

The Last Templars and Their Piety in Fourteenth Century Cyprus

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Introduction

Why write on the Templars in Cyprus?

In the summer of 1310, in the city of Nicosia on the island of Cyprus the castle that once housed the order of the Knights Templars stood empty.¹ Cyprus had for many years been a home to the order of fighting monks. They had first come to the island as owners in 1191 after purchasing it from King Richard the Lionheart of England.² Their reign here had been short, though, as they quickly sold back the island in 1192, content to remain simply residents rather than rulers.³ Throughout the remaining years of the twelfth and most of the thirteenth century the order actively used Cyprus as a meeting point and outpost for crusading endeavors in Palestine and the rest of the Near East. Templar activity in Cyprus increased at the end of the thirteenth century, first, with the Templar backing of the governor Amaury of Lusignan's claim to the throne of Cyprus over his sick brother Henry II, then, in 1291 with the order's retreat to the island after the fall of Acre.⁴ Cyprus became the Templar main headquarters in the order's drive to rebuild its former power. In 1308, a letter came to Cyprus from the Pope Clement V proclaiming that the order was to be tried on charges of blasphemy, sodomy, heresy, and idol worship. The brothers of the order were arrested and in 1310 appeared before the inquisitors of Nicosia to stand trial.⁵ Templars throughout the rest of Europe had all been simultaneously arrested on Friday, October 13, 1307 on the explicit orders of King Philippe IV (called le Bel).

¹ The Knights Templars are referred to by several names: the Poor Fellow Soldiers, the Temple, the order of the Temple of Solomon, and the Templars.

² Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191 - 1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

³ Ibid., 10.

⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁵ It is not known whether the order was arrested in 1308 and held prisoner until 1310 or simply arrested early in 1310 after Henry II came back into power. It is clear, however, that when the order was arrested it was placed under a sort of loose house arrest. The brothers of the order in Cyprus were not imprisoned or tortured.

The trial in Cyprus would eventually become exceptional in the history of the Templar heresy trials in Europe.⁶ Despite hearing the news of the forced confessions given by the Templar grand master and visitor, in addition to the news of fifty-four Templars burned for recanting their confessions only two months prior, every Templar to testify in Cyprus answered the inquiries with a resounding denial of all the charges. While no Templar was burned in Cyprus, the news of the innocence of the Templars in the trial was too little, too late for the order as a whole. Only a year later the order was disbanded, the Templar property divided up, and the remaining knights joined the other military orders or found a new role in life.⁷

The order of the Knights Templar has long been a popular subject among medieval historians. The organization of fighting monks was an unusual break in the traditional interpretations of the division of medieval society into three orders or classes: the nobility, the clergy, and the peasantry.⁸ Extensive scholarship on the Knights Templar has revealed much about the history of the order. This history has in turn touched almost every facet of high medieval history. The Templars' structure and rule reflected the monasticism of the twelfth and thirteenth century, while their membership hailed almost entirely from, and practiced the values of, the knightly class. In addition, Templar history is intimately linked to ecclesiastical, economic, and crusading history in the twelfth, thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Despite the vast scope of Templar history, scholarship concerning the late history of the order has focused almost entirely on the trial of the Templars and the debate as to the guilt or innocence of the order. The foremost modern historian of the Knights Templar, Malcolm Barber, has

⁶ The most definitive work to date on the trial of the Templars as a whole is Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

⁷ After the dissolution of the order many Templars became members of their former rival order the Knights of the Hospital of Saint John (the Hospitallers). Piers Paul Read, *The Templars* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

⁸ Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980).

published many works on the organization of the order and on the trial but has been limited in terms of showing how the order actually functioned in its later years.⁹

In this paper I use evidence of the trial record to show how religious vocation functioned within the Knights Templar near the end of the order's existence.¹⁰ I offer the historiography of the debate on the guilt or innocence of the order without engaging in the debate through my own primary research. Instead, in the context of the order's imminent demise, I will focus on the religious portrayal of the Templars by trial record. The trial record from Cyprus is an ideal source for dealing with the religion of the Knights Templar for two reasons. First, the trial offers a potentially more reliable source of information on the order due to the absence of torture. In France, officials of King Philippe le Bel forced confessions through torturing the Templars and pre-arranging which witness gave testimony and which did not.¹¹ The presence of these factors makes it difficult to get a clear picture of the order from the French trial records as only certain Templars were allowed to testify and they retracted and restated their testimony several times.¹² Secondly, the trial record in Cyprus offers a unique look at the order through the testimony of the Templar and non-Templar witnesses that elaborate on the questions asked further to affirm Templar orthodoxy. In the short and long depositions of the trial, the scribes record that the members of the order give extensive testimony to many accusations. Many brothers make lengthy responses to questions on their initiation and accusations that they did not believe in the

⁹ For Barber's works on the Knights Templar see Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*.; Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).; Malcolm Barber, ed., *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick* (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994).; Malcolm Barber, *Crusaders and Heretics, 12th-14th Centuries* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1995).

¹⁰ The principle text that I will refer to is Anne Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus: A Complete English Edition*, trans. Anne Gilmour-Bryson, 17 vols., vol. 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1998). It is an English translation of the record from trial of the Templars held in Nicosia.

¹¹ The king's officials Guillaume de Plaisians and Guillaume de Nogaret both had access to the jailed Templars and likely were able to affect their testimony. Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 125.

¹² *Ibid.*, 124-27.

sacraments, give charity, or confess properly. These testimonies do little to change the outcome of the trial but offer insight into the daily life of the order.

The trial of the Knights Templar in Cyprus illustrates how the brothers of the Order practiced what they believed to be orthodox piety up to the final hours of the trial. I found that the non-Templars who testified showed that the order, while not always on good terms with the Cypriot nobility, remained a valued part of the religious community of the knightly class. As a valued part of this community, the Templars practiced proper piety through the taking of sacraments and outwardly manifested faith. The Templar testimony confirms this view in their evidence of charity. While the order of the Knights Templar was technically exempt from charity, many of the knights that testify tell of the different ways in which the order would give to the poor. They highlight many examples from almsgiving to the leaving of table-scraps. The everyday religious practices of the knights are also evident in their views of the order's purpose. Each of the knights tells of their reasons for joining the order at their initiation. In doing this they show a distinct militarily constructed outward piety that is focused on the ideal of crusade. Many of these knights state that they joined the Templars in order to retake Jerusalem. This view is most prevalent among the younger Templars who seem to see their piety as function of their ability to fight for their faith against an infidel. Yet whether young or old, all of the Templars are content to follow the Rule of the order and practice orthodox Catholicism. Nowhere is orthodoxy more acutely defined than in the sacraments, most specifically confession. The Templar insistence on access to frequent confession with ordained priests reinforces the medieval norms for a pious Christian. While this does not provide any new evidence to further the view that the Templars were entirely innocent of the charges brought against them; it does give insight into the daily lives and religiosity of the order. The brothers that testify in the record

have a genuine concern for proclaiming their piety and in doing so reveal to us the ways in which the early fourteenth century Templars practiced Christianity.

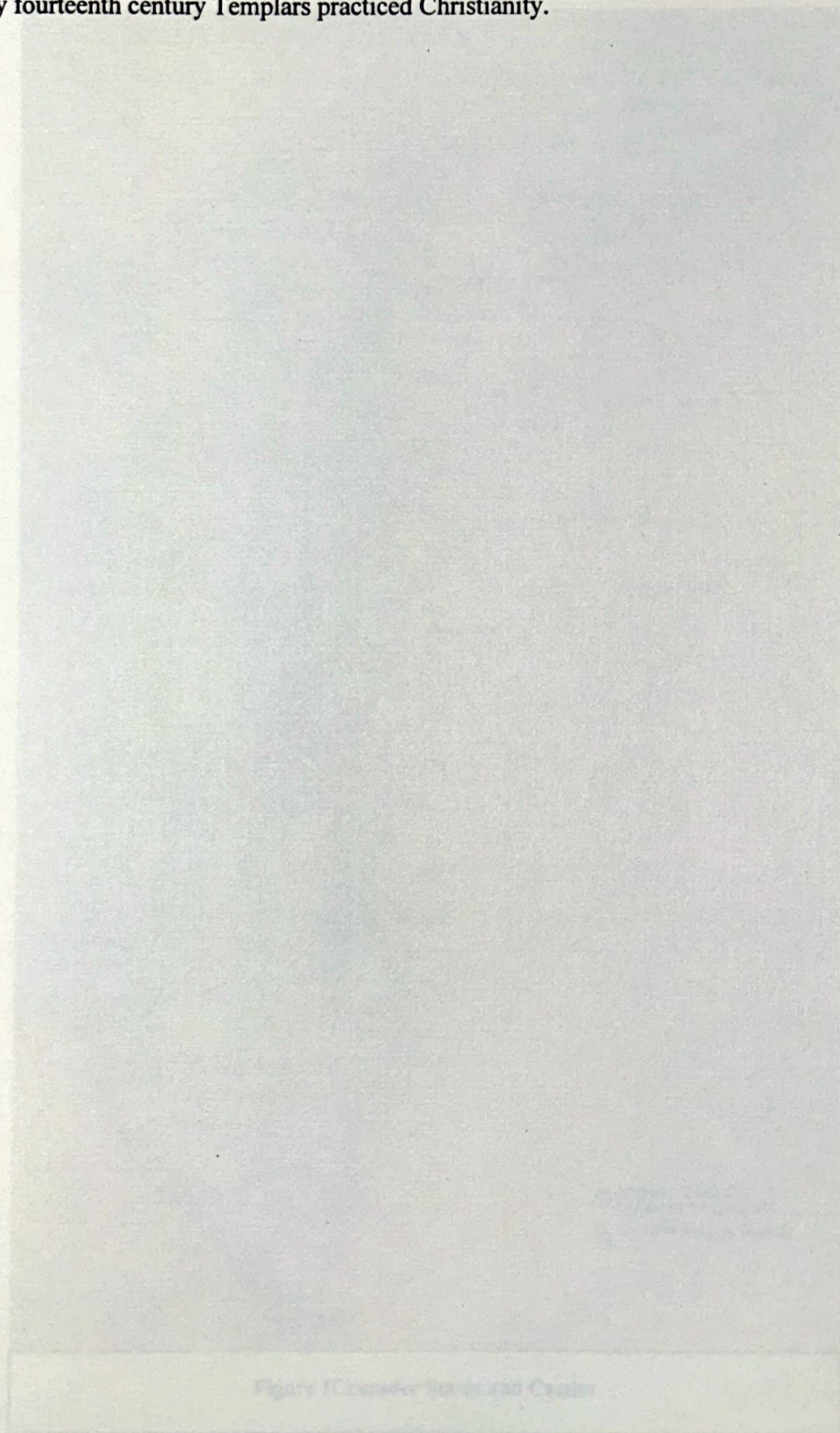




Figure 1 Crusader States and Castles

Background

The History of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ

A small group of nine knights returning to Outremer after the first crusade initially created the order of the Knights of the Temple of Solomon.¹³ Led by Hugh de Payns, the knights named "themselves the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ."¹⁴ Their purpose was to protect the European pilgrims on the roads in Palestine from Muslim bandits. With the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem following the first crusade, Frankish knights had succeeded in carving out a significant territory in the Near East.¹⁵ Protecting this territory, however, proved to be a more difficult task than attaining the land originally. The majority of the crusading knights returned home shortly after capturing Jerusalem. From the very beginning of the Kingdom's existence in 1099, a shortage of fighting men proved problematic for the defense of its territorial borders and its sparse European population.¹⁶ Hugh de Payns and his eight comrades took up the role of protecting the new territory and its pilgrim inhabitants.

