar on Trial: The Trial of the Templars in the British Isles, 1308–1311* (Stroud: History Press, 2009), 115–120; PTBI, 2: xxviii–xxxviii; Alan Forey, *The Fall of the Templars in the Crown of Aragon* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 81–84; Josep M. Sans i Travé, "Els Testimonis aliens a l'orde en el procés contra els templers a la península Ibèrica (1309–1310)," in *Miscel·lània Josep M. Puig Salellas: En homenatge*, ed. Josep Serrano Daura (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Estudis Jurídics, 2011), 201–221.

<sup>9</sup> *Regestum Clementis papae V*, vol. 3 (Rome: Typographia Vaticana, 1886), 284–287 no. 3402. This bull has often been published elsewhere, with minor variations in wording, from the copies which were circulated throughout the West.

<sup>10</sup> PTBI, 1: 15–16. When the archdeacon of London acknowledged receipt of the letter, he inserted *et* between *Templarios* and *qui*, thus altering the sense: PTBI, 1: 16.

On the other hand, in the Iberian Peninsula the bishop of Lisbon, after publishing Clement V's letters, did issue a general order instructing all those who knew anything about the alleged offences to come forward and speak the truth on pain of excommunication.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere on some occasions more positive action was taken to obtain information. The non-Templars who were questioned at Velletri and Segni in July 1310 were asked if they knew of anyone who could give information about the truth of the charges although, as all gave a negative response, no further measures were taken there.<sup>12</sup> The most decisive action seems, however, to have been taken in parts of England. In May 1310 the archbishop of York commissioned his official to question priests, both secular and religious, who had heard Templar confessions, and also any persons who had been *familiares* or servants of the Templars. As the official was to make inquiries throughout the diocese, this may have placed too great a burden on one person, for in the following month the archbishop instructed certain members of the local clergy to go – usually in pairs – to parts of Yorkshire where the Templars had houses and summon named men who had been in the Order's employ. Those summoned were to be questioned about their service and also asked if they knew anything about Templar reception ceremonies or of other matters which could give rise to suspicion.<sup>13</sup> In July 1310 the bishop of Winchester instructed the archdeacon of Surrey to ensure that anyone who had knowledge about the alleged Templar offences informed the bishop within a month, and in October of that year he ordered the archdeacon of Winchester to inquire from twelve trustworthy men, cleric or lay, in each deanery about the accusations against the Templars.<sup>14</sup> In an undated letter the archbishop of Canterbury similarly ordered his official to go to Ewell in Surrey, where the Templars had a house, and compel the vicar and three or four men of good repute there to investigate the Templars' alleged offences; a secret report was to be made to the archbishop.<sup>15</sup> These measures may be compared with actions taken earlier to investigate alleged heresy: in 1184 Lucius III had decreed that bishops should visit places where there were suspected heretics and seek information from local witnesses of good repute;

<sup>11</sup> Fidel Fita, *Actas inéditas de siete concilios españoles desde el año 1282 hasta el de 1314* (Madrid: F. Maroto e hijos, 1882), 94–95.

<sup>12</sup> TTPS, 239–244.

<sup>13</sup> *The Register of William Greenfield, Lord Archbishop of York, 1306–1315*, vol. 4, ed. William Brown and A. Hamilton Thompson, Surtees Society 152 (Durham: Andrews, 1938), 286 no. 2271, 334–335 no. 2301.

<sup>14</sup> *Registrum Henrici Woodlock, diocesis Wintoniensis, A.D. 1305–1316*, vol. 1, ed. A. W. Goodman, Canterbury and York Society 43 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 468–469, 491.

<sup>15</sup> *Registrum Winchelsey*, vol. 2, ed. Graham, 1241.

and a similar ruling was enacted at the Lateran Council in 1215.<sup>16</sup> Little evidence, however, survives about the measures taken to assemble outsiders in many regions although, as some witnesses stated that they had nothing to say, it would seem that reliance was by no means always placed solely on the volunteering of information.

It is clear, however, that extensive questioning of non-Templars usually took place only in areas where the Templars maintained their innocence or where few brothers could be apprehended. In French sources there are very few references to non-Templar witnesses. Most records of proceedings in French territories do not contain testimonies of outsiders,<sup>17</sup> and the papal commission in Paris heard evidence from only six non-Templars.<sup>18</sup> Three of these testified in April 1310, when many brothers were expressing a readiness to defend the Order and before fifty-four Templars were burnt at Sens. The other three appeared separately at different times, and had presumably volunteered to testify. In contrast, fifty-six non-Templars were questioned in Cyprus;<sup>19</sup> but the most extensive investigation of outsiders took place in the British Isles, where seventy-eight are known to have been interrogated in England, fifty-two in Scotland and forty-two in Ireland.<sup>20</sup> According to Raynouard, writing in the early nineteenth century, the archbishop of Messina and the bishop of Sora questioned thirty-two outsiders when no Tem-

<sup>16</sup> Hamilton, *Medieval Inquisition*, 29, 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Le Procès des Templiers d'Auvergne, 1309–1311*, ed. Roger Sève and Anne-Marie Chagny-Sève (Paris: CTHS, 1986); Andrea Nicolotti, "L'Interrogatorio dei Templari imprigionati a Carcassonne," *Studi medievali*, 3rd series, 52 (2011): 697–729; Léon Ménard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et littéraire de la ville de Nismes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Hugues D. Chaubert et Claude Hérisant fils, 1750), Preuves, 166–219; Sean L. Field, "Royal Agents and Templar Confessions in the *Bailliage* of Rouen," *French Historical Studies* 39 (2016): 67–69; id., "Torture and Confessions in the Templar Interrogations at Caen, 28–29 October 1307," *Speculum* 91 (2016): 319–327; id., "The Templar Confessions in Bigorre, December 1307 and March 1308," in *Political Ritual and Practice in Capetian France: Studies in Honour of Elizabeth A. R. Brown*, ed. M. Cecilia Gaposchkin and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 373–378.

<sup>18</sup> *Le Procès des Templiers*, vol. 1, ed. Jules Michelet (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1841), 175–177, 182–187, 454–459, 642–648; *Le Procès des Templiers*, vol. 2, ed. Jules Michelet (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1851), 195–196; *Processus contra Templarios in Francia: Procès-verbaux de la procédure menée par la commission pontificale à Paris (1309–1311)*, vol. 1, ed. Magdalena Satora (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 255–258, 263–268, 532–538, 702–708, 888–889.

<sup>19</sup> See the lists in TTC, 447, 450–451.

