The Templar Knights

Mark Rouska
Western Oregon University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/his

Part of the European History Commons, History of Religion Commons, Medieval History Commons, and the Military History Commons

Recommended Citation

This Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Theses, Papers and Projects (History) by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@wou.edu, kundas@mail.wou.edu, bakersc@mail.wou.edu.
The Templar Knights

Mark Rouska
Sr.Seminar
Final Copy
The Knights Templar

.....that you will find very few men in the vast multitude which throngs to the holy land who have not been unbelieving scoundrels, sacrilegious plunders, homicides, perjurers, adulterers, whose departure from Europe is certainly a double benefit, seeing that people in Europe are glad to see the back of them, and the people to whose assistance they are going to in the holy land are delighted to see them! It is is certainly beneficial to those who live on both sides of the sea since they protect one side and desist from molesting the other. St. Bernard

The Templar Knights came into existence after the First Crusades. There are many myths and stories about the knights. Hollywood has portrayed them as gallant men on white horses, slaying dragons and freeing the oppressed, or courting their lady fair. Who can forget the story of Arthur and the Knights of the Round and his betrayal by his most trusted Knight Sir Lancelot and his beloved wife Guinevere. But movies and reality are at separate ends of the spectrum in the case of the Templars.

It is my belief that the Knights Templar became a noble institution, but succumbed to the evils of greed and power, and would eventually become that which they combated. This corruption led to their eventual demise. Their need for more money, land, and power became an object of jealousy for those who were not allowed to touch them. The great power struggle of a strong Catholic church and monarchical system produced a clash of wills, and the Templars with all their glory and wealth were caught in the middle. When this conflict occurred the knights former allies subjected the Templars to torture and ridicule. When push came to shove they found they had few friends in the monarchical system. And the pope himself a weak

---

willed man, turned his back on these beloved warriors.

In my paper I intend to research the rise and fall of these gallant knights, and seek out the truth about their charges of financial corruption, as well as the truth about the other charges brought against them. I will follow this with an analysis of the trials and what happened to God's Warriors.

I find it interesting how throughout history that human corruption seems always present. It is as if some people can never accept the fact that another human has more money or power than themselves. It has been this way for many years, and yet all of mankind has not learned from our greedy sins of the past. We see corruption in politics, in sports, and in the case of the Templar Knights in the holiest of institutions. The corruption we see stems not only from power but money as well. Money can corrupt at the top, and bottom of all class systems, corruption knows no prejudices. It effects even the most holy of ideals without guilt or restraint.

The need for the Templars became apparent in the early 1100's. The Muslim armies were constantly harassing the lands of King Baldwin I and his successor, Baldwin II in Jerusalem, which was the Holy Land. The Catholic church had sworn to protect this land from the confiscation by the Muslims. Castles under the protection of Baldwin changed back and forth between Muslim and Christian inhabitors quite frequently according to Edward Burman; "...the important northern frontier castle of Baghras passed in and out of Templar hands almost once a generation from the 1130's to end of the thirteenth century".2

Not only were the castles being attacked but due to the isolation of the Holy City

of Jerusalem from sea ports and the extensive travel between the ports and the
city, the city needed protection as well. Travelers on pilgrimage to the Holy City were
often accosted by thieves and small armies usually of Muslim decent.
One such account given by Abbot Ecekhard of Aura shows the dangers of traveling in
this time which involve "...innumerably and unheard of torments of the same route,
with daily martyrdoms and many dangers which bring grief and anxiety to the
pilgrims". The events that were occurring in Jerusalem and nearby areas were
decreasing the population of the area. People were moving to safer areas in great
numbers and this became of great concern for Baldwin I. There was concern that the
Holy City would soon be evacuated, and that the Muslims would have control of the
city. It was now becoming apparent that an army was needed to protect property
owners and visitors on pilgrimage as well and the Templars would be the army to
fulfill this need.