The Templars were possibly established in 1119 as a confraternity; a kind of semi-religious, non-craft oriented guild that made similar vows to those of monks and lived accordingly pious lives. These groups were popular among young men of the laity who wanted to live a religious lifestyle in order to attain salvation. Hugh de Payns and his eight original brothers took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience in addition to a promise to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land.¹⁷ They took these vows inside the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem

¹³ The term Outremer refers to the crusader states in Palestine. This includes the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, the Principality of Antioch, and for a time the County of Edessa. (see figure 1) Read, *The Templars*.

¹⁴ Ibid., 91.

¹⁵ For a general history crusades see Thomas F. Madden, *A Concise History of the Crusades*, ed. Donald T. Critchlow, *Critical Issues in History* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999).; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁶ Read, *The Templars*, 88.

¹⁷ Ibid., 92.

from which the order would eventually take its name. The order grew slowly in this early period and was in danger of breaking apart in the early 1120's from the lack of new members. In 1121, Hugh, Count of Champagne, traveled to the Holy Land for a second and final time to join the order. A close friend of the renowned Cistercian theologian, Bernard de Clairvaux, Hugh solicited Bernard to help the order draw up a monastic rule.¹⁸ This rule was closely modeled after the Cistercian rule and provided specific prescriptions for daily diet and prayer. In 1128 Bernard once again aided the fledgling order by writing to the pope "In Praise of the New Knighthood."¹⁹ At the council of Troyes in 1129 the Templars became an official order of the Church.²⁰ Once a part of the Church, the order enjoyed monastic privileges such as the right to collect tithes and soon grew in size and power.

By 1139 the order had grown considerably and had taken on its full military purpose of commanders in the defense of Jerusalem. Pope Innocent II issued the bull *Omne datum* which "gave the order the autonomy which enabled it to act independently of the ecclesiastical and secular rulers in whose jurisdiction it operated."²¹ The order's ever expanding power combined with its new autonomy from the local elite allowed it to become a prominent political actor in the crusades. They expanded to hold lands all over Europe including fortifications along the frontiers of Christianity in Iberia and in Northeastern Germany where they enjoyed some of their greatest successes. In Palestine, the Templars acted as the vanguard for the crusading armies. As permanent residents of the area they had far greater experience in dealing with Muslim tactics than the new crusaders from Europe and the masters of the order were often consulted by the

¹⁸ J. M. Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, 14 vols., vol. 4, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Conrad Grennia, vol. Number Nineteen, *Cistercian Fathers Series* (Cistercian Publications, 1996).

²⁰ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

leaders of the crusade as to the best course on action.²² The military prominence of the Templars lasted throughout the crusades to 1291 when, at the siege of Acre, the castle of the Templars was the last building to fall.

In addition to military prowess, the order also gained considerable economic power as it grew. The ability to collect tithes allowed the Templars to make the most of their land holdings. By the late twelfth century the Templars owned land all over Europe and could control a considerable amount of wealth at any time. A perfect example of this wealth is the order's ability to buy Cyprus from Richard I of England. In addition to landholders, the Templars also became bankers for many European monarchs. They would loan or hold money for Kings and were even the treasury keepers of the King of France until 1307. This financial aspect of the order made them vulnerable to outside criticism. Philippe IV's belief that the Templars were usurers and his desire to obtain their resources contributed to the justification of the Templar arrests in 1307.

Templar history in Cyprus begins with Richard I's conquest of the island while en route to the third crusade. Prior to 1190 the population of Cyprus was primarily Greek. After Richard's take over, the island began to take on an important role as a crusader state. The nobility of the island became increasingly Latin and trade increased on the island, as it became an important seaport for the Italian maritime republics, Venice, Pisa and Genoa. In an attempt to gain money for his crusade, Richard sold the island promptly to the Templars. The Templars could not keep a large enough presence on the island to control it completely and sold it back to

²² The military advice did not always serve the Templars. In the crusade of King Louis IX of France in 1248, the Templars counseled the Count of Artois (King Louis' brother) to hold his force back from pursuing the fleeing Egyptians after a victory outside of Mansurah. The Count claimed that the Templar advice was meant only to prevent the Christian forces from victory and send his troops into the city. The Templars followed and all were massacred. Read, *The Templars*, 223.

Richard after less than a year. Richard resold the island to Guy of Lusignan who started the Lusignan dynasty that would rule Cyprus throughout the Middle Ages.

In 1291 Cyprus took on a much larger role in the crusading world and became a much more significant part of Templar history. Egyptian Muslim armies under the leadership of the Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil succeeded in capturing the last European lands in Palestine in the battle at Acre. The Templars, along with the other military orders and any remaining Latins in Outremer fled to Cyprus. Both the Templars and the Hospitallers re-established their main headquarters on the island.²³ They began heavily recruiting new members in an effort to support a new crusade. Severely weakened by the battle at Acre, the Templars had to rebuild the strength of the order. In 1305, the new grand master, Jacques de Molay, traveled to France to gain support. He would never return.

²³ The Hospitallers were the second of the military orders to emerge during the crusades. Originally an older order than the Temple, the Hospitallers took on a parallel military role to that of the Templars just after the establishment of the Templars as an order. Though allied in purpose and always on the same side in battle, the two orders remained rivals throughout the crusades.

The Accusations against the Order

Historians have called the trials of the Templars "the great crime of the Middle Ages."²⁴ In the summer of 1307, King Philippe IV of France had sent secret orders for the arrests of the Templars all over Europe with instructions not to open the orders until October 12.²⁵ By chance, the Templar leadership (grand master Jacques de Molay and his retinue of Templar officials including the visitor of France, Hugh de Pairaud) had recently entered France on a trip designed to recruit new members and promote the idea of a new crusade. Royal officials in every region of France and England arrested these leaders along with over six hundred other Templars.²⁶ The members of the order faced 127 accusations.²⁷ The majority of these charges can be grouped into three general categories. First were charges that dealt with the denial of Christ, heresy, and other sacrilege. This group mainly consisted of claims that the members of the order had disrespected crosses, misused church office or assumed the role of ordained priests, and practiced heresy. Most shocking among the heretical charges is the accusation that the Templars practiced idol worship.²⁸ One of the charges stated that members of the order "wound about the head of, or touched, the said idols with cords which they girded themselves with over their shirt

²⁴ Henry Charles Lea, "The Innocence of the Templars," in *The Guilt of the Templars* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 138.

²⁵ In an effort to remain consistent I have not Anglicized any Medieval names. Note that King Philip IV, who is often called Philip the Fair will appear as Philippe le Bel and the Templar Grand Master James of Molay will appear as Jacques de Molay. The exception to this is Richard I of England who I refer to as the Lionhearted.

²⁶ Alan Forey, "Towards a Profile of the Templars in the Early Fourteenth Century," in *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, ed. Malcolm Barber (Aldershot: Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1994), 198. Forey counts a total of 681 Templars interrogated at the time of the trial. It is unlikely that all of these Templars were arrested at one time. Trial records show that the Templars in Spain and Cyprus were arrested after the October 13 date. Most of the Templars arrested on October 13 were captured in France and England. Forey's figure at the time of the trial of over 600 Templars in royal custody gives an indication of the number of arrests that were made in France and England on October 13.

²⁷ Read, *The Templars*, 253.

²⁸ For more information on Medieval views on idol worship see Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

or skin.”²⁹ The second group of charges centered on sodomy. Templars were accused of kissing each other on various parts of the body as well as having carnal relations with each other. The church and the rule of the order would have strictly prohibited these actions. The validity of the charges of sodomy remains heavily contested by scholars today.

The last group consists of charges of which the Templars were almost certainly guilty. Yet, none of these accusations were of serious violations of clerical or secular laws. These were actions that the Templars could not be punished for but were used to portray the order as infamous. They centered on the ecclesiastical privileges and religious practices of the Templars, and secrecy of chapter meetings. Malcolm Barber shows in his translation of the trial record from Paris that one of these charges was that “charitable gifts in the said order were not made as they ought, nor was hospitality offered.”³⁰ This charge, while potentially serious for other orders, should not even have been issued against the Templars. In 1139, Pope Innocent II had issued the bull *Omne datum optimum* that stated that the Templars were “entitled to receive tithes but need not pay them.”³¹ The Templars were also not required to give hospitality. This paper considers these charges carefully, especially taking into account the accusation that the order did not give charity or hospitality, as much of the testimony in the trial is aimed at refuting these claims.

²⁹ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 48.

³⁰ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*. p250. This charge and several others do not appear in the trial record from Cyprus. Nevertheless, many of the Templar witnesses address these charges in their testimony. This suggests as Gilmour-Bryson points out, that part of the list of accusations from the trial in Cyprus is missing.

³¹ Read, *The Templars*, 116.

Debating the Trial of the Templars

The majority of scholarly work on the later history of the order of the Templars has primarily surrounded the trials from 1307-1314. From almost the moment the trials ended the charges against the Templars became a subject of historical controversy. Even medieval intellectuals doubted the validity of the charges. Historian Peter Partner points out that "three weeks after the arrests of the Templars had taken place, the Genoese politician Christiano Spinola suggested that King Philippe's real reason for attacking the Templars were hopes of seizing their money and also of uniting the two military orders."³² Both Boccaccio and Dante asserted that the charges against the Templars were false.³³ In his *Inferno*, Dante places Philippe le Bel in the circle of hell devoted to avarice, implying Philippe's financial motives for the attack on the order. Writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the order in a much more cynical light. In the century preceding and immediately after the Protestant Reformation, the spirit of anti-clericalism dominated many intellectual writings.³⁴ The Templars were a monastic order directly responsible to the Pope. For many early modern thinkers, the wealth of the Templars combined with their role in warfare would be enough to show them as a symbol of the corruption of the medieval Church and, by extension, the pope. The charges of blasphemy, sodomy, idol worship, and sacrilege, only add to this view of corruption.