<sup>20</sup> PTBI, 2: xxxvi. It is stated there that forty-nine were questioned in Ireland, but the text gives the names only of forty-two: PTBI, 1: 329–337; see also Maeve B. Callan, *The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish: Vengeance and Heresy in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 31.

plars could be found in Sicily.<sup>21</sup> Smaller numbers of non-Templars testified at Fano in Italy and at Mainz and Trier in Germany,<sup>22</sup> while those interrogated in the Iberian peninsula included nine at Lleida, seven at Medina del Campo and others at Orense, Zaragoza and Cervera.<sup>23</sup> In some regions the majority of those questioned were clerics, many of whom were friars,<sup>24</sup> but there was no uniform pattern. The nine questioned at Lleida were all clerics, including six friars, but four of the six witnesses at Zaragoza were laymen; and while in one group appearing in Cyprus the majority were clerics, a second group consisted mainly of laymen. In all regions, however, non-Templar witnesses were usually male: the testimony of only one woman survives.<sup>25</sup>

It is not surprising that, where possible, the questioning of Templars preceded that of outsiders, at least in part. In England the interrogation of brothers of the Order began in October 1309 and non-Templar witnesses were not questioned until the following month,<sup>26</sup> while at Medina del Campo three non-Templar witnesses appeared after thirty Templars had been interrogated.<sup>27</sup> Non-Templar witnesses were similarly questioned later in Aragon and Catalonia: at Lleida Templars were

<sup>21</sup> François-Just-Marie Raynouard, *Monumens historiques, relatifs à la condamnation des chevaliers du Temple et à l'abolition de leur ordre* (Paris: Adrien Égron, 1813), 284. Raynouard's comment is repeated by Cristian Guzzo, "Milites Templi Hierosolimitani in regno Siciliae: Vecchi documenti, nuove acquisizioni," in *I Templari nell'Italia centro-meridionale: Storia ed architettura*, ed. Cristian Guzzo (Tuscania: Edizioni Penne e Papiri, 2008), 91; but this set of interrogations is not mentioned by Kristjan Toomaspoeg, "La Fine dei Templari in Sicilia (1305–1327)," in *Religiones militares: Contributi alla storia degli ordini religioso-militari nel medioevo*, ed. Anthony Luttrell and Francesco Tommasi (Città di Castello: Selecta Editrice, 2008), 155–170.

<sup>22</sup> Raynouard, *Monumens*, 268–270, 273; Jochen Burgdorf, "The Trial of the Templars in Germany," in *The Templars: The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of a Military Religious Order*, ed. Jochen Burgdorf, Shlomo Lotan and Enric Mallorquí-Ruscalleda (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 242–243.

<sup>23</sup> PUT, 2: 372–376 no. 157; Josep M. Sans i Travé, "L'Inedito processo dei Templari in Castiglia (Medina del Campo, 27 aprile 1310)," in *Aciri 1291: La Fine della presenza degli ordini militari in Terra Santa e i nuovi orientamenti nel XIV secolo*, ed. Francesco Tommasi (Perugia: Quattroemme, 1996), 261–263; Fita, *Actas*, 95–98; Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Über den wahren Ursprung der Rosenkreuzer und des Freymaurerordens, nebst einem Anhang zur Geschichte der Tempelberren* (Sulzbach: I. E. Seidel 1802), 134–144; *Memorias del rey D. Fernando IV de Castilla*, vol. 2, ed. Antonio Benavides (Madrid: José Rodríguez, 1860), 635–637; Barcelona, Archivo Capitular (henceforth as: AC), Codex 149A ("Interrogations conducted at Zaragoza 1309–1310"), fols. 57v–59r; AC, Codex 149B ("Interrogations conducted at Cervera, 1310"), fol. 6r.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, PTBI, 1: 181–207.

<sup>25</sup> PTBI, 1: 203–204.

<sup>26</sup> PTBI, 1: 20, 112.

<sup>27</sup> Sans i Travé, "L'Inedito processo," 261–263.

interrogated between 16 and 26 February 1310, while non-Templar witnesses were questioned between 11 and 17 March; and at Zaragoza the questioning of Templars began on 7 November 1309 and continued intermittently until 9 January 1310, while several non-Templars appeared on 17 November and 10 December.<sup>28</sup> The records of proceedings in Cyprus might seem, however, to provide an exception. The questioning of Templars there began on 5 May 1310, and the interrogation of a group of non-Templars started on 1 June; but twenty-one other outsiders testified between the first and the fifth of May of an uncertain year.<sup>29</sup> It has sometimes been assumed that these were the first to be questioned and that all the proceedings took place in 1310: the neatness of the dating would invite this assumption.<sup>30</sup> Yet it has been pointed out that some of those appearing at the beginning of May were in exile in 1310:<sup>31</sup> the interrogation of this group must have occurred in 1311.

In some districts the same set of questions was used for non-Templars as for members of the Order. This happened in Cyprus and also at Medina del Campo and Zaragoza, while one witness at Lleida also referred to numbered articles of accusation.<sup>32</sup> In London, however, a special list, totalling twelve questions, was compiled,<sup>33</sup> and elsewhere some witnesses may have been asked merely to report what they knew about the Templars.

Some non-Templar witnesses possessed a certain amount of first-hand knowledge of Templar activities. A number of these had been in the Order's employ – in some instances for many years – or had had contact with brothers by staying in their houses or attending services with them. A considerable proportion of those questioned in Cyprus fell into this category: it would be expected that more outsiders would frequent the Order's headquarters than small rural commanderies in many parts of the West. There were, however, also some witnesses in western Europe who had long been in Templar service: three who gave evidence at Medina del Campo had lived with the Templars for sixteen, thirty-five and twenty years respectively.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> PUT, 2: 364–376 no. 157; AC, Codex 149A (“Interrogations conducted at Zaragoza, 1309–1310”), fols. 4r–59r.

<sup>29</sup> UT, 2: 152–165, 166, 376; TTC, 51–75, 77, 405.

<sup>30</sup> UT, 2: 152. Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 218, gave the date as 1310, but changed it to 1311 in the 2nd edition (2006), 257.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Edbury, “The Suppression of the Templars in Cyprus, 1307–1312,” *St John Historical Society Proceedings* (2003): 34–35.

<sup>32</sup> PUT, 2: 376 no. 157.

<sup>33</sup> PTBI, 1: 112.

<sup>34</sup> Sans i Travé, “L'Inedito processo,” 261–263.

As the main charges against the Temple focused on admission ceremonies, which were held in private, there are no eye-witness accounts of these. Yet many giving first-hand testimonies not only stated that they knew of no wrongdoing but also commented favourably on particular Templar activities.

Many witnesses in Cyprus who had attended services with Templars commented on the devotion shown by the latter. A knight, for example, who had stayed in the Templar house at Limassol for seven months said that he had seen brothers *audire missam et communicari devote, sicut faciunt alii christiani*, and a merchant of Famagusta stated that in Acre and at Limassol on Good Friday he saw *fratres dicti ordinis discalciatos et excapigliatos ire in ecclesia Templi ad adorandum et orare crucem devotissime adeo bene, quam unquam viderit aliquos fideles fidei Christiane*.<sup>35</sup> Similar comments were made by priests who had been in Templar service in Castile.<sup>36</sup> Several witnesses in Scotland also stated that they had seen Templars devoutly hearing masses.<sup>37</sup>

A number of priests in Cyprus further said that they had heard the words of consecration for the Eucharist said by Templar chaplains, while others also affirmed that this was done. William of Biblio, a priest in Nicosia, for example, testified that when he was a deacon he had assisted Templar priests in the celebration of masses and that they used to say the words of consecration.<sup>38</sup> Three priests questioned at Medina del Campo similarly stated that they had heard Templar chaplains doing so, as did John of Hoddington, rector of St Mary le Strand, who was questioned in London.<sup>39</sup>

Non-Templar priests both in Cyprus and the Iberian Peninsula affirmed that they had heard the confessions of Templars, and were of the opinion that the brothers who confessed were good Christians.<sup>40</sup> The only adverse comment relating to confessions made by an eye-witness was that of an English Franciscan, who claimed that when he heard the confession of the Templar Richard of Hales, the latter swore to tell the truth *salvo secreto ordinis Templi*; but the Franciscan did not make any further comment.<sup>41</sup> None reported heretical confessions. It could, of course, be argued that those hearing confessions could not easily admit during

<sup>35</sup> UT, 2: 155, 392; TTC, 57, 429.