The founding date of the Knights has been widely disputed. Some historians
believe they started as early as 1114, and some that believe it could have been as late
as 1119. One thing most historians do agree on is that originally there were just nine
Knights. St. Bernard and Hughes De Champagne were the original sponsors of the
Knights. Hugh De Payen was a vassal of the Count Hughes De Champagne, and De
Payen became the first Grand Master of the Knights. The Knights were first housed
in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Their mission according to Allan Forey "......
was to provide protection for pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land, but within a few years

3 Ibid., 16.
4 Vassel: "In feudalism, one holding land from a superior in return for allegiance and homage. A
vassel is subordinate to a lord, and superior to a vavasour. Madeline Penner Cowman, Medieval
it was forming part of the Christian military against the Muslims".  

King Baldwin II was apparently so impressed with this new army that he petitioned St. Bernard, who it is said was second in power to the pope, and his cousin De Payen, to get papal sanction for the order. He wanted the Pope to provide them with a formal rule and put them under Papal protection. Bernard advocated this as well, and soon Bernard and De Payen were in Troy with the pope's council and the Knights were officially placed under papal control. With this papal decree the knights would only have to answer to the pope, meaning they were no longer under the control of any king, or secular law.

The Templars were expected to live a monastic life, one of prayer and forsaking worldly goods. In the early times of the Templars this monastic lifestyle was not always their idea of a worthwhile cause. At one point early in their career there was talk of abandoning the order. In a letter by De Payen's as paraphrased by Peter Partner, he discusses the lack of enthusiasm for the order;

.... because they were made to work humbly for others, unknown to the rest of the Christian world, and without even the benefit of the prayers of Christian folks. At this early stage early Templars were pessimistic about the role they had chosen. In a world in which the religious obedience of the monastery was reckoned the surest way to salvation, the obligation to shed blood instead of to pray seemed an inferior way to serve God: The poor Knights seemed to be accepting of a religious rule life without obtaining its full benefits.

6 For a detailed account of the Papal acceptance of the Templars see John J. Robinson, Dungeon Fire and Sword: The Knights Templar In The Crusades, (New York:M. Evans and Company, Inc.) 36.
7 Partner, The Knights Templar and Their Myth, p 4.
For the first nine years the Knights remained just the original nine members. In 1126 De Payen went on a trip to recruit men for the order. De Payen’s recruits came from all backgrounds including those that challenged the law at times. Partner suggests “The overwhelming need for trained troops in the Holy Land diluted the call for a strong ethical basis for the Order”. They dressed conservatively, often had shaggy beards, and wore poorly looking clothing. As time passed and the order grew in its importance dress became more sophisticated, and qualifications for entry into the order became more important as well.

The order was no longer open to just anyone with a horse who believed in God and the Catholic church. Membership was only allowed to direct descendants of knights and young men who on their father’s side were knights. Their clothing became more distinct as the order became more popular and subsequently more wealthy. Eventually the knight wore a white tunic with a red cross over the left breast. Beneath that they wore a chain mail covering everything but the knight’s sword arm.

In the early days of the Templars there were no written rules. The Knights were to defend persons on pilgrimages and defend the Church. As they grew in fame and numbers laws were established to protect the order. They were not allowed to have sex with a woman or man, carry money, accept money or bribes. They could not harm a brother in the order or kill a Christian. They were not allowed to do anything without permission of a superior. According to Francis Gies the worst crime “...for a

---

member of a Military Order was apostasy, denying the Cross, even to save his life”.10

Along with the above rules they adopted policies that were known as the “Code of Chivalry”. This code was a guideline for the knights to adhere to. The code involved treating fellow Knights and those considered inferior with dignity and humility. It prohibited attacking unarmed citizens. Finally the Knights fought only for the glory of God and Church, not for fight for financial gain.11

The command structure of the Knights as detailed by historian Charles Addison began with:

The Grand Master, who was the commander of the Temple, and answered only to the pope, the other officers were as follows.

The Marshall whose role was to execute military commands in battle: In the event of the Grand Master's demise the Marshall would replace him.

The Grand Preceptor of the Temple's job was to oversee all receipts and monies whenever the Grand Master was outside of Jerusalem The Preceptor was in command of the house.

The Draper's role was to clothe the troupes as equally as possible. This meant he could not clothe one Knight more elegantly than the others.

The Standard Bearer was in charge of displaying the Beauseant, the war banner of the Knights. He was supported by many squires who made sure the colors never fell, or were captured by the enemy.