Far from the immediate reaction of medieval writers, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the prevailing view of the Templars was that they were guilty of the charges pressed against them. A belief in the secret knowledge of the Templars as sorcerers and wizards and the notion that this knowledge continued in the secret, Masonic societies of the time furthered this

³² Peter Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 63.

view.³⁵ Some even believed that the Templars had carried on in secret after 1315 and had become the Freemasons. These fanciful notions of the history of the Templars made use of the charges of heresy against the order to cast them in an exotic light. This view has heavily influenced modern writers on the Templar trials, as every scholar must now establish the truth or falsity of the trials in terms of this myth. Furthermore, the idea of Templar rites containing Gnostic roots has laid the ground work for writers to find support for the idea that the Templar charges were rooted in fact. One writer, G. Legman, not only argues for the guilt of the Templars but also asserts that the accusations of idol worship are justified by the order's contact with Muslims. He states that the accusations of homosexual rites and idol worship are justified by the "Oriental erotic forms of anti-Christian or pre-Christian worship the Templars would presumably have come in contact through their collaboration with the Moslems."³⁶ The idea that contact with Muslims could be sufficient proof of these sorts of accusation represents the kind of historical guesswork that has carried the debate on the Templars into the twentieth century.

Recent historical work on the Templar trials still centers on the guilt or innocence of the order. The view most prevalent among present day historians is that the order was wholly innocent of the charges brought against it. This view is complicated, though, by those that see the order as guilty, but as a victim of the late medieval tendency to persecute those deemed outsiders. This is particularly true of scholars who examine the charge of sodomy against the Templars. Many modern day writers see the Templars as persecuted for their acceptance of homosexuality. Legman argues that Jacques de Molay, the Templar grand master, admitted to the charges of sacrilege and denial of Christ to avoid being held responsible for the charges of

³³ Ibid., 90.

³⁴ Ibid., 93.

³⁵ Ibid., 110-15.

homosexuality that carried a harsher penalty.³⁷ This theory is unfounded as, in the Middle Ages, no conception of homosexuality existed as it does today. Accusations of sodomy, which was widely practiced, carried penalties less severe than adultery in the eleventh century and had only begun to be persecuted in the fourteenth.³⁸ These writers extend this view to see those historians who argue for the order's innocence of the sodomy charges as favoring the persecution of homosexuality in the present day. The same generalization that one's writings reflect one's views in a modern context applies to the opposition as well. Many writers who argue for the Templar innocence see those think they were guilty as furthering anti-religious views. Legman accuses writers that argue for the innocence of the Templars of "falsifying history for purposes of religious controversy."³⁹ These interpretations on the modern debate over the trial of the Templars have led scholars to concentrate on the methods used by the inquisition in the trial and on the reasoning behind the accusations.

The widely accepted view that the Templars were innocent is based largely on the methods of the trial. In particular, the use of torture to obtain confessions indicates the falsity of the accusations. The foremost modern historian on the Templars, Malcolm Barber, critiques the validity of the confessions of the Templars based both on the use of torture and on the French King's control over the trials. Only a small number of carefully selected Templars were brought before Pope Clement V to confess. Barber sees this as an indication of the royal influence on the confessions. He asserts that "the French government had the Templars at its disposal and there can be no doubt that those selected either had some grudge against the order or were terrified by threats and torture, and were therefore confidently expected to make the appropriate

³⁶ G. Legman, *The Guilt of the Templars* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 19.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁸ R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987), 92.

confession."⁴⁰ For Barber the crown's selective methods account for the unanimous confessions made by those representing the accused Templars. Some historians contest that the evidence of torture did not affect the outcome of the trial. Legman states the use of torture "does not necessarily mean that the confessions thus elicited were false, though that is the implication always left in mention of torture by partisans of the Templars' innocence."⁴¹ Barber disputes this view through the use of modern studies that show the confessions could have been influenced so much by the torture that the members of the order would, themselves, begin to believe their own confessions. Modern studies of torture show that "ultimately the subject becomes hysterical and is much more open to suggestion which he normally would have completely rejected."⁴²

Like the methods used in the trial, the motives behind the arrests of the Templars are essential to understanding how the outcome of the trial occurred. There are several different ways of interpreting the reasoning behind the accusations. First one could see Philippe le Bel's intentions as genuine and pious. His grandfather Louis IX had been canonized during Philippe's reign. Philippe's royal lineage had become known as the *most Christian* kings. He was intimately involved in church affairs and had a long family history of crusading. It is likely that Philippe genuinely saw the knights Templar as sinners and heretics and wished to rid the order of the perceived corruption. Peter Partner states that "governments do not usually launch savage attacks on innocent minority groups unless the governments themselves are a prey to paranoiac fears and suspicions, such as seem to have existed in the Templar case."⁴³ Partner argues, at least in part, that the French King saw the Templars as disloyal to him as a feudal lord because of the losses in the crusades and the belief in the Templars' hidden wealth. Legman also points to

³⁹ Legman, *The Guilt of the Templars*, 15.

⁴⁰ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 101-02.

⁴¹ Legman, *The Guilt of the Templars*, 43.

this wealth as a genuine motive for the King. He writes that the Templars, through their banking practices, were guilty of usury. The impracticality of charging the order with usury in the beginning of the fourteenth century, when large scale banking practices were beginning to flourish, forced the King to find other means of attacking the Templars. Another problem with accusing the Templars of usury was that "the Knights Hospitallers would have to stand trial with them, not to mention every Lombard banker in Christendom."⁴⁴ While Legman sees the wealth of the Templars as a genuine cause for concern on the part of Philippe le Bel, many other historians take a more cynical approach and see the King's desire for the wealth of the Templars as the sole motive for the arrests.

The second approach to the motives of the trial is the more cynical view that sees Philippe le Bel as an active beneficiary of the order's demise.⁴⁵ Many scholars, including Malcolm Barber, assert that the French crown attacked the Templars, at least in part, for financial reasons.⁴⁶ The order had often served as bankers and as armed treasure guards. In an analysis of the property records of the Templars "it is clear that from the time of Louis IX well into the reign of Philippe le Bel, the chief royal treasury was at the Temple"⁴⁷ Even Philippe only removed his treasury from the Temple in Paris a few months before he sent letters for the arrest of the order. The Temple provided a logical place to hold money in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The well fortified Temple in Paris acted as a headquarters for the order in the west. Eleanor Ferris, a historian of the finances of the order, points out "the fact that any connection

⁴² Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 56.

⁴³ Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*, xix.

⁴⁴ Legman, *The Guilt of the Templars*, 27.

⁴⁵ Historians draw these conclusions from a variety of sources. In addition to the important trial records from the trials of 1308 and 1310, the record of the papal council of Vienne in 1315 that formally disbanded the order is also important as it provides for an explanation of how the Templar property was to be divided.

⁴⁶ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 32.

between the order of soldier monks devoted to the rescue and defense of the Holy Sepulchre, and the financial affairs of Christendom is to be accounted for, possibly, by the common medieval practice of depositing objects of value in concentrated places for security during times of trouble and tumult."⁴⁸ The appearance of wealth attained through their role as treasure keepers made the Templars a prime candidate for King Philippe to use to find a way out of financial turmoil.

Barber argues that "the attack on the Templars must be seen in the context of the methods employed by the French government in an effort to relieve the acute financial problems of the reign."⁴⁹ But while the financial concerns of the crown must have played a role in the Templar events, many scholars try not to explain them with only one cause.

The perception of Templar wealth was far more important than the actual monetary gains from the Templar arrests. New research shows the Templars had little treasure. Templar property in Western Europe was actually not that valuable in terms of movable goods. There was "a marked absence of rich armor, vestments, and expensive trappings, showing that the Templars were living simple lives and cared little for luxury."⁵⁰ Because the Templars acted as moneylenders, they were affected by the economic state of Europe. Templar wealth declined as the European economy slowed down at the beginning of the fourteenth century. This decline was exacerbated by loans made by the Templars that remained outstanding. In her *Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, Anne Gilmor-Bryson states that "although the order acquired a reputation of being very wealthy, this appears not to have been the case by 1307. Frequently at this time

⁴⁷ Eleanor Ferris, "The Financial Relations of the Knights Templars to the English Crown," *The American Historical Review* 8, no. 1 (1902): 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 2.

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

⁵⁰ Clarence Perkins, "The Wealth of the Knights Templars in England and the Disposition of It after Their Dissolution," *The American Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (1910): 254.

money lent by the order to kings, princes and popes was not repaid.”⁵¹ In addition to money lost through loans, historians also point to the Templar lifestyle and purpose as an indication of their actual poverty. The Templars followed a rule similar to Cistercian monks and took oaths of poverty.⁵² The Templars in the west generated income for the order to send to the east and to recruit and train new members. Partner argues that “they erected numerous buildings in the west...for training and administration, but these were humble and utilitarian in nature.”⁵³ As Barber notes, the extent of the Templar riches was not nearly as vast as people imagined at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁵⁴ If the accusations made against the Templars were motivated by money, they reaped small reward.

Another explanation for the arrests is the popularity of the order itself. The order had fallen out of favor with many people in Europe by the fourteenth century. This decline in popularity is often argued to be directly linked to the end of the crusades. The loss of the last European foothold in Palestine with the fall of Acre marked the end of the crusading era. The Templars were no longer needed to protect Europeans in the Holy Land. While the idea of another crusade persisted, no effort ever materialized. If Christians needed a “personification of the crusade in the form of a tangible order on which they could lavish support, they were also in equal need of a scapegoat on which they could concentrate their anger when the ideal of the crusade became tarnished.”⁵⁵ Peter Partner has added the idea of social jealousy to the concept of the declining favor of the Templars. He sees the accusations as a political tool used by Guillaume De Nogaret, the French keeper of the seals. He argues that the perception of Templar

⁵¹ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 4.

⁵² Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*.

⁵³ Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*, 12.

⁵⁴ At the time of the Templar arrests, inventory lists of all the Templar possessions were taken. While many of these inventory lists are lost, some, such as the list from the Temple in London are extremely detailed and clear.

⁵⁵ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 8.

wealth and prestige, at the same time as the defeat in Palestine, may have added to Nogaret's "social jealousy" that "neither the Pope nor the religious knights were by origin great lords born to vast wealth; as members of a class they came from the sector of society just above his own."⁵⁶ The charges brought against the Templars may have been a signature method of accusation for the French minister to take advantage of other powerful groups.

Historians contest Philippe le Bel's direct influence in the Templar trial. For many scholars, Philippe was merely a pawn to his advisors. While this perception has changed in recent scholarship to the view that Philippe freely allowed his advisors their power, it remains popular sentiment that his head ministers maintained a great deal of control in the Templar case. Barber asserts the close link between the Templar accusations and those of other trials most specifically trials involving the French minister Guillaume de Nogaret such as that of Pope Boniface VIII.⁵⁷ The type of charges brought against the Templars is the largest indication of this control. Accusations of idol worship were unusual in other trials before this time. "Quite suddenly, around the year 1307, magical charges became one of the standard methods of aggression among the jealous and competitive servants of King Philippe le Bel."⁵⁸ The idea that the king's ministers had total control in the Templar case is an insufficient explanation, however, since Philippe clearly invested a great deal of personal effort into the trials. The long trial involved considerable debate on canon law concerning Philippe's right to arrest the order. Barber sees the king's delay in the trial as a means to gather assurances of his right to act from French masters of theology as well as the king's hesitation in pressuring Clement V to be a sign of his

⁵⁶ Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*, 54.

⁵⁷ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 107-09.