<sup>36</sup> Sans i Travé, "L'Inedito processo," 262–263.

<sup>37</sup> PTBI, 1: 345–346.

<sup>38</sup> UT, 2: 383; TTC, 416; see also UT, 2: 379–380, 382, 389; TTC, 410–411, 414, 425.

<sup>39</sup> Sans i Travé, "L'Inedito processo," 261–263; PTBI, 1: 117.

<sup>40</sup> UT, 2: 381, 382; TTC, 412, 414; Sans i Travé, "L'Inedito processo," 262; PUT, 2: 374, 375 no. 157.

<sup>41</sup> PTBI, 1: 200.



the trial that they had earlier been told of errors but had taken no action. Certainly many Templars in France claimed that before proceedings had begun they had confessed the errors detailed in the list of accusations; but, although confessions may have taken place, it is very unlikely that they included comments on the wrongdoings of which Templars were later accused. Some parts of the supposed Templar confessions are unconvincing, and it would be very surprising if no priest had taken action on hearing about the denial of Christ and other matters, especially as some, including at least one patriarch of Jerusalem, were said to have heard more than one heretical confession.<sup>42</sup>

Yet not all eye-witness testimony was wholly favourable. Although outsiders did not participate in admission ceremonies, several commented on a change in the demeanour of a recruit after he had been received into the Order. Guiscard of Marziacho told papal commissioners in Paris that a kinsman called Hugh of Marchant had appeared *valde palidus, et quasi turbatus et stupefactus* after taking his vows, and a Franciscan testified at Lleida that another recruit was afterwards *totus pallidus et stupefactus*.<sup>43</sup> None of the postulants was said to have explained precisely the reason for their distress. Guiscard said that at the time he attributed the change to the hardships (*austeritates*) imposed on brothers; he had changed his mind only after he had heard of the accusations against the Order. The Franciscan commented merely that in consequence many suspected evil, but he did not offer an opinion himself. In the light of the later accusations against the Templars, such witnesses may well have been led to exaggerate the despair displayed by recruits. Any change in demeanour may have been related to the fact that in some cases the decision to enter the Order was made by parents and not the recruit;<sup>44</sup> and the lack of a novitiate<sup>45</sup> meant that a postulant had to commit himself immediately for life. In Scotland the witness Fergus Marescal further stated that his grandfather was cheerful and well when entering the Order but had died three days later. Yet

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<sup>42</sup> Alan Forey, "Could Alleged Templar Malpractices have remained undetected for Decades?," in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307–1314)*, ed. Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 15–18.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 183–186; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 263–266; PUT, 2: 374 no. 157; see also *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 454–455; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 533–534.

<sup>44</sup> One of the brothers mentioned in this context was reported to have said that his parents had made him a Templar: *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 457; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 536.

<sup>45</sup> Alan Forey, "Novitiate and Instruction in the Military Orders in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Speculum* 61 (1986): 5.

it was made clear that it was only recently that he had come to believe that his grandfather's death was occasioned by a refusal to participate in the wrongdoings demanded of him; and it has been pointed out that the grandfather was presumably already elderly at the time of his reception.<sup>46</sup> Some witnesses were clearly re-interpreting their earlier understanding of events in the light of the accusations against the Order.

There were further reports by eyewitnesses which at first sight appear to throw the beliefs of some Templars into question. An English Franciscan stated that the Templar provincial master Brian le Jay had said that *pagani ita bene crediderunt sicut xpiani*.<sup>47</sup> What the Templar may have been implying is that Muslims worshipped as devoutly as Christians. Certainly some westerners travelling in Islamic lands commented favourably on Muslims' conduct in religious matters: in the later 13th century, for example, Ricoldo of Monte-Croce noted Muslims' devotion in prayer, their generous almsgiving, and their respect for the name of God.<sup>48</sup> An English Dominican further claimed that at Dijon a Templar had asked him if he thought the sacrament was true; but the Templar's colleague then explained that this was a joke, and the friar appears to have accepted this.<sup>49</sup> Another English witness asserted that he had heard a Templar belonging to the convent of Duxford making the more specific claim after a funeral that *nullus homo post mortem habet animam plus quam canis*,<sup>50</sup> and a Dominican in Ireland maintained that he had heard the Templar William of Warenne asserting that Christ was the son of a whore.<sup>51</sup> It is not known how accurate these reports were, although it may be noted that the claim about the soul is also found in accusations against others accused of heresy and that the comment made about William of Warenne was also voiced in another heresy trial in Ireland.<sup>52</sup> In some instances the witness would

<sup>46</sup> PTBI, 1: 187, 345–346, 381, 399, 415, 429; PTBI, 2: 393 footnote 73.

<sup>47</sup> PTBI, 1: 186, 381.

<sup>48</sup> Ricoldo of Monte-Croce, *Pèrgrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient*, ed. René Kappler (Paris: H. Champion, 1997), 160–164; see also Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'oriente francescano*, 1st series, vol. 4 (Quaracchi: Tipografia del Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1923), 451; Darió Cabanelas, "Un franciscano heterodoxo en la Granada nasri, Fray Alfonso de Mella," *Al-Andalus* 15 (1950): 249–250.

<sup>49</sup> PTBI, 1: 387, 420.

<sup>50</sup> PTBI, 1: 194, 382, 416.

<sup>51</sup> PTBI, 1: 334.

<sup>52</sup> *Jacobi Grace Kilkeniensis Annales Hiberniae*, ed. and trans. Richard Butler (Dublin: Irish Archaeological Society, 1842), 106; *Il Registro di Andrea Sapiti, procuratore alla curia avignonese*, ed. Barbara Bombi (Rome: Viella, 2007), 104; PTBI, 2: 374 footnote 50; Callan, *The Templars, the Witch*, 204.

have needed to remember words spoken many years earlier, and it is also difficult to assess comments allegedly made by Templars without knowing the brothers' intentions and the tone in which statements were made. In England John of Eure, sheriff of York, further stated that on one occasion he had invited the commander of Westerdale, William of the Fenne, to a meal and that the Templar had shown him a book, which the sheriff passed to his wife: she found in it a document which asserted that Christ was a false prophet and not the son of God. The sheriff then looked at it, and asked the commander about it: he was told that the man who had composed the document was a rascal. John further claimed that he had mentioned all this to the lords inquisitor in the presence of the Templar, who had said that he was illiterate and did not know what was in the book.<sup>53</sup> The wording of the document echoes closely that of the articles of accusation, and the narrative also prompts other grounds for doubt. It is not apparent why the commander should have handed the book to the sheriff. It further implies that the sheriff's wife, as well as the sheriff, could read the document, in whatever language it was written. Most importantly, it is not clear when the alleged meeting with the inquisitors took place, and nothing survives about their questioning of William of the Fenne on this point: in his testimony, given at York, he denied all the main charges.<sup>54</sup> These various comments and reports, some of them not directly related to the articles of accusation, can certainly not be taken to indicate views widely held by brothers.