The Guardian of the Chapel had the responsibility of bringing the portable chapel and decorated altar to battle sites, so the Knights could fulfill their monastic

---

10 Ibid., 125
11 Microsoft, Encarta, , 1998
duties.

The Turcopilar was in command of the light horse infantry usually of half Muslim and half Christian descent. They were well informed in the art of Muslim warfare and were paid by the Templars. They were not considered knights of the order. They were comparable to the famed Indian Scouts that were used by the U.S. Calvary during the plains wars.¹²

The Knights Templar were well trained and disciplined and took their oath to protect seriously they would soon become the role model of the well kept knight.

In the beginning of the Templars' service their orders were limited to just working from fort to fort in the Holy land as the country was far too vast to defend for a small army. These forts were manned with Templars as well as the Turcopilar who were paid to man the forts. According to Partner: “The watershed of crusading history was the collapse of the Kingdom of Jerusalem after the Battle of Hattin in 1187. No feudal monarchy could have emerged with its powers unimpaired after such a blow”.¹³ The Templars became much more important to the monarchs of the region, since they had professional soldiers, as well as financial backing to support an army. They were constantly being sought for their advice on issues of warfare by the monarchs.

Whenever a crusade in the early years of the Templars occurred they were expected to fight for the secular leader, and sometimes this alliance was a bit shaky, Gies writes; “...whenever a new crusade was undertaken, the knights and Orders were obliged to submit to the leadership, usually royal or imperial, of the expedition’s head. The

¹³ Partner, *The Knights Templar and Their Myths*, 20.
arrangement did not always work smoothly".  

The Templar's first opportunity to join the Crusades came at the onset of the Second Crusade. The fall of Edessa, a Christian city, caused concern to the Pope Eugenius III. This city's demise led to the connection of the Turks of Iran and the Turks of Anatolia. "The loss of Edessa was a traumatic shock for the Christians of Western Europe, and with hindsight appears as the first step towards the ultimate disintegration of the crusading states—a mere half-century after the hard-won conquest."  

The Second Crusade was led by Louis VII of France. His troops were undisciplined and often stopped at every Muslim town to loot the local treasury. The Templars exemplified a new discipline unseen to previous crusaders.

Now the King liked the example which they set and was glad to imitate it, and he wanted the army to be influenced in that direction, for he knew that even if extreme hunger should weaken them, unity of spirit would also strengthen them in their weakness. By common consent, therefore, it was decided that during this dangerous period all should establish fraternity with Templars, rich and poor taking oath the they would not flee the field and they would obey in every respect the officers assigned to them by the Templars.  

Even though the men united in their cause, the Second Crusade ended in disaster and was lost. According to Burman they lost because "...it seems that the rigours of the journey together with innate antagonism and the temptations placed before them

14 Gies, The Knights In History,113.
15 Burman, Templar Knights Of God, 55.
16 Ibid., 57.
were too much for many of the crusaders. Moreover, the whole enterprise was marked by a fatal lack of coordination between the army of Louis and that of Conrad Hohenstaufen, which preceded Louis along the overland route to the East."17

Ironically it would be in this crusade that the Templars would expand their financial business. Louis VII lacked all the funds for this Crusade so the Templars loaned him the funds to proceed. The Templars were not the only order to fight in the Second Crusade. They were accompanied by the Knights Hospitaller. The Hospitalers would become famous for the charity work and important for this paper was their rivalry with the Templars.

As time passed the Templars became uncooperative with the Hospitalers. "It has been said that the Templars on the whole pursued a political policy which favored the Palestinian baronage, and the Hospitalers one which favored the monarchy."18

The relationship between the Hospitalers and the monarchs would become important later after the trial and the disbursement of the Templars' monies. The Templars feelings towards their so-called Muslim enemies is illustrated in the story of a Muslim in Jerusalem who would come to worship at al-Aqsa mosque. The story was told by Usamah Ibn Munqidh and translated by Amin Maalouf;

I used to go to al-Aqsa mosque, where my Templar friend were staying. Along one side of the building was a small oratory in which the Franj had set up a church. The Templars placed this spot at my disposal that I might say my prayers. One day I entered, said Allahu Franj, threw himself upon, and grabbed me, and turned me toward the east, saying, "Thus do

17 Ibid., 56
18 Partner, The Knights Templar and their Myth, 20.
we pray." The Templars rushed forward and led him away. I then set myself to prayer once more, but this same man, seizing upon a moment of inattention, threw himself upon me yet again, turned my face to the east, and repeated once more, "Thus do we pray". Once again the Templars intervened, led him away, and apologized to me saying he is a foreigner. He has just arrived from the land of the Franj and he has never seen anyone pray without turning to face east. I answered that I had prayed enough and left, stunned by the behavior of this demon who had been so enraged at seeing me pray while facing the direction of Mecca.  