⁵⁸ Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*, 54.

insecurity in superseding the authority of the pope.⁵⁹ This view conflicts with the idea that Philippe ever turned over the control of the trial. Partner offers, instead, the idea that the magical accusations made by the king's ministers were merely the methods employed by the heads of state to justify a breakdown in the relationship between the order and the king due to the king's view of the order, whether or not that view was founded in truth. He states that the ruin of the Templars came from the fundamental feudal reaction of the king's anger at perceived disobedience that was so incomprehensible to the ruling politicians that it could only be attributed to the influence of demons.⁶⁰

The evidence in the trial of the Templars has proved insufficient to lead historians to a clear answer as to the guilt or innocence of the order. To gather support for views either for or against the Templars, scholars have had to look beyond the trial record. In doing this, while many have made significant advances toward a better understanding to the methods and motives of the trial, they have largely overlooked the evidence of other aspects of Templar history that the trial does offer. The trial in Cyprus is an exceptional glimpse into the workings of the order. In their compelling defense, the Templars explain how they practiced religion. While the evidence that they give may not prove them to be innocent, it does highlight how the order interpreted church teachings and how these teachings manifested themselves in the community of the order. No prior scholarship has explored this testimony in this way. Historians who have studied the functioning of the order have focused instead on the earlier history of the Templars and their role in the crusades. Research in the religion of the order at the time of the trials helps to explain the role of the military orders in the post crusade world.

⁵⁹ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 81.

⁶⁰ Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*, 85.

Templar Piety in Cyprus

Outsider Views of Templar Piety

By the early fourteenth century, the crusading purpose of the Knights Templar had been exhausted. The fall of Acre, the last crusader city, marked the last time the Templars would have any influence in Palestine. For historians, this crucial battle marked the end of the crusades. Yet for the people of Christendom in the fourteenth century, the ideal of a crusade was far from over. More importantly, since the military orders were automatically associated with the idea of a crusade, their unique role as a sacred army still had to be fulfilled.

As late as the fifteenth century, popes and kings of Europe continued to talk about proclaiming a new crusade. This talk was especially prevalent in the first decade after the fall of Acre. Jacques de Molay reacted to this sentiment with a massive recruiting campaign. The Templars had been severely weakened after the battle at Acre and needed to rebuild. The grand master, Guillaume de Beaujeu, had died along with the majority of the knights in Palestine.⁶¹ Molay saw the Templars as essential to the designs of a new crusade. Peter Edbury, a historian of the crusades and medieval Cyprus, points out that "there were plenty of people in the West prepared to pay at least lip-service to the idea that a new crusade should be organized to win back the Holy Land."⁶² Before the crusade could be proclaimed, though, several questions needed addressing. First and foremost, the problem of maintaining two autonomous, and often disagreeing, military orders needed to be resolved and the Pope needed to make peace with the King of France.

⁶¹ Read, *The Templars*, 242.

⁶² Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191 - 1374*, 101.

Since their creation, the two military orders of the Hospitallers and the Templars both had played a prominent role in every crusade. The two orders were, nevertheless, each other's fiercest rival. Templars and Hospitallers held separate territories and often disagreed on military strategy.⁶³ They worked together in the crusades but remained two separate armies. After the fall of Acre, many people began to see both orders as inefficient. In 1291 Pope Nicholas IV proposed the idea of merging the two orders. Attempting to rally support for a new crusade to set out in 1293, Nicholas "ordered provincial church councils to meet to consider the recovery of the Holy Land [and] he took up the suggestion that a new military order be formed by merging the Templars and the Hospitallers."⁶⁴ Nicholas' death later that year, in April of 1292, put an end to any immediate threat to the autonomy of the two orders.⁶⁵ Despite the failure of Nicholas' call to crusade, though, the idea of the orders as inefficient survived.

Respect for the Templars continued to decline in the eyes of late thirteenth century rulers as a result of continued problems between King Philippe IV and the popes. Boniface VIII's notoriously poor relations with Philippe would eventually get him posthumously tried for heresy. These relations took their toll on the Templars as well, since they were in charge of guarding the Pope at Anagni where he was nearly murdered.⁶⁶ Agents of the king of France, who would later play an important role in the arrests of the Templars, along with members of a rival family to Boniface VIII broke into the Pope's papal apartments at Anagni and attempted to kidnap him. While individual Templars had sided with the king of France in the affair, the order as a whole remained publicly on the side of Boniface. Shortly after Boniface died, the Templars were

⁶³ The Templars and the Hospitallers each held their own land and were responsible only to the pope. Both orders had owned numerous castles in Outremer and were free to act independently of one another in determining military strategy and treaties.

⁶⁴ Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191 - 1374*, 102.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Read, *The Templars*, 258.

arrested and Clement V could do little to help them. In their last years the Templars had increasingly poor relationships with local nobles.

The nobility of Cyprus had especially good reason to be biased against the Templars in 1310. The time of the Templar trial was a period of political turmoil in Cyprus. Amaury of Lusignan, lord of Tyre, had in 1306 "declared Henry (King of Cyprus) too ill to rule and, adopting the title of '*governor and rector*,' assumed control of the kingdom."⁶⁷ Henry II held the crown himself until 1308 but was eventually unable to stop his brother from taking control, when Amaury exiled him to Armenia. The Templars had fallen out of favor with Henry prior to his exile for their dealings with the King of Sicily, Charles II (called the lame). Charles was a prime candidate for the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which was figuratively held by Henry II of Cyprus. Charles II of Sicily would strengthen the cause of a new crusade and possibly bring with him the support of Philippe IV of France. Both orders supported Charles' aspirations to some degree and "looked to Charles' kingdom as a source of supplies for their establishments in Cyprus," though, the Hospitallers refused to take one side or another entirely.⁶⁸ Henry could not be upset over the use of Charles for supplies as the island was under the threat of a possible Muslim invasion throughout the 1290s.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the fact that both orders "maintained good relations with [Henry's] rival, King Charles II of Sicily, would have placed their support for the regime in Cyprus in question."⁷⁰

The Templar loyalty to the ruling class of Cyprus was further questioned by the support of the order for Amaury's claim to the throne. The Templar grand master, Jacques de Molay "was to come out strongly against Henry at the time of Amaury of Tyre's assumption of

⁶⁷ Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191 - 1374*, 113.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

power."⁷¹ Henry had, in the years preceding his exile, caused considerable conflict with the Genoese in Cyprus. After making a trade deal that would allow the Genoese rivals, merchants from Pisa and Barcelona, to trade in Cyprus, Henry, fearing an uprising from the Genoese merchants began exiling Genoese citizens.⁷² The Genoese exiles led to some small uprisings in the port city of Famagusta and hurt trade to Cyprus temporarily. Still, the conflict was a blow to Henry's regime partially because of the threat of a Mamluk invasion. By contrast, Amaury had enjoyed some success fighting alongside the Templars in a small expeditionary force that landed in Tortosa on the Palestinian mainland in 1300.⁷³ Prior to the Templar arrests, the Templar connection to Amaury proved useful as "the Templars had consistently supported [him], and in recent months their senior officer then in the island, the marshal Ayme d'Oselier, had given vent to his hostility to Henry on at least two occasions."⁷⁴ However, Templar relations with Amaury did not help them in 1308 when the governor received the order for their arrests. Amaury likely made a difficult decision in arresting the Templars as they had been some of his most fervent supporters. It is possible that Amaury "sought to enhance his reputation at the curia by his efficiency in organizing the arrests despite the fact that the Templars in Cyprus were well armed and notwithstanding rumors of impending Muslim attack."⁷⁵ By the time of the trial of 1310, the Templars had few friends in Cyprus. Amaury had been assassinated and Henry had come out of exile to reclaim power. It is likely that both the supporters of Henry and Amaury desired the suppression of the order of the Templars.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 117.

⁷³ Ibid., 105.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

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⁷⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 117.

⁷³ Ibid., 105.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

The accusations made in the trial seem to reflect a strong public sentiment against the Templars. This view is justified taking into account the common views of the Templar wealth, the failure of St. Louis' crusade, the failure at Acre, and their declining popularity. Yet, surprisingly, the testimony instead shows a Cypriot nobility that was largely supportive of the order, at least, in the trial.⁷⁶ Nearly every non-Templar witness testified that the order had done no wrong. One witness even testified that he had thought the Templars to be guilty, but changed his mind after witnessing a miracle.⁷⁷ This testimony does not necessarily imply a favorable outlook on the order but does show that the island's nobility valued the order. By 1310 the Mamluk threat of invasion had passed and the Templars had been imprisoned for three years. It seems unlikely that a favorable view of them would be politically beneficial in any way. Instead, the testimony depicts the Templars as a spiritual focal point for the nobility of Cyprus.

The Cypriot nobility repeatedly make reference to the Templar piety and orthodoxy. Lord Reynald de Seisson, a prominent landowner, who had been imprisoned by Amaury, stated to the trial court that "he indeed saw [the Templars] in the churches, and at the divine offices, devout in their faith, just like any religious persons hearing divine offices."⁷⁸ Reynald thus responded to accusation XVI by explaining the proof he had seen regarding the Templars' belief in the sacraments.⁷⁹ Whether or not the Templars attend mass and how they respond to the sacraments of the Mass proves to be an important measure of piety for the order throughout the trial record. Four other non-Templar witnesses mention the taking of sacraments during the Mass. One of them, Lord Aigue de Bessan, who, as Captain in Cyprus led the party that supported King Henry's claim to the throne, stated that the Templars "very much believed in the

⁷⁶ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

Eucharist and on any day whatsoever he saw them hear Mass and be very devout in sacred observances.”⁸⁰ Even at the point of death, the Templars seemed to be models of ideal faithfulness to the Cypriot knights. Lord Peter Ysan said he saw a Templar die while clutching a cross and praying to Christ in his final moments.⁸¹ The testimony involving the Templar faithfulness through belief in the sacraments illustrates both how the nobility viewed religious devotion as well as how the Templars exemplified it. The choice to testify about devotion to the Eucharist and the cross upon death shows how these nobles saw the Mass and specifically the Eucharist as focal points of Christian faith. Their affirmations that the Templars participated with them in this faith indicate a Templar community that, while separately from secular society, interacted with the secular knights religiously on a daily basis.

A second issue regarding Templar piety to emerge in the trial record is the notion that although the Templar meetings were held in secret, the order often interacted with the religious community of the city. Moreover, the Templars drew a large amount of personal support from this community. While, the chapter meetings of the order were secret, the order was very active outside of chapter meetings in church attendance, city defense, and charity. In the following section, this study addresses the more specific aspects of Templar charity brought out in the trial in the next section. In church attendance, though, many of the non-Templar witnesses make statements that both affirm the charge of the secrecy of the order chapter meetings and speak highly of the order’s religious devotion. Lord Jacques de Montolive, who spoke out against Amaury in 1310, only to be exiled to Armenia along with Henry II, told of how “often and repeatedly he had lived in towns and outside towns with the knights and especially with their

⁷⁹ See Appendix A for a list of the accusations from the trial record in Cyprus.