The accusation about the worship of idols prompted comments by a few eye-witnesses, but their observations carry no weight. A notary called Nicholas of Hynton stated that he had seen a head when visiting the Templars in London, but he did not go so far as to suggest it was an idol.<sup>55</sup> In Aragon Bartholomew Tarín, *sobrejuntero* of Zaragoza, related that there had been two wooden statues in the church of San Pedro at Castellote – he had presumably seen these – and that the Templars had removed them to the castle there when proceedings against the Order began; but the local commander had explained that they had been made in memory of two brothers who had died. Bartholomew also alluded to a head sculpted on the south wall of the castle of Horta, but he made no further comment about it.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> PTBI, I: 183, 380–381, 415.

<sup>54</sup> PTBI, I: 262–263.

<sup>55</sup> PTBI, I: 191.

<sup>56</sup> AC, Codex 149A (“Interrogations conducted at Zaragoza, 1309–1310”), fols. 57v–58r. Little now remains of the castle of Horta: Joan Fuguet Sans, *L'Arquitectura dels Templers a Catalunya* (Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1995), 129.

A London notary, Robert the Dorturer, claimed that the English provincial master Guy of Foresta had sought to have homosexual relations with him.<sup>57</sup> This assertion could have been true: during the trial several Templars themselves admitted that they had engaged in homosexual activity.<sup>58</sup> But the accusation against the Order was that it allowed and encouraged homosexuality.<sup>59</sup> In fact Templar regulations not only condemn it but also give examples of brothers' being punished for the offence.<sup>60</sup>

On the question about gaining wealth by any means, a few giving first-hand evidence referred to occasions when there had been altercations with the Templars about property.<sup>61</sup> Yet all religious foundations were involved at times in disputes of this kind, which could prompt accusations of greed. They do not substantiate the claim that brothers were bound to use any means to obtain profit. Templar regulations in fact required recruits to promise that they would never consent to Christians' being wrongfully deprived of their possessions.<sup>62</sup>

Many of those who had first-hand experience of Templar activities thus expressed strong support for the Order, while those who raised concerns were often doing so on the basis of isolated incidents or alleged comments; and the views of some were influenced by their knowledge of the accusations later made against the Order. When particular claims at first hand are being assessed it should also be remembered that memory not only fades over time but can be fallible and unreliable: unreal memories can be recalled, sometimes under the influence of later events.

The majority of non-Templars who gave evidence were, however, not eyewitnesses but relied on second-hand reports or hearsay. Some of these commented on the issues which had occasioned critical comment by those with first-hand experience. There were further tales of a marked change in the demeanour of recruits

<sup>57</sup> PTBI, 1: 114, 185, 393, 425.

<sup>58</sup> *Le Procès*, vol. 2, ed. Michelet, 286; *Le Procès*, ed. Sève and Chagny-Sève, 148, 215.

<sup>59</sup> PTBI, 1: 13; *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 91–92; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 164–165.

<sup>60</sup> *La Règle du Temple*, ed. Henri de Curzon (Paris: Renouard, 1886), 229 clause 418, 297–298 clauses 572–573; *Il Corpus normativo templare: Edizione dei testi romanzi con traduzione e commento in italiano*, ed. and trans. Giovanni Amatuuccio (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 2009), 214 clause 116, 306 clauses 24–25; cf. Anne Gilmour-Bryson, "Sodomy and the Knights Templar," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7 (1996): 151–183.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, TTC, 415; UT, 2: 383; PTBI, 1: 114, 343.

<sup>62</sup> *La Règle*, ed. Curzon, 345 clause 676; *Il Corpus normativo*, ed. and trans. Amatuuccio, 386 clause 7.

after the reception ceremony.<sup>63</sup> A Dominican in England further stated that he had been told by a Cistercian monk that the commander of Temple Bruer had said *nos moriemur sicut alie bestie*,<sup>64</sup> while a laymen who testified at Zaragoza gave a second-hand report that when two Dominicans had been involved in a long discussion about the soul at the Templar castle of Castellote, the Templar provincial master, Berenguer of Cardona, had exclaimed: *Disputastis satis de anima. Tamen quando homo mortuus est non restat anima nec aliquid*.<sup>65</sup> The comment – whatever the exact words spoken – appears to have been prompted partly by boredom. Several testimonies contained second-hand reports or rumours that outsiders had been propositioned by Templars;<sup>66</sup> one witness further suggested a more general practice of sodomy amongst Templars, but provided no support for this claim.<sup>67</sup> Some of those questioned stated that they had heard rumours that recruits promised to increase the Order's wealth by any means, but the only one who tried to substantiate a more general policy was a regular canon at Lleida, who claimed that when the commander of Ascó asked the provincial master Berenguer of Cardona to return certain tithes and *primicias* at Ascó which had been unjustly acquired, the latter answered that he could not hand them back because *qualitercumque iuste vel iniuste aliqua bona ordini Templi fuerint acquisita, nos non debemus nec possumus ea restituere*.<sup>68</sup> Yet it is unlikely that the witness would have been able at second-hand to reproduce the provincial master's precise words.

Some giving non-eyewitness reports also provided detailed information about idols. The most precise statement was made by a English Franciscan, John of Donington, who said that he been told by a former Templar that the Order had four main idols in England – in London, Bisham, Temple Bruer and the other further north. If the Templar had in fact made a comment, he was probably referring to relics, which were glossed by the witness as idols.<sup>69</sup> John Welby of Bust, who had gained his information from John of Donington, mentioned three idols, while

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<sup>63</sup> Fita, *Actas*, 98; Aurea L. Javierre Mur, "Aportación al estudio del proceso contra el Temple en Castilla," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 69 (1961): 99; Antonio Benavides, *Memorias del rey D. Fernando IV de Castilla*, vol. 1 (Madrid: José Rodríguez, 1860), 636; PTBI, 1: 197; *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 457; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 535–536.

<sup>64</sup> PTBI, 1: 193, 381, 416.

<sup>65</sup> AC, Codex 149A ("Interrogations conducted at Zaragoza, 1309–1310"), fols. 57v–58r.

<sup>66</sup> PTBI, 1: 193, 194, 394, 425–426.

<sup>67</sup> PTBI, 1: 203; see also PTBI, 1: 337.

<sup>68</sup> PUT, 2: 376 no. 157.