As one can see the Templars did not treat their enemy as hostiles, they treated them more so as acquaintances.

The constant jealousies of the feudal lords and militant factions for power and largess during the crusades would eventually lead to the loss of importance of the crusading movement. In addition the rivalry between the Templars and Hospitallers carried disputes in and out of battle. The lack of a need of the Templars as warriors resulted in their main purpose in their minds to be financiers and business men. This was not to say the no longer were involved in fighting, they just shifted their ideology.

As the popularity of the Knights grew they began to receive vast gifts from people across the Holy Lands and from people on pilgrimage whom they protected; even though each individual Knight could not hold possessions, the order could. As a result of these gifts and the spoils of war, the order began to accumulate vast sums of wealth. According to Burman;

---

The Templars came into the possession of their estates in four main ways. The first and most obvious, was by donation, whether as direct gifts form royalty and nobility or in the form of benefactions which guaranteed the continued availability of cash or sustenance until the donors death. Second, the Templars especially in Spain, gained large tracts of lands by conquest or as the results of grants made after military actions; this also clearly applied to the gifts of castles such as the Tortosa in the Holy Land. Third perhaps the less to be expected, the Templars also purchased land. This could be either as a means of investing cash produced by other sources or as part of an attempt to extend estates by adjoining lots of land. This tended to be a development in the later phases of the orders history.....Last of all, surprising and at the same time fascinating, was the possessions of land by reclamation.20

Monetary gifts were being given to the order by citizens, and as suggested by the historian Edward Burman, money was being bequeathed to the order as well. For instance, King Henry II of England left 5000 silver marks, and another 5000 for the defense of Jerusalem, in 1182. The Patriarch of Jerusalem left the order 16000 besants to defend Jerusalem.21 With their wealth on the rise the Templars soon began to offer small loans. The first loans were made to a couple that intended to use the money for a pilgrimage in the early 1100’s. They used their lands and home as collateral. In this manner the Templars also developed as a financial institution.

They now began to dress in clothing that fit their status in society. They were clean shaven, wore a tunic bearing their coat of arms, and shiny armor to be worn on Crusade or in tournament. They began to realize the potential money to be made and started loaning money to more than just landowners and persons on pilgrimage.

21 Ibid., 76.
King John I of England borrowed quite frequently, as well did King Henry III of England. Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, discuss King Henry III’s desperation for largess; "...his treasury depleted by military expeditions, he even pawned the English crown jewels to the Templars..."22 Already discussed is the loan the Templars made to Louis the VII of France to fund the Second Crusade.

Not only did the Templars loan money but they held some lands and properties in trust as well, even for the deceased. Monarchs and other wealthy people would often try and take receivership of these in trusted items, but the Templars would not relinquish any items. According to Charles Addison “Henry II in one instance demanded from the Templars the money deposited with them by a disgraced lord. He was told that money confided to them in trust they would deliver to no man without the permission of him who had in trusted it to be kept in the Temple.”23

Other services they offered were vault holdings of money and valuables for citizens. They collected taxes for both the pope and monarchs. The Templars began to collect taxes for the monarchs about 1184. The monarchs trusted the Templars’ implicitly with the taxation of the local citizen. Also they became keepers of the royal revenue. These financial services continued for the duration of the Templars' existence until the trial. However early in their careers as tax collectors, Gilbert of Ogerstan a Templar, in 1188, was found guilty of embezzlement of royal taxes, and was punished by the Grand Master, yet the monarchs still felt that the order was

honest and trustworthy with their monies. When the Templars got involved in finances and loans they knew they were going against their vows so business had to be conducted in covert ways. One such way was...

The sums allowed to the Templars for expenses could easily hide an extra payment, especially when the Order was assigned a fixed proportion of revenues for this purpose. In some other cases it is possible that interest was deducted from a loan at the time when the money was lent, so that the amount mentioned in the instrument of debt would represent the sum loaned, but not the actual amount received by the borrower.