⁸⁰ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 56.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

leaders, however, they never wished to miss Mass, and there he saw them behave as devotedly and religiously as other Christians.”⁸² Jacques’ testimony is important additionally because it widens the scope of the trial in Cyprus. While the knights in the Cyprus trial hail from Templar chapter houses in all parts of medieval Europe, without Jacques’ testimony of Templar actions in other towns, the records from Cyprus could be seen as an anomaly. Yet this testimony, along with the statements of other nobles who talk of the Templar actions in Palestine (often specifically defending Acre), show that the order’s involvement in the religious community of Cyprus was considered common Templar practice.

Like Jacques de Mountolive, Cypriot nobility who had had experiences with the Templars had positive things to say in the trial record about the military function of the order. Most of these statements concerned the fighting role of the Templars, such as that of Jacques de Plany. Jacques told of how he saw the previous grand master, Guillaume de Beaujeau, and that the “master well could have escaped and fled if he had wished at the capture of the city of Acre, just as many other religious and secular knights fled, but he preferred to die for the Catholic faith and its defense.”⁸³ Two other witnesses testified to the Templars’ willingness to die for their faith at Acre. Not all of these witnesses supported the order during the trial. Cyprus seems not to have been aware of the trial of the Templars until Amaury received the order for the arrests 1308. Despite the papal letter of accusations, only one member of the Cypriot nobility testifies that he was in any way opposed to the order. Lord Raymond de Benthon had seen “the Templars fight against the Saracens in defense of the Christian faith in many places better than, or as well as, any other Christians,” but he still mistrusted the order after hearing of the papal letters.⁸⁴ In

⁸² Ibid., 58.

⁸³ Ibid., 59.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 61.

his testimony, Raymond tells of how he was at first against the order but changed his mind after seeing a miracle. He states that he was:

hearing in Nicosia so many and so great and astonishing things about [the Templars] contained in apostolic letters, his mind was very greatly disturbed, having an evil opinion against them such that he did not want to hear mass with them. On the contrary, as soon as he could he fled and avoided their company. At last this knight, the witness, as he did not have a priest who would celebrate mass before him in that property, thought it best that at least he could conveniently participate with them at mass, and hear the divine office. And when one day this witness came to their chapel in order to see the body of Christ, and entered that chapel at the hour that the priest sacrificed and raised high the body of Christ, even if God were to help him, he would say that the body of Christ, or the Host appeared to him as large as an *obley* (a large disc), and larger still, and as white as snow.⁸⁵

Raymond's miracle further shows the piety of the order. The repeated experience with the Templars in a religious, community oriented setting, rather than in battle, influenced his view of them over time. More important than the truth of the miracle is that Raymond perceived that a miracle had occurred. His testimony shows a real admiration of the order that must have been felt by much of the Cypriot nobility despite their political biases against the order.⁸⁶ The nobles' testimony to the Templar belief in sacraments illustrates the importance of Templar everyday participation in community oriented and externalized religious practice.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 61-62.

⁸⁶ Only the Latin nobility are represented in the trial. The native Greek population that comprised most of the peasantry of the island is not mentioned in the trial and did not play a role in the affairs of the Templars.

Templar Charity and Hospitality

The giving of charity was a defining aspect of Templar piety. For the medieval order, practicing religion was a public affair. Just as the nobility of Cyprus testified to the externalization of the orthodoxy of Templar beliefs through their public belief in the sacraments, the Templars themselves affirm their orthodoxy by telling of their acts of charity. All of the seventy-five Templars to give a long deposition responded to accusation 93 with a statement describing some kind of charitable practice by the order. The text of the accusation is lost from the trial record in Cyprus but Barber translates the accusation from the French proceedings to read "that charitable gifts in the said order were not made as they ought, nor was hospitality offered."⁸⁷ While the accusations in France were not identical to those in Cyprus, the general charges brought against the order were the same in all parts of Europe and, given the response of the witnesses to this charge, it is likely that the main idea of the accusation was the same. The answers to accusation 93 usually involve a statement proclaiming that the order did in fact give charity and hospitality. The order was required to give charity and hospitality, but not on the scale that they described in the trial.

The rule of the order outlined specific requirements for what charity should and should not be practiced. The rule of the Templars, first written in 1129 and developed over the course of the twelfth century, describes the order as a monastic convent under an oath of poverty.⁸⁸ As a result, the order is entitled to receive tithes but does not owe tithes to any other institution. The rule states that "you who have abandoned the pleasant riches of this world, we believe you to have willingly subjected yourself to poverty; therefore we are resolved that you who live the

⁸⁷ Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 250.

⁸⁸ Barber, *The New Knighthood*.

communal life may receive tithes.”⁸⁹ This statement also draws a direct link between the order of the Templars and the pope. The order was only subject to the authority of the pope and did not owe any feudal obligation to any other institution above them whether secular or religious.⁹⁰ This exceptional privilege of remaining independent of the hierarchy of the church would eventually contribute to the Templar wealth but in the founding years of the order was an essential factor to its proliferation. Despite the order’s poverty at the time of the writing of the rule, it was still required to have an almoner and give some charity. The Rule ordains “that a tenth part of the bread be given to [the] almoner” to be given to the poor after the dinner meal.⁹¹ Other Templar records outline that the bread was to be given three times per week but do not state which poor should receive it.⁹²

In the eyes of the order, not all poor were starving or penniless.⁹³ The rule of the order talks about giving charity to other religious orders and secular knights as well as paupers.⁹⁴ At the time that the rule was written the begging or mendicant orders did not yet exist. Medieval almoners eventually come to consider these voluntarily poor orders as more deserving of charity than those people who are not poor by choice.⁹⁵ In the trial record the mendicants are referred to several times as receivers of Templar charity. A Dominican friar Brother Baldwin of Villa Ganti told the inquisitor that “in Cyprus, in Nicosia, and in Limassol, namely, sixteen years ago (1294) and since that time, and during that time for many years, great almsgiving made by the order of

⁸⁹ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 33.

⁹⁰ Read, *The Templars*, 116.

⁹¹ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 27.

⁹² Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven: Yale University, 1986), 136.

⁹³ For information on the poor in Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries see Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002). For information on charitable institutions in Europe see Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*; and James William Brodman, *Charity and Welfare: Hospitals and the Poor in Medieval Catalonia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1998).

⁹⁴ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*.

the Temple to the order and to the Preaching brothers (the Dominicans)."⁹⁶ The Dominicans in Cyprus were far from poverty stricken. On the contrary, they were "the most important religious order in Cyprus, and...the Royal family was closely associated with it, and usually buried in the Dominican church."⁹⁷ Thus, Templar charity must be viewed as a function of the Templars' desire to interact with the larger community of nobles as well as a desire to help those in need.

Further involvement in this noble class religious community through charity is evident through gifts to the nobility. In the medieval conception of poverty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, members of the nobility may also be considered to be the more deserving poor.⁹⁸ In the trial record, the Templars give a wide-ranging account of who received charity. One Templar knight, Brother Hugh Oliver of Vahosca stated that charity was given to "paupers, widows, young ladies, knights and other persons."⁹⁹ The implication of this statement is that widows, young ladies (who came from poor families and often received charitable gifts in the form of dowries),¹⁰⁰ and knights were easily distinguishable from paupers and yet still received charity.

Despite the Templars' apparent wide-ranging uses of charity, the order seems to have focused its gifts on those who were really penniless. The majority of statements regarding charity in the trial record mirror those of the knight, Brother Berengar of Rivosico, who tells that "charity was undertaken...in abundance to paupers, widows, orphans and others."¹⁰¹ The trial record shows that the Templars still practiced charity in the late thirteenth century as their Rule had prescribed in the early twelfth century. Of the seventy-five Templars who gave long

⁹⁵ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris*, 3.

⁹⁶ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 438.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁹⁸ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris*, 46.

⁹⁹ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 311.

¹⁰⁰ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris*, 34.

depositions, seventy-two said that the order, "in a place where there was a chapel, three days a week they gave out bread, and a tenth of all bread which was cooked in the order was given away."¹⁰² The frequent practice of giving charity is even noted by the Cypriot nobility that testified in the trial. Lord Philip Bonjory testifies that "in the houses of the Temple in Limassol and in Famagusta he saw that great almsgiving was undertaken by the order of the Temple to the poor of bread, of meats, and dishes of food, and this before the capture of the master of the order, and fourteen years ago and during that time."¹⁰³ Lord Philip's testimony illustrates that the Templars continued to give weekly alms, as outlined in their Rule, even after the fall of Acre that devastated the order financially. Lord John of Cahors adds to this point by showing that the giving of alms was not limited to urban centers, but even practiced in the Templar castles such as Tortosa. He stated that he had seen "alms made...in the house of the Temple in Acre and in Tortosa."¹⁰⁴ The giving of charity seems so important to the order, that the task of almoner was reserved for Templars of higher rank. Three of the Templars that testify are listed as almoners and all hold the rank of sergeant.¹⁰⁵ All three almoners also echo the testimony that alms were given the required three times each week.

While the rule only required charity in the form of bread three times a week, the Templars often went beyond the requirements and found more personal ways to give charity. The master of the order was most often mentioned as the one who gave additional charity. As the commanding officer of the order the master would have had the most authority to distribute Templar funds. Lord Stephen of Cahors told of how he "saw the master of the Temple at the

¹⁰¹ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 306.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 169-70.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 415-16.

door of the house of the Temple in Nicosia having many alms given out in the form of money to the poor persons standing there near the door.”¹⁰⁶ Additional alms that were not directly given by the master or the almoner tended to be food oriented. The trial record shows that the Templars often gave charity from the leftovers of their own table, inviting the poor to come and finish the food that they did not. A knight of the order, Brother John the Spaniard of Portugal stated “that all the leftovers from the table of bread which had been broken, and a tenth part of all the bread which was cooked in the house of the Temple, and watered wine, and leftover pieces of meat remaining on the table the table were given to the poor for the love of God.”¹⁰⁷ In addition to bread money and meat the knight Brother Dennis of Vienne tells of how “sometimes cloaks and clothing” were given out as well.¹⁰⁸ The elaborate defense that Templars make against the accusation that they did not give charity illustrates the importance that the order must have placed on their role as alms-givers in the community.

The issue of hospitality is grouped with the charge of charity in the trial, but in practice was a much more complicated issue for the order. As a military order, the Templars would not have been able to open their doors to strangers at all times. The writers of the Templar rule take note of this and as a result the rule takes into consideration the Templars’ military purpose in defining the requirements for charity and hospitality. For example, rather than giving money to beggars, “on Maundy Thursday,¹⁰⁹ [the Master] should wash the feet of thirteen paupers, and should give to each of them a shirt and breeches, two loaves of bread, two deniers and a pair of

¹⁰⁵ Brother Gui de Lengles, sergeant found on Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 209; Brother Jacques de Valleburna, sergeant found on Ibid., 255.; and Brother John the Englishman, former preceptor of the palace, sergeant found on Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 258.

¹⁰⁶ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 422.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 201.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 180.