<sup>69</sup> No idols were discovered in Templar houses even in France, where the Templars had no warning of Philip IV's planned arrests.

a summary of evidence given in the British Isles not only mentions three heads but also states that the provincial master, William of More, brought three idols from overseas, although John of Donington's testimony affirms merely that he brought statues.<sup>70</sup> These sources provide an illustration of the way in which information could be distorted in the process of transmission. A stone at Sandford which was said to be worshipped in another English testimony was probably a reliquary: an inventory taken after the arrest of brothers by the sheriff of Oxford mentions a reliquary there.<sup>71</sup> The venerating of a calf was mentioned at second-hand by two witnesses in Yorkshire; but it has been pointed out that some westerners thought that Muslims worshipped a calf, and this could be the origin of these statements.<sup>72</sup> Almost all the comments about idols were made in the British Isles, but the Dominican prior of Lleida reported that the royal bailiff of Tarragona had seen a Templar wearing a belt with a bearded silver head attached and had therefore assumed that the Templars worshipped idols.<sup>73</sup>

Some of these testimonies also purported to have detailed information on matters not covered by eyewitnesses, such as admission ceremonies and the conduct of chapters. Roderick Rodríguez, a witness at Medina del Campo, asserted that the Castilian king Alfonso X had wanted to find out about the Templars' secret receptions and had therefore persuaded a young man to enter the Order for a year; at the end of that period the recruit was with difficulty persuaded to reveal to the king that he had been forced to deny Christ and spit on the cross.<sup>74</sup> Roderick stated that he had heard this said after proceedings against the Order had begun, nearly a quarter of a century after Alfonso X's death. The notion that a brother could leave at will after a year is contrary to Templar regulations, and if the tale were to be accepted, it would have to be believed that the king, although apparently anxious to discover the truth, had taken no action when he was enlightened. A parish priest in Yorkshire claimed that an Augustinian had told him that he had heard the confession of the Templar Patrick of Ripon and that the latter had

<sup>70</sup> PTBI, 1: 204, 206, 398, 428.

<sup>71</sup> PTBI, 1: 197–198, 397, 428; PTBI, 2: xxxv, 215 footnote 173.

<sup>72</sup> PTBI, 1: 183–184, 391, 395–396, 427; PTBI, 2: 189 footnote 23, where it is also suggested there that a clerk read *catellum* (cattle) for *catum*, as the Templars were accused of worshipping a cat; but the word used was *vitulus*, and *catellus* was normally used to describe a puppy or kitten, not cattle as is suggested.

<sup>73</sup> PUT, 2: 372 no. 157. On the wearing of belts by members of religious orders, see Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 91, 184–185.

<sup>74</sup> Fita, *Actas*, 98; Javierre Mur, "Aportación," 99; Benavides, *Memorias*, 1: 636–637.

stated that when he entered the Order he had to deny Christ and insult and spit on the cross.<sup>75</sup> This account presupposes that the Augustinian was happy to reveal all the details of a confession – including the name of the Templar – to a local priest, while apparently not informing his superiors of evidence of heresy; and the reported conversation was said to have taken place after the arrest of the Templars. A further English account given by Agnes Louekete, and repeated by a London Franciscan, claims that a youth concealed himself in the building where a Templar chapter was being held at Dinsley and saw a cross being placed on the backside of a black idol; the provincial master and others, including new recruits, spat on the cross, although one who refused was thrown into a well.<sup>76</sup> Agnes asserted that she had heard this tale when the youth had spoken to her husband, who was proposing to enter the Temple: the latter nevertheless persisted with his plan, only then to tell the Templars that he did not want to spit on the cross or kiss the backside of an idol. This last part of the account hardly carries conviction, and it has been pointed out that many of the elements in the report are commonly found in accusations made against heretics.<sup>77</sup> A Dominican also provided a hearsay report that two men in the service of a Templar had made holes in a roof, on to which they had climbed, and saw the brother refusing to deny Christ: this was said to have happened, however, three years after he had entered the Order.<sup>78</sup> An English Franciscan reported that the son of a Templar had looked through a partition during an admission ceremony and that a recruit had been killed when he refused to deny Christ.<sup>79</sup> Yet it is only in second-hand accounts that these claims, which have certain similarities, are found.

The denial of Christ was further mentioned by an English witness who claimed that a Templar had been heard bewailing in a meadow that he had had to deny Christ: in one version a number of a people were said to have been close enough to hear the words, although the Templar was seemingly unaware of their presence.<sup>80</sup> Another witness in England maintained that recruits who refused to deny Christ were sent overseas to be killed.<sup>81</sup> It is not stated when this claim was made: it could

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<sup>75</sup> PTBI, 1: 183–184, 380, 383.

<sup>76</sup> PTBI, 1: 202–204, 386, 400–401, 419.

<sup>77</sup> PTBI, 2: 222 footnote 217.

<sup>78</sup> PTBI, 1: 382, 416.

<sup>79</sup> PTBI, 1: 185, 400, 415, 429–430.

<sup>80</sup> PTBI, 1: 185, 200, 415. In one version of this testimony, however, those working in the field were said to be asleep.

<sup>81</sup> PTBI, 1: 194.

easily have been an idea which emerged after the accusations against the Templars became known.

Rumours of kissing on the anus appear to have been in circulation for many years. In Paris Guiscard of Marziacho testified in 1310 that he had been aware of them forty years earlier and had heard them in Aragon and Apulia as well as in France.<sup>82</sup> Adam of Henton, a Franciscan in Scotland, said that, when he was young, boys used to shout: *Custodiatis vos ab osculo Templariorum*.<sup>83</sup> These rumours appear however, not to have been taken seriously before proceedings began. A secular priest testifying in Lleida said that *alique persone leves dicebant, suspicando aliquotiens et aliquotiens truffando, quod osculabantur se in ano*, and a Franciscan stated that when a relation was about to enter the Temple members of his family *trufando et ridendo* had said that he would have to kiss the Templar receiving him on the anus.<sup>84</sup> Despite what he had allegedly heard, Guiscard of Marziacho helped two recruits to gain entrance to the Temple, and Adam of Henton admitted that he had not taken the cries seriously until the time of the trial.

There were also rumours that Templars had shown disrespect to the cross not only at admission ceremonies. A witness at Medina del Campo said that he had often heard that *in vituperium crucis* Templars had a cross on their stirrups – a variation on the claim of trampling on the cross.<sup>85</sup> Several witnesses in England produced varying accounts of a different rumour. Some said merely that they had heard that a Templar had a cross on the rear of his underpants, or had a cross hanging against his anus.<sup>86</sup> Other versions were that when a certain Templar died, his sister found a cross on his underpants – in one version it was of black silk – or a cross hanging against his anus.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, a Dominican had heard that after a Templar had left a house in York where he had been staying with other brothers, the woman who owned the house found his pants in a latrine and saw that they had a cross affixed at the rear.<sup>88</sup> These tales, all based on hearsay and containing several implausibilities, were presumably variations on a single rumour, which had evolved as it circulated.

<sup>82</sup> *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 183; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 263.

<sup>83</sup> PTBI, 1: 187, 343, 391, 423.