In reference to their banking skills Baigent and Leigh write: "To drink like a Templar was a frequent smile in England; and despite their vow of chastity, the knights seem to have wenched as zealously as they drank. But whatever their conduct in such respects as these, their reputation for accuracy, honesty and integrity in financial affairs remained untarnished." As one can see they had a knack for finances and making money, but by accumulating this wealth they would soon be writing their own epitaph to their Order.

As time passed the Templars became more and more consumed with the making of money and acquisition of lands. Sometimes these men of God would use suspect methods in gaining largess. Helen Nicholson historian, makes reference to a story that accuses the Templars of overlooking their obligation to destroy the

25 Joshua Prower, "The Settlement OF the Latinos In Jerusalem's, Speculum, XXVII" (1952) No Publisher Given, as quoted in Edward Burman, The Templars Knights Of God: The Rise and Fall of the Knights Templar, p. 83  
26 Baigent and Leigh, The Temple and the Lodge, p. 49
Muslims, "... There was a legend in circulation which recounted how the Christians had failed to capture a Muslim fortress because some of the Christian leaders had been bribed by Muslim gold to raise the siege. This gold subsequently turned out to be copper."27

In another incident the knights were accused of placing their greed before their duties. Amin Maalouf recounts their lust for money by discussing the Templars' association with Muslim Assassins led by Rashid al-Din Sinan and the events that occurred when he and his men suggested converting to Christianity, which was one of the many duties of the Templars to encourage:

Rashid al-Din Sinan, known as the "old man on the mountain" sent a message to Amalric announcing that he and all his supporters were prepared to convert to Christianity. At the time the Assassins held several fortresses and villages in central Syria, where they lived relatively peaceful lives, seemingly having renounced the spectacular operations of bygone years. ....Rashid al-Din still commanded well-trained groups of killers and devoted preachers, many of the sect's members had become law abiding peasants, often even compelled to pay a regular tribute to the order of Templars....the old man hoped, among other things, that his flock would be exempted from the tribute, which only non-Christians had to pay. The Templars, who did not take their financial interest lightly, observed these contacts between Amalric, and the Assassins with some disquiet....One day in 1173, as several envoys of Rashid al-Din were returning from an audience with the king, the Templars laid an ambush and massacred them. There would be no further talk of conversion by the Assassins.28

---

The end of the order would come at the hands of French King Phillip the IV, or Phillip the "Fair," as he was commonly known. Phillip had a lust for power and he did not intend to share it with the pope and others. In fact he had some of his men break into Pope Boniface VIII's home and threaten him. Boniface would die a month later, Some historians believe Phillip poisoned him although this is not confirmed by other historians.

Pope Clement V succeeded Boniface VIII, and that pleased Phillip for he felt Clement was weak and easy to manipulate. Not only did Phillip want the papacy under his control, but he wanted to eliminate the Templars as well. One reason was his injured pride. He had asked for an honorary membership into the Templar order, such as the one that was given to King Richard I of England, but he was denied this request. He would not forget the insult. He also wanted the monies and lands owned by the order. Baigent and Leigh discuss the findings by Phillip of the Templar monies... "...in June 1306, a rioting mob had forced him (Phillip) to seek refuge in the Paris Temple, where he witnessed at first hand the staggering extent of the Order's wealth and resources. Phillip desperately needed money and the Templar treasure must have made him salivate."  

Phillip brought charges against the Templars to the pope. These charges were said to have been compiled through an investigation conducted by Phillip's minister, Guillaume de Plaisins. Plaisins stated that his investigation stemmed from the confessions of two Templars as early as 1305. Allegedly these two men confessed that they had denounced the Lord. Based on this information Phillip

29 Baigent and Leigh, The Temple and the Lodge, 50.
30 Ibid., 51.
allegedly had twelve men join the order as spies for his investigation. These spies had a mission to learn more about the Templars and these charges to discover if they were true. However in the later court proceedings it was never proven that these men existed.\textsuperscript{31} The charges would be given to the pope and were listed in a condensed version as follows:

1. That the members denied Christ, God, the Virgin Mary, or the saints during a secret ceremony

2. That the members committed a variety of sacrilegious acts on the cross of the image of Christ.

3. That the members practiced obscene kisses.

4. That the members encouraged and permitted the practice of sodomy

5. That the priests of the Order did not consecrate the Host.

6. That the members did not believe in the sacraments.

7. That the members practiced various sorts of idolatry.

8. That the Grand Master, or other dignitaries, absolved brethren from their sins.\textsuperscript{32}

Included on the above list is the charge of sodomy, which according to Robinson; "..... was being overworked, St. Dominic had accused the Cathars of it. Philip had leveled the same charge at Boniface VIII. Charges against men in high

\textsuperscript{31} Peter Partner, \textit{The Murdered Magicians}, (Vermont:Thorsons Publishing Group) 1987, 71.

\textsuperscript{32} Gilmore-Bryson, \textit{Trial of the Templars}, p17, As edited by Burman, \textit{The Templars Knights of God}, 166-167
stations seemed always to be made in bunches rather than in a single charge, and sodomy always seemed to be included."33 The above charges included accusations of spitting on the cross, collecting and worshiping various animal heads and other church abominations.

These charges were brought to Pope Clement V., but he admitted he did not believe them. Pope Clement V was not a strong willed pope and was often considered a puppet to Phillip. According to Partner;"...this does not mean it was ever his (Clement V) political aim to save, or to protect the Templars. Clement's aim was to vindicate the principles of Church law and of papal jurisdiction."34

Phillip had all the Templars rounded up and arrested while the orders officers were away. Each branch of the order was tried by local clergy from their respective home lands. Only in France and countries heavily influenced by France did the trials proceede as Phillip anticipated, with confessions building the case against the order.

In Germany the prosecution came to a complete standstill, and one of two archbishops even found the Templars innocent, to the Pope's irritation and displeasure. Pope Clement V continually exhorted the countries which normally did not use torture as a part of their judicial procedure, such as Aragon, and England, that they must use torture against the Templars; these exhortations show that the Pope knew perfectly well how the confessions had been obtained.35

Phillip the Fair was by no means conducting a fair trial as witnessed in the above quote by Partner. In fact when the pope, who was moving towards a fair trial, began

33 Robinson, Dungeon Fire and Sword, 458.
34 Partner, The Knights Templar and Their Myth, 72.
35 Ibid., 80.
his tactics, Phillip intervened and burned 54 Templars alive displaying how he wanted the trial to proceed. The trial was essentially a torture-laden ordeal of confessions, according to Parker; "To facilitate the process, torture was used openly and effectively. Under these conditions, a number of 'free and spontaneous' confessions were obtained although many of them were later repudiated as having been obtained under duress."36 The methods used to gain confession included "...regular use of the rack, the pulley torture, the ordeal of water, and the ordeal of fire."37 An example of the latter was to grease a Knight's feet with pig grease, and then suspend them over fire, burning the feet, until confessions were given.

Often times these torture techniques were used before imprisonment to build a case for Phillip, and his prosecuting attorney Guillaume de Nogaret. Sometimes the torture was so excessive that death occurred to the Knight before he could confess. According to Burman torture was used....

so much that Pope John XXII was later forced to issue a decree limiting the use of torture, while the issue was already discussed in the same Church Council that abolished the order of the Temple in 1312. The most notorious employers of torture were the inquisitors of Southern France, where the Cathar threat which had lead to the foundation of the inquisition had been strongest.38

In April 1310 The Templars built a defense for themselves, the defense essentially claimed all confessions were made under torture. Pope Clement V was reluctant to try anyone under these conditions. It was at this point with the case

36 Ibid., p. 87.
37 Burman, The Templars Knights Of God, p.162.
38 Ibid., 162.
struggling that Phillip IV burned the 54 officers of the order. According to Burman "..these executions had the desired effect as fresh terror was struck in the hearts of the Templars still in the hands of the inquisition. Aimery de Villiers-le-Duc, who was interrogated two days later, asserted quite openly that he would rather confess than be burned."39 Given all the confessions in August of 1311 Clement V called together clergy heads and decided the fate of the Templars. He decreed in 1312 that the order be suppressed. Clement V expressed the suppression as follows.