¹⁰⁹ This refers to the Thursday immediately preceding Easter Sunday.

shoes.”¹¹⁰ This washing can only be done after the almoner has determined that the paupers “do not have any vile diseases on their feet or legs.”¹¹¹ It is also to protect the military purpose of the order that the rule outlines specific conditions for charity and forbids brothers from giving it on their own. The rule states that “if any brother lends the alms of the house without permission to such a man or in such a place as the house may lose them, he should not keep his habit.”¹¹² These military constraints on the giving of charity are probably the reasons that the Templars were not required to offer hospitality. Allowing strangers to seek lodging inside the Templar house could threaten the security of the order, the secrecy of military plans, and ultimately their ability to act as a fighting force.

Nearly every Templar who testified in the trial tells of how the order gave hospitality. The testimony, however, is cautious. Every brother to testify clarifies that hospitality was not required of the order and, unlike the issue of charity, no Templar witness states that he, himself, offered anyone hospitality. The knight, Geoffrey of Port points out that there was no place in the Templar house designated for guests. He states that he saw many guests at the Templar house even though “they did not designate a hospice for housing guests because they are not obliged to.”¹¹³ Why then do the Templars argue that they gave any hospitality at all? One reason could be that the Templars had a certain empathy of purpose toward other religious orders. The specific cases of hospitality mentioned in the trial often state clearly that housing was offered to other orders. Brother Guillaume of Guaren of Casali sancti Vassi, a sergeant of the order, said that “when any outsider from the religious orders of the Minors or Preachers, or other orders, or anyone else, came for lodging to the house of the Temple, he was received and housed with

¹¹⁰ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 43.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 121.

generosity."¹¹⁴ Even when the other religious orders are not named specifically they are separated out from secular persons in the testimony. Brother Guy of Lengles, an almoner for the order tells of how when any religious or other person came to the house of the Temple for shelter, that he was received and treated with benevolence."¹¹⁵ Of the seventy-five Templars to give a long deposition, sixty-nine testify to some sort of hospitality given by order. Whether religious persons or secular, the trial indicates that the desire to accommodate those who were in need was a priority for the order. Even in the final years of the order, the Templars must have seen the need to give charity and hospitality as a paramount importance to their religious purpose.

¹¹³ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 218.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

The Warrior Piety of the Young Templars

A third aspect of Templar piety illustrated by the trial in Cyprus is way in which the Templar knights, especially those that were younger, saw the military role of the order as an essential element of their piety. This is unique to the Templars on trial in Cyprus because the majority of the brothers in the order in Cyprus were either young or knights, and in many cases both. The order of the Knights Templar, itself, was unusual in its age demographics when compared to other religious orders in Medieval Europe. While the Templars, like other military and non-military orders, welcomed men of any age to the order, the distinct military purpose of the Templars drew a younger group of would-be monks. In his examination on the ages of the Templars at the time of their trials, Alan Forey finds that most Templars joined the order in their early to mid twenties.¹¹⁶ One's twenties was the age of maturity for the knightly class in Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Age groupings were not a product of age itself, but more of the social function one fulfilled in society. For the secular knighthood, an eldest son reached knighthood between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two.¹¹⁷ At this age a young man would have undergone the training necessary to become a knight. The "Templars had no training program...Brothers were expected to already be skilled in the art of warfare."¹¹⁸

In joining the Templars a young knight was able to progress to adulthood in a way unattainable for a secular knight.¹¹⁹ For members of the secular nobility, knighthood did not make one an adult. Georges Duby points out that "a knight was usually called a 'youth' until his

¹¹⁶ Forey, "Towards a Profile of the Templars in the Early Fourteenth Century," 200.

¹¹⁷ Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

¹¹⁸ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 23.

¹¹⁹ For more information on knighthood see Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1970), Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*; Francis Gies, *The Knight in History* (New York: Francis Carney Gies, 1984); Peter Speed, ed., *Those Who Fought: An Anthology of Medieval Sources* (New York: Lithica Press, 1996).

marriage and perhaps even afterwards."¹²⁰ Similar to marriage, the process of becoming a Templar is a religious ceremony that involves personal questioning and prayer.¹²¹ The trial record from Cyprus shows some of the similarity between marriage and the joining of the knightly order in the Templar short depositions. In defending the order's reception ceremony, six of the Templars on trial, including the knight Brother Baldwin of Cery, state that they had promised "not to leave the order for better or worse."¹²² Joining the military orders early in one's career as a knight may have been a way of advancing out of youth.

For most of the knightly class "it was common for *adolescentia* to be seen to end between twenty-five and thirty, with twenty-eight as the figure commonly given."¹²³ Nevertheless, at the time of the arrests in 1307 the Templars contained a wide variety of ages in chapter houses across Europe. With the exception of Cyprus the age differences among the Templars in most parts of Europe varied evenly. Far from being dominated by younger men, "the majority of the Templars appear to have been in their thirties, forties and fifties."¹²⁴ In Cyprus, however, there was a much larger discrepancy in the ages of the knights.

While there are not any exact figure for the ages of the knights in Cyprus, the trial record of 1310 shows the length of service for seventy-two of the seventy-six Templars who gave short depositions. These figures show that the majority of the knights fall into two groups: those who have served for less than ten years and those who have served for more than twenty. Of the first group the trial records shows 50 knights who confessed to being in the order less than ten

¹²⁰ Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*.

¹²¹ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 170.

¹²² Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 120.

¹²³ Forey, "Towards a Profile of the Templars in the Early Fourteenth Century," 199.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

years.¹²⁵ The majority of these knights testified at the trial to have been initiated into the order between the years 1300 and 1305. Forey points out in his research that the "most striking feature of the figures for length of service, however is the contrast between Western Europe and Cyprus."¹²⁶ He finds that only 36% of the Templars in Britain had less than ten years of experience compared to 64% of the knights in Cyprus.¹²⁷ The number of relatively new Templars in Cyprus suggests that many of the knights were relatively young. One possible reason for this age difference between the knights in Cyprus and those in the rest of Europe could have been the Templar "practice to dispatch knightly recruits quickly to the East."¹²⁸ Younger knights would be at the peak of their physical fighting ability. In addition, new recruits would make up the rank and file of the Templar troops and would be needed in far greater numbers than the experienced officers. In both cases the need for young knights in Cyprus is militarily based.

The emphasis on combative youth in the record from Cyprus affected the piety of the young knights. The trial record suggests that the young knights embraced their military role as a chance to fight for the faith. In the rule of the Templars, new recruits to the order are supposed to be asked, "Do you also promise to God and to the Lady St. Mary that you, all the remaining days of your life, will help conquer, with the strength and power that God has given you, the Holy Land of Jerusalem?"¹²⁹ Yet in 1310, in Cyprus, after the Latin territories in Palestine have fallen and there is even greater need for the order to play a role in reclaiming them, only eight knights mention this pledge. Brother Aymo of Gala tells the court how at his reception he

¹²⁵ There are 50 knights in the who state that they have been in the order for less than 10 years in the short depositions of the trial as translated in Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*. Forey reports only 46

¹²⁶ Forey, "Towards a Profile of the Templars in the Early Fourteenth Century," 200.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹²⁹ Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 171.

"promised...obedience and chastity and to go take back the kingdom of Jerusalem."¹³⁰ Brother Aymo of Gala was received into the order in 1305; right around the time of Jacques de Molay's departure to France to gather support for a new crusade. Gilmour-Bryson comments that "this witness (Brother Aymo of Gala) was received only five years before, long after the fall of Acre. Such persons may have been particularly keen to take back the Holy Land."¹³¹ The comparative numbers of other Templars to express this desire support this notion. Of the Templars who mentioned reclaiming the Holy Land, two joined the order in 1300, one in 1302, one in 1303, two in 1304, and two in 1305. None of the ten Templars who had been in the order more than twenty years at the time of the trial, some of whom had received their younger brethren, mentioned this pledge. There was a pious fervor among the younger Templars to enact their vows to the order by going to war.

The young Templars who testified also use their role as a military component of the church to further define that which is not Christian. More than just reclaiming the kingdom of Jerusalem, some of the knights, in their descriptions of their initiations, expressed a specific desire to fight against Muslims. Brother Andrew of Renovaria told that at his reception he pledged "to do his best to fight against the Saracens in order to take back the Holy Land."¹³² Brother Nicholas of Moncucco made a similar promise to fight against Muslims at his reception. He tells the court that he "promised to do his best for the help of the Holy Land in order to get it back from the hands of the Saracens."¹³³ The idea of proving one's piety as a Templar through fighting the enemies of Christendom is reflected in Bernard of Clairvaux's early intention for the function of the order. In his letter *In Praise of the New Knighthood* he argues that secular

¹³⁰ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 102.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 124.

knights who fight one another will lose to sin whether or not they triumph in battle, while the Templars protect themselves both in body and in spirit by fighting in an effort to die for God.¹³⁴ The idea of attaining salvation through dying while fighting the enemy of Christ must have echoed through the minds of these young Templars who, at the trial, raise the issue of fighting Saracens unprompted by the court. Both their desire to perform the seemingly impossible task of reclaiming Jerusalem and their identification of their own role through a desire to fight Muslims illustrates the militaristic piety present in the younger Templars at the trial. This piety must have played a significant role in recruiting new knight to the order and must have been an ever-present sentiment among the Templars, especially in Cyprus.

¹³³ Ibid., 126.

¹³⁴ Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*.

Confession

The Templars made their most compelling defense of orthodoxy against the charges of improper confession. Templars and non-Templars answered three different accusations with statements concerning correct confessional practices. Their responses to these charges illustrated the way in which the ecclesiastical hierarchy constructed an essential component of orthodox piety. They showed the conflicting views of proper confession held within the clergy while at the same time emphasizing the need for confession within the religious community. Most importantly, the defense of confession brings out some of the most personal statements in the trial. Confessing publicly in order to receive absolution was not only the best way for the order Templars to demonstrate their piety, but also would have represented the last chance for the order to be saved should they be guilty at the trial. The statements that they did confess properly depicted the desperate need for the answers to this charge to be believed.

The accusations of improper confession reflected the Church's growing emphasis on proper penitential practice as a defining element of piety. At the forefront of this piety was a belief in the institutions of the church. Mary C. Mansfield, a historian of medieval penance, argued that "the purpose of penance was first and most obviously the reconciliation with God that promised eternal salvation, but it was also the reconciliation with the institutional church through the authority of its sacraments and its priests."¹³⁵ Confession was an important sacramental rite. As a result, in order for absolution to be obtained, the rite must have been performed by an ordained priest. The first of these charges, article 24, stated "that they believed and so it was said to them that the grand master of the order could absolve them from their

¹³⁵ Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1995), 16-17.

sins.”¹³⁶ This charge showed the fear of the order as a religious entity that existed outside the structure of the church. The brothers of the order were responsible only to the grand master and he to the pope. The charge that they had confessed to the grand master represents apprehension on the part of the religious authorities that the order would extend their internal hierarchy to encompass sacramental ritual.