<sup>84</sup> PUT, 2: 375 no. 157; *Le Procès*, vol. 1, ed. Michelet, 454; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 533.

<sup>85</sup> Fita, *Actas*, 97; Benavides, *Memorias*, 1: 636.

<sup>86</sup> PTBI, 1: 194, 383, 384, 417.

<sup>87</sup> PTBI, 1: 196, 384, 385, 417–418, 419.

<sup>88</sup> PTBI, 1: 384–385, 418.



It is noticeable that most of the explicit evidence about the accusations made against the Order is to be found in the testimonies which are based on second-hand information or hearsay, although some witnesses were merely reporting what they had heard and did not themselves seek to condemn the Templars. It might be expected that if the claims had been accurate, some of them would have been reported at first hand, even allowing for the death of some individuals who had been the original source of the alleged information. It seems in fact that the testimonies of this kind were not based on hard evidence: at this, as at other, times, rumours which had no factual foundation frequently circulated. A comment made by Walter of Coventry about the hermit Peter of Wakefield, who had prophesied that the English King John would be deposed, gives an impression of the way in which false rumours very quickly multiplied: *quotidie, ut est mos vulgi, mendacia mendaciis addebantur, quotidie ei nova imponebantur, et unusquisque de corde suo mendacium proferens, hoc Petrum dixisse asserbat.*<sup>89</sup> It is not easy to trace the emergence of rumours, but some assertions about the Templars may have started as speculation or a suggestion or a joke or a question, and then became elaborated and distorted in retelling. Details might be added to make a story more impressive or to achieve some notoriety for the teller. The emergence of unfounded assertions about the Templars was also no doubt encouraged by a widespread awareness of the nature of the accusations made against the Order, many of which had already been voiced against suspected heretics; and there was ample time for false claims to be elaborated. At least two years had elapsed between the arrest of the Templars in France and the giving of evidence by non-Templars, and by that time many had also heard of the confessions made by brothers in France. It should also be remembered that in the early 14th century the dissemination of factual information through official channels was difficult, and this provided an opportunity for rumour and hearsay to flourish: from 1307 onwards the attack on the Templars was no doubt a frequent topic of conversation and comment.

In addition to reporting supposed incidents and happenings, non-Templar witnesses also made assumptions about issues besides the changing demeanour of postulants. The secrecy of admissions was very widely mentioned, although some said that it was for honourable reasons,<sup>90</sup> while many merely alluded to the practice without further comment: most of the witnesses in Cyprus fall into this category. A few said that their suspicions had been aroused only after proceedings against

<sup>89</sup> *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria*, vol. 2, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series 58 (London: Longman, 1873), 208.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, PTBI, 1: 113, 114, 116.

the Order had begun,<sup>91</sup> but others expressed more long-term concerns relating to secrecy, especially in Scotland.<sup>92</sup> Yet discussion of the secrecy of admissions could provide no more than suspicion of wrongdoing, and the Temple was by no means unique in placing bans on revealing capitular proceedings. A clause in the *Gesetze* of the Teutonic Order was based on clause 225 of Templar regulations, which penalised Templars who made known what had taken place during chapters,<sup>93</sup> while in the Hospital prohibitions were included in statutes issued in 1270 as well as in that order's *esgarts*.<sup>94</sup> There were also some witnesses who argued that, as Templars in France had confessed to wrongdoing, and as the same regulations applied to Templars everywhere, brothers in other countries must therefore be guilty. This approach is particularly evident in testimonies given in Ireland,<sup>95</sup> where many for this reason concluded that the Templars were guilty.

The evidence provided by non-Templars, like that of the brothers themselves, does not present a convincing case against the Templars, and some of those who testified may have had reasons, not related to what they knew about the articles of accusation, for hostility to the Order. There is a noticeable contrast between the testimonies given in Cyprus, which were almost entirely supportive of the Temple, and those in some western kingdoms, especially the British Isles, where the Templars were more commonly criticised and condemned. Cyprus residents valued the Templars for their contribution to the defence of the Holy Land. Some witnesses on the island alluded to the brothers' shedding their blood in defence of the faith, and it was also recalled that Templars held in Muslim captivity had, despite threats, refused to convert to Islam.<sup>96</sup> In most parts of the West, however, the Templars had no military function and were often seen as wealthy landowners and were increasingly thought to be not making good use of their resources, while others residing in the West, especially the clergy, were being taxed to finance proposed crusades. At the Council of Lyon in 1274, when the clergy were required to give a tenth for

<sup>91</sup> PUT, 2: 374 no. 157; PTBI, 1: 200.

<sup>92</sup> For the Scottish testimonies, see PTBI, 1: 342–347.

<sup>93</sup> *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1890), 83 clause 38 (3); *La Règle*, ed. Curzon, 153 clause 225; *Il Corpus normativo*, ed. and trans. Amatuccio, 128 clause 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, vol. 2, ed. Joseph Delaville Le Roulx (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1897), 536–561 no. 2213 clauses 75, 82; *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, vol. 3, ed. Joseph Delaville Le Roulx (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), 225–229 no. 3396 clause 24; see also G. R. Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216 to 1360* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), 239.

<sup>95</sup> For Irish testimonies, see PTBI, 1: 329–337.

<sup>96</sup> UT, 2: 55, 157, 160–161, 162, 387–388, 394; TTC, 58, 61, 67–68, 71, 422–423, 432.

six years, the dean of Lincoln maintained the military orders' possessions would be sufficient to provide for the defence of the Holy Land if proper use were made of them: he claimed that this was a widely held opinion.<sup>97</sup> Certainly, at several provincial councils held after the fall of Acre it was recommended that the assets of the military orders should be evaluated in order to discover how many knights they could maintain, and that they should be required to keep that number in the East.<sup>98</sup> In this situation there was no doubt a greater readiness in parts of western Europe to criticise the Templars.

Past conflicts with the Templars may also have inclined some to think the worst of them. An English brother of the order of St Thomas of Acre, who voiced criticisms of the Templars, alluded to the harm which the Temple was alleged to have done to his order, although he maintained that he was not speaking out of hatred: his evidence, however, contained nothing of substance.<sup>99</sup> Yet by no means all those who had earlier had confrontations with the Order spoke out against it during the trial. The episcopate had commonly been involved in conflicts with Templars about the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Order, which reduced episcopal authority and income.<sup>100</sup> Many bishops had, of course, a role in conducting proceedings against the Templars, but the few who were questioned, such as those of Beirut and Segni, were not critical of the Order.<sup>101</sup> It has also been pointed out that in Cyprus royalist nobles, who might have been expected to take the opportunity to criticise the Templars, did not testify against them.<sup>102</sup> The Hospitallers were also often regarded as bitter rivals of the Templars, and there had certainly been disputes between them, even if the degree of hostility was exaggerated by contempo-

<sup>97</sup> *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents relating to the English Church*, vol. 2, ed. Frederick M. Powicke and Christopher R. Cheney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 815.