Therefore, with a sad heart, not by definitive sentence but by apostolic provision or ordinance the direct orders of the pope we suppress, with the approval of the sacred council, the order of Templars, and its rule, habit and name, by an inviolable and perpetual decree. We entirely forbid that any from this time forward should enter the order, or receiver wear its habit, or presume to behave as a Templar. If anyone acts otherwise he incurs automatic excommunication. In addition, we reserve the persons and the property for our own disposition and the apostolic see.40

The last officers of the order were ordered to be burned alive.41 H.J.A Shire details the account of Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Order, and his final statements while being executed; "....Jacques De Molay amid the flames were to summon his persecutors to justice before the Court of Heaven, and it is a fact that Pope Clement V was called within a few days to answer that indictment, while Phillip

39 ibid., 171
40 Robinson, Dungeon Fire and Sword, 462
41 For an excellent account of the demise of the Templars read H.J.A. Shire, The knights of Malta,
did not outlive the year." Robinson describes how the citizens viewed the ashes of Molay, and his fellow knights he was burned with, and how they;

...had taken on a mysterious even sacred aura. During the night people of Paris swam out to the island to put bits of cinders in their mouths, then swam back with the conviction that they were taking home holy relics. From the cold ashes grew legends, symbols, and even organizations over the centuries a head that, whatever based on fact or fantasy, evidenced a mystic memory of those warrior monks that would not let the Templars die.

In what only could be called ironic, the Grand Master De Molay was also the godfather of Phillip's son. With the trials over and the order dissolved it was apparent something must be done with all the monies, and holdings of the Templars.

Phillip having achieved his goal of the destruction of the order would soon be going after the bounty of holdings the order had accumulated, "putting aside the fact that he had already raped the Templar preceptory in France of every movable item of value." Phillip was anxious to use some of the funds for a new order which he would place his son in charge of, but for once Clement would show some strength, and he ordered a Papal bull *Ad Providum*, May 2, 1312. In this bull he ordered all property to be given to the Hospitalers, the rivals of the Templars. Their connection and alliance with the monarchy paid off as they were not forced to disband, and they gained some of the Templars wealth. The pope did release the lands the Templars held in the Iberian Peninsular to native Christian Kingdoms apparently under the pressure of the

---

42 Ibid., p. 27.
43 Robinson, *Dungeon Fire, and Sword*, 468-469.
44 Ibid., 462.
Royal families of those countries. But that is not to say that Phillip did not get his share of the Templar fortune according to Robinson:

He got Pope Clement V to agree that the secular monarchs, who after all were just obeying the Pope's orders to them, should be allowed to charge against the Templar properties the cost of arresting and feeding the Templars the cost of maintaining the properties they had been "holding" for the church, down even to the cost of the stakes, faggots, and torches required to burn the Templars to death.... In his subsequent calling of a new Crusade, the Pope made another cash concession to Phillip of France. He was to be permitted revenues for six years to provide funds for his Crusade to the Holy Land. Since he never went, it seems safe to assume that he pocketed the money.

Conclusion.

The Templars were formed to provide a service of protection for people of the Christian faith. Often times as was portrayed in the letter by De Payen this was a thankless job, whose only reward was a guarantee by the Catholic church of entry to heaven. For this service they were required to give up a normal life of business and pleasure, probably too much to ask for of these gallant knights. As like most of mankind when they found a way to collect money and lands they chose to do so against their vows. Having done this they opened their order up for criticism and greed by those who felt the Templars had more then they needed. Upon ignoring Phillips IV's plea to become an honorary knight they gained a powerful enemy, for his greed and lust for money was backed by his control of the region. Once he found he

45 Burman, The Templars Knights of God, 172-173
46 Robinson, Dungeon Fire and Sword, 464-465
could manipulate Pope Clement V and the so-called trials, he knew he would gain that which the Templars worked hard to achieve.

The Templars' lack of relationship with the 'French monarchs left them vulnerable to Phillip's greed. If the Templars had built a relationship like the relationship built between the Hospitalers and Phillip could they have avoided their doomed fate? Not likely Phillip's greed was much stronger then his need for friends. If Robinson's account of De Molay's curse on Phillip and Pope Clement is true and if one believes in divine providence then justice was finally carried out by the God that the Templars were sworn to follow.
Bibliography