In response to article 24, the Templars go beyond a simple denial of the accusation. They acknowledge the sacred right of the ordained clergy to hear confession. Brother Peter Borden of Toulouse, a standard-bearer for the order told that “the brothers did not believe that the master of the order could absolve them from sins because he was not a priest.”¹³⁷ Brother Peter’s testimony would reinforce the Templar correct practices and show that the order recognized the hierarchical right of the church to perform the sacraments. Another Templar witness, Brother Guillaume de Guaren de Casali sancti Vassi, a sergeant, took this statement further by offering divine power as an explanation for why the grand master could not hear confession. He states that the master of the order cannot absolve sins “since the master of the order is not a priest he does not have the power to absolve brothers of the order from their sins.”¹³⁸ By pointing out that only the priest had the power to absolve sins both of these Templars affirm the social structure of the church.

Another way that the trial record suggests the Templars reaffirmed the hierarchy of the church was through confessing to other orders. In Cyprus, the Templars state that they often confessed to other religious orders. Brother John the Spaniard of Portugal, a knight, in response to article 74, said that “when they wished, they might confess to others, and they used to confess

¹³⁶ Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, 47.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

to Minor and Preaching brothers, moreover, also to priests of the Carmelite order, and sometimes they took Communion from their hands."¹³⁹ The non-Templar witness, Presbyter Nicholas of Vienne, a priest in Nicosia, affirms this statement by testifying that he "frequently saw brothers of the order in Nicosia confess to Preaching and Minor brothers and sometimes to others."¹⁴⁰ Another priest living in Nicosia, Lord Guillaume de Biblio, testifies in agreement with Presbyter Nicholas while adding that he saw the Templars confess to other religious orders while in Acre.¹⁴¹ Lord Guillaume's testimony suggests that the Templar practice of confessing to other religious orders occurred outside of Cyprus as well. As in the case of Templar hospitality toward other orders mentioned above, the Templar use of the priests of other orders shows a religious link between the communities of the orders.

The Templar defense of confession was more than an endorsement of the church hierarchy. The majority of the Templar testimony about confession centers around a desire to properly participate in the sacrament so as to attain salvation. The second accusation, article 74, charged "that they ordered them not to confess to anyone except brothers of the order."¹⁴² The significance of this charge must be viewed in the context of the rising importance of public penance. The Knights Templar had many ordained priests within their order. With rare exception, the brothers of the order could confess their sins properly without ever leaving the chapter house. Brother Baldus of Acre, a sergeant, responded to article 73 saying "when the brothers of the order are able to have a good supply of Templar priests of the order, they prefer to confess to them rather than to others, and to take communion from their hands, but when they are not able to, they freely confess to other religious, and to Minors and Preachers, and took

¹³⁹ Ibid., 201.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 414.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 416.

communion from their hands as he himself did.”¹⁴³ With confession used as a legal instrument for dealing with venial sins, it was important that confession, and by extension penance, was performed in public. To keep sin within the secrecy of the order would harm the order’s public image, as sins against the community would not have acknowledged as absolved.

By participating in confession outside of the order, the Templars would have been able to build ties with the religious community they confessed in. These ties are evident in the trial in the specific references to Templars by name. Lord John de Bay, a knight in Nicosia, told the inquisitorial court that he “saw that Brother Jacques de Doumanin, now brother and preceptor of the house in Nicosia...used to confess to Brother Adam of the Carmelite order.”¹⁴⁴ He saw others but did not remember their names. Similarly, Lord John the Lombard, a knight, testified that he “saw the brother Guillaume de Beaujeu, then master of the order of the Temple, confess to Brother Peter Regio, priest of the Preaching order.”¹⁴⁵ The response to the question of proper confession is the only time in the trial that the non-Templar witnesses mention the names specific Templars. This mentioning of names conveys a sense of importance to the matter of confession. Additionally, it suggests that the witnesses that testify had a personal interest in the confessions of the men they named. While the trial record reveals nothing more about the relationship between these men, it demonstrates the link between the Templars and the religious community in which they confessed. Evidence of Templar confession within this community, despite the existence of ordained Templar priests, suggests that public confession was an important aspect in Templar piety.

¹⁴² Ibid., 50.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 400-01.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 418.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 422.

Conclusion

The testimony from the Trial of the Templars in Cyprus revealed a great deal of information about the daily religious lives of the late Templars. The circumstances of the trial allowed for the order of fighting monks to give more accurate testimony. In this testimony, they extended a defense of the extremely heretical charges of heresy, sodomy, and idol worship and gave information about the religious practice of the order. Many of the non-Templar witnesses reaffirmed these statements of religious practice in their testimony in favor of the order. These non-Templar witnesses, in their defense of the order, depicted a community-oriented image of the Knights Templar.

Much of the religious practice of the order was externally manifested to the religious community as a whole. This outward religious practiced reached all three of the traditional classes within the religious community. The evidence that was offered by members of the nobility supporting Templar religious practices showed the Latin nobility of Cyprus was a significant part of this larger religious community. They interacted with the Templars through participating with the order in the sacraments of communion and confession, and witnessed deeds of charity and military valor done by the order. In addition to the nobility, the other religious orders had a significant relationship with the Knights Templar. The trial record showed that the orders would often interact in their everyday religious practice. In charitable deeds the Templars were quick to give to the Mendicants and readily opened their doors in hospitality members of the other religious orders who needed a place to stay. In Cyprus the Templars were especially close to the Dominican order that had a large presence on the island. They would not only offer housing to them, but would make their confessions to them. Despite the availability of Templar priests, the Templars frequently confessed to Dominicans, Carmelites and other

religious orders. Lastly, the Templars interacted religiously with the poor of the community through their giving of charity. The brothers of the order testified to giving to the poor above and beyond what was required in the rule of the order. This testimony showed a religiously constructed sense of obligation toward the needy. Thus, in their participation in religious acts with the nobility, the other religious orders, and the poor, the Templars practiced piety through interacting with the community as a whole.

The Templar religious participation was driven by a genuine desire to attain salvation. The trial record depicts the brothers of the order as concerned for their souls. Many of the Templars, especially the young knights, of whom many resided in Cyprus, saw their primary way to attain salvation in fighting against the enemies of the catholic faith and reclaiming the Holy Land. The inability to accomplish this task must have been frustrating to the Templars desires for salvation. The outward manifestation of Templar faith could have been a potential method of dealing with the stagnation of the military role of the order. In trial, the Templars expressed their willingness to fight on crusade in at their reception in the short depositions. In the longer depositions they then progressed to a defense of their faith based in their belief in the sacraments of the church, their active works of charity, and their frequent confession. The evidence for these works of faith showed that Templar religion was changing in the fourteenth century. The externalized piety of the Templars, combined with their declining military role indicated that the order was in a state of transition. Already in 1310 the focus of the order had shifted from the idea of a crusade toward community religious vocation similar to the other religious orders. The ultimate end of the trial of the Templars suppressed the order and made it impossible to determine if any real change in the order would have occurred. The trial record does make it clear, though, that in 1310, the order, while in the danger of dissolution, still

practiced its piety as avidly and more so as it did in at the time of its founding. The order was an essential part of the larger religious community and played an important role in practicing piety within it.

Appendices

The List of the Articles of Accusation

That, namely, that each one in his reception, and sometimes after-wards, or as soon as the first reaching up new members could have the opportunity for it, denied Christ, sometimes Christ descending, and sometimes Jesus, and sometimes God, and sometimes the Holy Virgin, and sometimes all the saints of God, insulted or blasphemed by those who received him.

That the Brothers commonly did this.

That some of them did this.

Sometimes even after the reception.

That the receivers said and taught those whom they received that Christ, or sometimes Jesus, or sometimes the crucified one, was not the true God.

That they told those whom they received that he was a false prophet.

That they said that he had not suffered nor been crucified for the redemption of himself but for his own.

That neither the receivers nor those whom they received had a hope of salvation through him (Christ), and that they said to them they received or something of the sort.

That they took from whom they received not on the cross or on a representation or sculpture of the cross and images of Christ, although there were being shown or something of the sort.

That they refused that the cross itself be brought upon with their feet.

That their brethren sometimes brought upon the cross.

That they sometimes blasphemed and insulted others in front of their cross and several times they did this in Church publicly.

That some of them on that day or on another of that Week were accustomed to meet together for the purpose of counseling and visitation.

That they obtained a certain gift which appeared to them in their meeting.

That they did this in contempt of Christ and the crucified him.

That they did not believe in the sacrament of the altar.

That some of them did not believe.

That some of them did not believe.

Appendices

Appendix A - The List of the Articles of Accusation

List of the Articles of Accusation from the trial in Cyprus as translated by Gilmour-Bryson. This list is incomplete. It lists only 87 of the 127 charges that the Templars were questioned on.¹⁴⁶

- I. First, namely that each one at his reception, and sometimes after-wards, or as soon as the one receiving new member could have the opportunity for it, denied Christ, sometimes Christ crucified, and sometimes Jesus, and sometimes God, and sometimes the blessed Virgin, and sometimes all the saints of God, induced or exhorted by those who received him.
- II. That the brothers commonly did this.
- III. That most of them did this.
- IV. Sometimes even after the reception.
- V. That the receivers said and taught those whom they received that Christ, or sometimes Jesus, or sometimes the crucified one, was not the true God.
- VI. That they told those whom they received that he was a false prophet.
- VII. That they said that he had not suffered nor been crucified for the redemption of humankind but for his sins.
- VIII. That neither the receivers nor those received had a hope of salvation through him (Christ), and this they said to those they received or something of the sort.
- IX. That they made those whom they received spit on the cross or on a representation or sculpture of the cross and image of Christ, although those who were being received sometimes spat beside it.
- X. That they ordered that the cross itself be trampled upon with their feet.
- XI. That these brothers sometimes trampled upon that cross.
- XII. That they sometimes urinated and made others urinate on that cross and several times they did this on Good Friday.
- XIII. That some of them on that day or on another of Holy Week were accustomed to meet together for the aforesaid trampling and urination.
- XIV. That they adorned a certain cat which appeared to them at their meeting.
- XV. That they did this in contempt of Christ and the orthodox faith.
- XVI. That they did not believe in the sacrament of the altar.
- XVII. That some of them did not believe.
- XVIII. That most of them did not believe.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 45-51.

- XIX. That they did not believe in other sacraments of the church.
- XX. That the priests of the order did not say the words by which the body of Christ is consecrated during the canon of the mass.
- XXI. That some of them did not say these words.
- XXII. That most of them did not say these words.
- XXIII. That the receiver enjoined this upon them.
- XXIV. That they believed and so it was said to them that the grand master of the order could absolve them from their sins.
- XXV. That the visitor could absolve them from sin.
- XXVI. That the preceptors of whom many were laymen could absolve them from sin.
- XXVII. That they actually did this.
- XXVIII. That some of them did.
- XXIX. That the grand master confessed this in the presence of great persons even before he was captured.
- XXX. That in the reception of brothers of the order or at about that time sometimes the receiver and sometimes the received kissed each other on the mouth, on the navel or the naked stomach, and on the backside, or at the base of the spine.
- XXXI. That they kissed sometimes on the umbilicus.
- XXXII. That they kissed sometimes at the base of the spine.
- XXXIII. That they kissed sometimes on the virile member.
- XXXIV. That at reception they made those whom they received swear that they would not leave the order.
- XXXV. That they considered them to be professed.
- XXXVI. That the receptions of brothers were held secretly.
- XXXVII. That no one was present except brothers of the order.
- XXXVIII. That on account of that secrecy, for a long time strong suspicion worked against the brothers of the order.
- XXXIX. That it was commonly held.
- XL. That it was said to brothers whom they received that they could have carnal relations with one another.
- XLI. That it was licit for them so to do.
- XLII. That they ought to do this to one another and to suffer it.
- XLIII. That to do this was not a sin for them.