<sup>98</sup> *Councils and Synods*, vol. 2, ed. Powicke and Cheney, 1113; Bartholomew Cotton, *Historia anglicana*, ed. Henry R. Luard, Rolls Series 16 (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1859), 208–209, 215.

<sup>99</sup> PTBI, 1: 193. On the relations between the Templars and St Thomas of Acre, see Alan Forey, "The Military Order of St. Thomas of Acre," *English Historical Review* 92 (1977): 494–495.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Alan Forey, *The Templars in the Corona de Aragón* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), cap. 5; Damien Carraz, "Églises et cimetières des ordres militaires: Contrôle des lieux sacrés et *dominium* ecclésiastique en Provence," in *Lieux sacrés et espace ecclésiastial (IX<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 46 (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 2011), 277–312; Jochen Schenk, "Aspects and Problems of the Templars' Religious Presence from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century," *Traditio* 71 (2016): 279–281, 286–293.

<sup>101</sup> UT, 2: 378–379; TTC, 409; TTPS, 242–243. Most prelates at the Council of Vienne were in favour of allowing a defence for the Templars.

<sup>102</sup> Gilmour-Bryson, "Testimony of Non-Templar Witnesses," 206; Edbury, "Suppression," 36–37.

riaries. Yet the Hospitallers are almost entirely absent from records of the proceedings. Simon of Sarezaris, the Hospitaller prior in Nicosia, reported unfavourable comments which he had heard, but he did not offer any opinion about them.<sup>103</sup>

The stance adopted by friars, who provided a considerable proportion of non-Templar witnesses, also needs to be considered, as it has been argued, on the basis of the proceedings in the British Isles, that it was in the interests of the mendicant orders – Franciscans, Dominicans, and Carmelites – to criticise the Temple.<sup>104</sup> It has been pointed out that many friars had in the past heard Templar confessions and that they would have been under suspicion for not reporting alleged wrongdoings, or taking action about errors. In the British Isles, however, the Templars – with three late exceptions – denied all the main accusations and none had said that he had in the past made a confession to a friar about the alleged wrongdoings. Even if friars in England were aware of the claims of confessions made by some Templars in France and even if these were a matter of concern, a guilty verdict against the Templars would not have resolved the issue. The problem would have disappeared only if the Templars had been found innocent and the accuracy of their testimonies about confessions rejected on the grounds that these had been obtained by torture or the threat of torture and were untrue. Nor, of course, were the friars the only clergy who were said to have heard Templar confessions of wrongdoing.

It has further been claimed that orders of friars had their own problems and that attention would be diverted from these by criticising the Temple. But the evidence is not always convincing. In the 13th century attempts were certainly being made to check the proliferation of new orders: in 1274 the Carmelites were allowed to continue only *donec de ipsis aliter fuerit ordinatum*.<sup>105</sup> Their anxiety about their future certainly led them in the next decade to seek help in trying to persuade the papacy to favour them.<sup>106</sup> Yet, although they were not granted the privilege of exemption until 1317 and it was not until 1326 that they were assigned the rights enjoyed by Franciscans and Dominicans regarding preaching and confession, their concerns about their future existence had been assuaged in 1297, when Boniface VIII decreed in the bull *Tenorem cuiusdam* that, as the foundation of their institu-

<sup>103</sup> UT, 2: 398–400; TTC, 439–441.

<sup>104</sup> PTBI, 2: xxxvi–xxxviii; Nicholson, *Knights Templar on Trial*, 118–120; ead., “The Trial of the Templars in Britain and Ireland,” in *The Templars: Rise, Fall*, 225–226.

<sup>105</sup> *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta*, vol. 2, no. 1, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 356–357.

<sup>106</sup> *Foedera, conventiones, litterae et cuiuscumque acta publica*, vol. 1, no. 2, ed. Thomas Rymer (London: Eyre and Strahan, 1816), 618; *Medieval Carmelite Heritage: Early Reflections on the Nature of the Order*, ed. Adrian Staring (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1989), 44–48.

tion had taken place before the 1215 Lateran Council, they should remain *in solido statu*.<sup>107</sup> The main evidence offered about the Dominicans is a report of divisions in the English province in 1314, two years after the dissolution of the Temple, but it is not clear when problems began.<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, the Franciscans were certainly experiencing difficulties on the issue of poverty.<sup>109</sup> Yet, although it may be argued that the Franciscans could have been seeking to divert attention from their own difficulties, it could equally be maintained that the destruction of one religious order could set a precedent and might lead to the demise of others. When towards the end of 1311 the abbot of Morimond, the mother house of the order of Calatrava, urged brothers of that order to undertake reforms, he alluded to what was happening to the Templars and expressed the hope that the Spanish order would not suffer the same fate.<sup>110</sup> It has also been suggested that the Templar trial may have been one of the reasons for the transfer of the Teutonic Order's headquarters from Venice to Marienburg.<sup>111</sup>

Nor was the stance adopted by friars in the British Isles mirrored by that of their colleagues in other countries. In the surviving proceedings no Carmelites in other countries testified. In Cyprus the Dominican prior of Nicosia praised the charitable activities of the Templars and knew nothing against the Templars except what had been reported from the West since the beginning of the trial, and a similar response was made by his colleague Nicholas of Marsilia.<sup>112</sup> At Velletri four Franciscans stated that they had no information which could be of any help to the inquisitors.<sup>113</sup> At Lleida, three Dominicans reported isolated incidents which

<sup>107</sup> *Bullarium Carmelitanum*, vol. 1, ed. Eliseo Monsignani (Rome: Typographia Georgii Plachi, 1715), 48–49.

<sup>108</sup> A. G. Little, "A Record of the English Dominicans, 1314," *English Historical Review* 5 (1890): 107–112; 6 (1891): 752–753. Attention has also been drawn to the condemnation of the views of two Dominicans in the early 14th century; but in one case this happened in 1314, after the abolition of the Temple, and the censuring of the other in 1305/1306 was unlikely to endanger the future of his whole order: see William J. Courtenay, "Inquiry and Inquisition: Academic Freedom in Medieval Universities," *Church History* 58 (1989): 175, 177.

<sup>109</sup> Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, 2nd ed.), cap. 11; Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 119–129.

<sup>110</sup> Letter from the abbot of Morimond to the brothers of Calatrava, 7 October 1311, Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Órdenes Militares, Libro 1349, fol. 77r.

<sup>111</sup> Arno Mentzel-Reuters, *Arma spiritualia: Bibliotheken, Bücher und Bildung im Deutschen Orden* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 30; Klaus Militzer, "The Templar Trial and the Teutonic Order," in *The Templars: Rise, Fall*, 258–259.

<sup>112</sup> UT, 2: 397–398; TTC, 437–439.