That they themselves or many of them did this.

That some of them did this.

That brothers in each province had idols, namely heads, some of which had three faces and some one, and some had a human skull.

That they adored these idols and this idol, and specially in their grand chapters and meetings.

That they venerated it.

They venerated it as a god.

They venerated it as their savior.

That some of them venerated it.

That most of them venerated it.

That they said that that head could save them.

That it could make the brothers rich.

That it gave all the riches of the order to them.

That they made the earth germinate.

That the idol made the trees flower.

That they wound about the head of, or touched, the said idols with cords which they girded themselves with over their shirt or skin.

That at their reception every brother was given the cords or other lengths of them.

That they did this in veneration of the idol.

That they ordered them that they gird themselves with the cords and that they wore them continually, and they did this even at night.

That the brothers or the order were received in the aforesaid way.

That they did this even at night.

That they did so everywhere.

That most of them did so.

That those who did not wish to do the aforesaid things during their reception or afterwards were killed or sent to jail.

That some of them were.

That for the most part they did.

That they ordered them under oath not to reveal the aforesaid matters.

- That they ordered them not to reveal the aforesaid under pain of death or jail.
- LXX. That they should never reveal the method of their reception.
- LXXI. That neither did they dare to talk of the aforesaid matters among themselves.
- LXXII. That if they were found to have revealed their reception they were punished with death or imprisonment.
- LXXIII. That they ordered them not to confess to anyone except brothers of the order.
- LXXIV. That the brothers of the said order knowing the aforesaid errors neglected to correct them.
- LXXV. That they did not withdraw from the observance of the errors and the community of the brothers although they had the ability to withdraw and to do the aforesaid thing.
- LXXVI. That it was enjoined upon the brothers to increase the wealth of the order by any means they could whether good or evil.
- LXXVII. That they did not consider that to be a sin.
- LXXVIII. That each and every one of the errors are certain and manifest between the brothers of the order.
- LXXIX. That there is public and common opinion about these matters, and as much between brothers of the order as outside.
- LXXX. That brothers in great numbers have confessed the aforesaid as much before the court as outside, and before eminent persons and in several places.
- LXXXI. That the brothers of the order, both knights and priests and others, confessed the aforesaid or a large part of the errors in the presence of our lord pope and the lord cardinals.
- LXXXII. [cannot be read]
- LXXXIII. [cannot be read]
- LXXXIV. Let each be asked separately about their receptions, about the places in which they were received, about the times of their receptions, and about those present at their receptions, and of the manner of their receptions.
- LXXXV. Let it be asked of each when and by whom the errors began and what their origin was, and what was the cause, and about all circumstances, and about other matters of which it is seen to be beneficial.
- LXXXVI. Let it be asked of each of the brothers if they know where these heads or idols, or any of them, are, and in what manner they were carried and kept and by whom.

Appendix B – Names that appear in this Paper

List of names of medieval persons as they appear in this paper.

Richard I the Lionhearted (1157-1199) – King of England (1189-1199). Conquered Cyprus in 1191 and sold the island to the Templars.

Amaury of Lusignan lord of Tyre (d. 1310) – Governor of Cyprus (1306-1310). Brother of King Henry II of Cyprus.

Henry II of Lusignan (d. 1324) – King of Cyprus and Jerusalem (1285-1324). Exiled to Armenia from 1308-1310.

Clement V (1260-1314) – Pope (1305-1314). Clement was Pope throughout the trial of the Templars. He was also the first Pope to reside in Avignon, France where the Papacy remained until 1377.

Philippe IV le Bel (1268-1314) – King of France (1285-1314). Ordered the initial arrest of the Templars for heresy in 1307.

Hugh de Payns (d. 1136) – Grand Master of the Temple (1119-1136). Founding member of the Knights Templar.

Hugh, Count of Champagne – Feudal lord of Hugh de Payns until 1125 when he renounced his worldly wealth, giving generously to the Order, and joined the Knights Templar.

Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint (1090-1153) – Renowned ecclesiastic. Joined Cistercian Monastery of Cîteaux in 1113. Wrote *In Praise of the New Knighthood* for the Templars to the council of Troyes in 1129.

Innocent II (d. 1143) – Pope (1130-1143). At the second Lateran council in 1139 granted the Templars autonomy from church hierarchy and the right to collect tithes.

Guy de Lusignan (d. 1194) – King of Jerusalem (1186-1192) and Cyprus (1192-1194). Bought Cyprus from King Richard of England after the Templars had resold it. Founded the Lusignan dynasty in Cyprus.

al-Ashraf Khalil – Sultan (1290-1293). He was the son of the Mamluk sultan Qalawun. Succeeded in capturing Acre and finishing off the crusader forces in Palestine in 1291.

Jacques de Molay (1244-1314) – Grand master of the Temple (1298-1314). The last Templar grand master, Molay was arrested in 1307 and held captive at the castle of Chinon in France. He was burned as a relapsed heretic when he retracted his confession for a second time in 1314.

Hugh de Pairaud (d. 1314) – Visitor of France. Second most powerful position in the Knights Templar.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) – In his *Inferno* he placed Philip le Bel in the circle of Hell devoted to avarice for his arrest of the Templars.

Louis IX, Saint (1214-1270) – King of France (1226-1270). Called St. Louis. Led a crusade that attacked Egypt in 1248.

Guillaume de Nogaret (d. 1314) – Lawyer and royal court official involved in the trial of the Templars and the trial of Boniface VIII. Became Philippe le Bel's chief advisor.

Boniface VIII (1235-1303) – Pope (1295-1303). Struggled with Philippe le Bel over the power to tax the clergy. He was attacked at Anagni in 1303 by Guillaume de Nogaret and later died. After death he was tried posthumously on charges similar to those used against the Templars.

Guillaume de Beaujeu (d. 1291) – Grand master of the Temple (1273-1291). Died in the Templar defense of Acre.

Nicholas IV (d. 1292) – Pope (1288-1292).

Charles II the Lame (1248-1309) – King of Naples and Sicily (1285-1309). Count of Anjou and Provence.

Ayme d'Oselier – Marshal of the order in Cyprus; highest ranking Templar officer in Cyprus. Templar witness 1

Reynald de Seisson – A prominent landowner in Cyprus who had been imprisoned by Amaury. Non-Templar witness 3, group 1.

Aigue de Bessan – Captain of Cyprus; led the party that supported King Henry II's claim to the throne. Non-Templar witness 4, group 1.

Peter Ysan – A knight in Cyprus responsible for guarding the imprisoned Templars at his estate. Non-Templar witness 8, group 1.

Jacques de Montolive – A landowner in Cyprus who spoke out against Amaury in 1310. He was exiled to Armenia. Non-Templar witness 6, group 1.

Jacques de Plany – A knight of Cyprus present at the battle of Acre. Non-Templar witness 7, group 1.

Raymond de Benthon – Non-Templar witness 9, group 1.

Brother Baldwin of Villa Ganti – A Dominican Friar questioned in Cyprus. Non-Templar witness 33, group 2.

Brother Hugh Oliver of Vahosca – A knight who joined the Templars in Provence in 1303. Templar witness 44.

Brother Berengar of Rivosico – A knight who joined the Templars in Barcelona in 1297. Templar witness 43.

Lord Philip Bonjory – Non-Templar witness 24, group 2.

Lord John of Cahors – Non-Templar witness 15, group 2.

Lord Stephen of Cahors – Non-Templar witness 21, group 2.

Brother John the Spaniard of Portugal – A knight who joined the Templars in Insa in 1300. Templar witness 13.

Brother Dennis of Vienne – A knight who joined the Templars in Châlons-sur-Saône in 1293. Templar witness 7.

Brother Geoffrey of Port – A knight who joined the Templars in Palingiali in 1301. Templar witness 17.

Brother Guillaume of Guaren of Casali sancti Vassi – A knight who joined the Templars in Lombardy in 1292. Templar witness 14.

Brother Guy of Lengles – A knight who joined the Templars in Burgundy in 1300. Templar witness 15.

Brother Baldwin of Cery – A knight who joined the Templars in Paris in 1267. Templar witness 42.

Brother Aymo of Gala – A knight who joined the Templars in Châlons-sur-Marne in 1305. Templar witness 24.

Brother Andrew of Renovaria – A knight who joined the Templars in Paris in 1300. Templar witness 46.

Brother Nicholas of Moncucco – A knight who joined the Templars in Asti in 1303. Templar witness 48.

Brother Peter Borden of Toulouse – A standard-bearer who joined the Templars in Toulouse in 1284. Templar witness 26.

- Presbyter Nicholas of Vienne - A priest in Nicosia. Non-Templar witness 21, group 2.
- Lord Guillaume de Biblio - A priest living in Nicosia. Non-Templar witness 16, group 2.
- Brother Baldus of Acre - A sergeant who joined the Templars in Apulia in 1299. Templar witness 75.
- Lord John de Bay - A knight in Nicosia. Non-Templar witness 17, group 2.
- Brother Jacques de Doumanin - A preceptor of the Templars in Cyprus who joined the order in Dijon in 1295. Templar witness 40.
- Brother Adam - A priest of the Carmelite order.
- Lord John the Lombard - Non-Templar witness 22, group 2.
- Brother Peter Regio - A priest of the Dominican order.

Appendix C – Timeline of the Trial of the Templars in Cyprus

1099 Capture of Jerusalem in the first crusade. Establishment of the crusader states in Palestine.

1119 Foundation of the order of the Knights Templar

1129 Council of Troyes. The Knights Templar become an official order of the Roman Church.

1191 Richard the Lionheart acquires Cyprus and sells it to the Templars for 100 000 besants.

1192 Templars give back the island of Cyprus only to have Richard resell it to Guy of Lusignan.

1291 Fall of Acre, last crusader city in Palestine.

October 13, 1307 Philip IV has the Templars arrested on initial charges.

October 19, 1307 Hearings begin in Paris.

February, 1308 Clement V suspends hearings.

1308 Templars are imprisoned in Cyprus.

March, 1309 Beginning of Episcopal Inquiries.

August, 1309 Papal commission opens inquiry into the order.

1310 Templars are arrested in Cyprus.

May 1310 Trial of the Templars begins in Cyprus.

May 1310 Burning of 54 Templars near Paris.

October 16, 1311 Opening of council of Vienne.

1312 Council of Vienne decides to disband the order.

March 18, 1314 Burning of Jacques de Molay.

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