<sup>113</sup> TTPS, 239–241.

were regarded as suspicious, but the warden of the Franciscans there said that he did not believe that the Templars were guilty of the main charges and that when hearing their confessions he had concluded that they were good Christians: the only adverse comment he made was on the secrecy of their chapters. His colleague Peter Mir also mentioned secrecy and commented that a Templar recruit looked pale and distraught after his reception, but a third Franciscan testifying in Lleida said that he knew nothing but good about the Templars and asserted that they had confessed to him as good Christians and true Catholics.<sup>114</sup> A Dominican who testified in Paris stated that he thought some Templars were guilty, but that he had been present when some brothers had given evidence and had come to the conclusion that *major fides esset adhibenda negantibus quam confitentibus*.<sup>115</sup> Hostility to the Templars during the trial was not a widespread stance among Franciscans and Dominicans.<sup>116</sup> The criticisms voiced by friars in the British Isles echo opinions which were widely held there rather than those of their colleagues in other parts of western Christendom, especially the eastern Mediterranean and the Iberian peninsula, where until 1307 the Templars were still engaged in fighting against Islam.

The evidence provided by outsiders seems usually to have had little influence on the decisions taken at the end of the trial. Adverse comments made by non-Templars certainly feature strongly in the report sent to the papal *curia* about the interrogations in the British Isles, and in the report rumour and hearsay were readily accepted as evidence, while favourable testimony was ignored.<sup>117</sup> This is, however, the only surviving record of this kind, and it is not known what was included in submissions from other countries.<sup>118</sup> Yet in the bull *Vox in excelso*, in which

<sup>114</sup> PUT, 2: 372–375 no. 157.

<sup>115</sup> *Le Procès*, vol. 2, ed. Michelet, 195–196; *Processus contra Templarios*, vol. 1, ed. Satora, 888–889; English version in *The Templars*, ed. and trans. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 303–304.

<sup>116</sup> The suggestion has also been made that friars in Ireland who opposed the English government may have felt resentment towards the Templars who had served that government in Ireland: Helen J. Nicholson, “The Testimony of Brother Henry Danet and the Trial of the Templars in Ireland,” in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Kedar*, ed. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 423; but it has been objected that the friars were themselves associated with the English government: Callan, *The Templars, the Witch*, 67 footnote 131.

<sup>117</sup> UT, 2: 78–102; PTBI, 1: 379–409.

<sup>118</sup> For references to submissions from other parts of western Christendom, see Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Alan Forey, “*Vox in excelso* and the Suppression of the Knights Templar: The Bull, its History, and a New Edition,” *Mediaeval Studies* 80 (2018), 41–58 (English version in *The Templars*, ed. and trans. Barber and Bate, 309–318).

Clement V announced the dissolution of the Order in 1312, the pope not surprisingly focused on the admissions of guilt by brothers.<sup>119</sup> While Clement was passing judgement on the Order as a whole, decisions about individual Templars were left to provincial councils. Some of these assemblies also attached little importance to the criticisms made by non-Templar witnesses. Although at the Council of Salamanca in October 1310 the final decision about Templars was left to Clement V, this was done out of respect for the pope: the prelates there accepted the protestations of innocence by the Templars and stated that they could be absolved.<sup>120</sup> They ignored adverse criticisms by outsiders. At the Council of Tarragona in November 1312 it was stated that the Templars had not been proved guilty by their own confessions – they had all maintained their innocence even under torture<sup>121</sup> – *vel per depositiones testium super hoc productorum*: they were thought to be defamed by the confessions of the grand master and others in France, not by the comments of outsiders.<sup>122</sup> It is apparently only in England that non-Templar testimony may have been influential in determining the fate of brothers, and that public repute or *fama* may have been taken into consideration, as was allowed at that time.<sup>123</sup> In the closing stages of proceedings Templars in London not only admitted the charge that absolution had been given by brothers who were laymen but also accepted that they were so defamed regarding the accusations of heresy and other errors that they could not purge themselves of them. Those who were judged at York in July 1311 similarly admitted that they were too defamed to be able to clear

<sup>119</sup> Brown and Forey, “*Vox in excelsis*,” 41–58. Clement was also at that time acting under pressure from the French king; Barber, *Trial*, 2nd ed., 265–267.

<sup>120</sup> Fita, *Actas*, 65–66; Gonzalo Martínez Díez, *Los Templarios en la Corona de Castilla* (Burgos: Editorial La Olmeda, 1993), 241–242; Philippe Josserand, “Le Procès de l’ordre du Temple en Castille,” in *La Fin de l’ordre du Temple*, ed. Marie-Anna Chevalier (Paris: Geuthner, 2012), 149–150.

<sup>121</sup> Angelo Mercati, “Interrogatorio di Templari a Barcellona (1311),” *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens* 6 (1937): 240–251.

<sup>122</sup> ACA, Cancillería Real, Varia de Cancillería 412 (“Report of the proceedings of the Council of Tarragona, November 1312”), fol. 3v. Although some non-Templar witnesses in the Iberian Peninsula spoke in favour of the Templars, these were countered by the hostile comments voiced by others, and conciliar decisions were no doubt determined by brothers’ consistent denial of wrongdoing, even under torture.

<sup>123</sup> Paul Hyams, “Due Process versus the Maintenance of Order in European Law: The Contribution of the *ius commune*,” in *The Moral World of the Law*, ed. Peter Coss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 82; cf. Julien Théry, “Fama: L’opinion publique comme preuve judiciaire. Aperçu sur la révolution médiévale de l’inquisitoire (XII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles),” in *La preuve en justice de l’antiquité à nos jours*, ed. Bruno Lemesle (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 119–147.

themsevels.<sup>124</sup> Brothers in the British Isles were therefore subjected to penances, as well as being sent to live in religious houses.<sup>125</sup> A summary of evidence drawn up in England in the spring of 1311, like the report sent to the pope, certainly relies heavily on the testimonies of non-Templar witnesses.<sup>126</sup> Both of these documents were, of course, drawn up when the Templars in the British Isles were denying all the main charges against them,<sup>127</sup> and before three English brothers confessed to the leading accusations, probably under torture, towards the end of June 1311.<sup>128</sup> A later summary, based largely on the submission to the pope, does allude to the testimonies of these three Templars, but only very briefly and without emphasis.<sup>129</sup> Non-Templar testimonies may therefore have influenced the decisions taken in England. But this was the only country where non-Templar evidence may have been of significance in determining the fate of Templars.

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<sup>124</sup> *Councils and Synods*, vol. 2, ed. Powicke and Cheney, 1338–1339.

<sup>125</sup> On the penances imposed, see Alan Forey, “Ex-Templars in England,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002): 24–26.

<sup>126</sup> PTBI, 1: 181–207; see also PTBI, 2: xxvi, 186 footnote 1; Nicholson, “Trial of the Templars,” 226.

<sup>127</sup> Henry Danet reported a rumour that a commander of ‘Atlit forced recruits to deny Christ and claimed that some brothers from Portugal and Catalonia did not believe in the sacraments, but in the rest of his testimony, including his account of his own reception, he rejected the main accusations: PTBI, 1: 301–306; Nicholson, “The Testimony of Brother Henry Danet,” 411–423.

<sup>128</sup> PTBI, 1: 349–362; *Councils and Synods*, vol. 2, ed. Powicke and Cheney, 1308–1311.

<sup>129</sup> PTBI, 1: xxv–xxvi, 411–432; *Annales Londonienses*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, vol. 1, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series 76 (London: Longman, 1882), 180–198.



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