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Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, and Helen J. Nicholson, eds., *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307-1314)*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. xxvi + 399 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$99.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9780754665700 (hb); ISBN 9781409410096 (Kindle).

Review by Sophia Menache, University of Haifa.

From the time the Templars were arrested on 13 October 1307--the 'unlucky' Friday since then--interest in the Order and its downfall has constantly increased, the original astonishment of medieval chroniclers followed by the analysis of historians and the passionate approach of novelists, dramatists, and film writers. Each, in his or her respective time and space, has tried to decipher the enigma of the dissolution of an Order that had enjoyed so much wealth and prestige, as claimed by the fourteenth-century chronicler, Jean de Paris. The consequent, rich bibliography on the Templars and their Order thus raises the question whether it is still possible to contribute new insights after more than 700 years of continuous research.

Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, and Helen Nicholson faced this historiographical challenge and have done an excellent job. They edited twenty-eight papers presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at the University of Western Michigan, Kalamazoo (3-6 May 2007) and at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds (9-12 July 2007). Very coherent from a thematic, chronological perspective, the volume presents new insights into the many facets of the trial of the Templars. Significantly, the book also brings together young researchers at the beginning of their careers and well-known medievalists who paved the way for modern historiography on the Military Orders--first and foremost, Malcolm Barber, who wrote an excellent introduction for the present work, but also Alan Forey, Anthony Luttrell, Luis García Guijarro Ramos, Peter W. Edbury, Helen Nicholson, and Anne Gilmour-Bryson. The volume faithfully represents Ashgate's interest in crusader studies, which has brought about productive and much desired publications in the area during the past several decades.

The book comprises three main sections: the first part is devoted to developments before the trial; the second and larger section, to the trial in different areas of Christendom; and the third to different aspects of the trial and its aftermath. The title of Alain Forey's paper, "Could alleged Templar malpractices have remained undetected for decades?," hints at the author's approach with regard to the charges against the Templars. As to the reliability of the depositions, they probably intended to release seemingly repentant Templars from Capetian accusations, since most described behavior patterns about which they heard from secondary sources, but in which they themselves had not participated. Furthermore, if true, the malpractices ascribed to the Templars, especially those during the reception ceremony, could hardly have remained undetected. As Thomas Krämer convincingly shows, the nature of the interrogation dictated the nature of the confessions in most cases.

The question remains, however, about the factors that brought about the Capetian offensive against the Templars. Bernard Schotte provides one valid reason: the Templars' participation in the Battle of Courtrai (1302) on the side of the Flemish rebels. The Flemish military victory set the stage for the

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long, difficult struggle of the northern county for political independence, and remained a decisive stage in collective memory. The shameful defeat had an opposite effect on the Capetian court, which sought retaliation. The opportunity came two years later, at Mons-en-Pévèle, with Philip the Fair himself at the head of the army, an exceptional move in the long career of the Capetian king. One should note in this regard that the political stand of the Military Orders always remained a complex subject which has not yet received satisfactory attention in historical research.

During their two-hundred-year existence, the Templars more than once had supported the French King, even against the heirs of St. Peter, the Order's traditional protectors. Although the economic factor was long ago recognized as the main stimulus for Philip arresting the Templars and confiscating their property—a claim already voiced by Dante Alighieri, among many others—Ignacio de la Torre elaborates on the monetary fluctuations during the reign of Philip the Fair and the king's desperate need for silver after seven years of continuous debasement. De la Torre rightly bridges the arrest of the Templars with the expulsion of Lombards and Jews, extreme measures—though hardly new, at least with regard to the Jews—accompanied by confiscation of their wealth.

Whatever the reasons for the French initiative were, the last master of the Order, James of Molay, remains an intriguing figure. Molay was in the wrong place at the wrong time: visiting France at the time of the arrest, he was already an old warrior, incapable of fulfilling the critical role expected from him. Anthony Luttrell brings new, interesting data with regard to Molay's election (in either 1292 or 1293) and the master's ambiguous policy. However, it is rather dubious whether this election can be considered an anti-French move or whether it had some weight in Philip's anti-Templar policy; one can hardly think that the Capetian king would have waited fourteen or fifteen long years to realize his plans. Moreover, the very fact that James of Molay was given an honorary place in the funeral ceremony of Catherine of Courtenay, the wife of the king's brother, Charles of Valois, convincingly contradicts the allegedly negative influence of the master on the moves of Philip the Fair.

Nicholas Morton provides a much more credible factor, namely the growing dependence of the Military Orders on the goodwill and patronage of secular patrons. This development stood in contrast to the original papal expectations of independent Orders, which—as Jonathan Riley-Smith accurately has described them—were intended to become the long arms of the papacy. The two other great Military Orders, the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights, both evaded the fate of the Templars thanks to their independent states in Rhodes and Prussia. The Templars' dispersion throughout Christendom deprived them of a geopolitical basis and thus made the Order too vulnerable and too dependent on the Apostolic See. Pope Clement V's hesitant policy vis-à-vis the king of France, his main ally for the renewal of the crusade, actually sacrificed the Templars to the needs of the emergent national states.

The second part of the book comprises eight articles devoted to the problematic development of the trial in France. One can find here important insights, such as Jochen G. Schenk's well-documented study on family ties in the Templar Order and their influence on the overall conduct and inner discipline of its members. Thomas Krämer provides an original view of the inquisitors' state of mind by focusing on the seneschalship of Nîmes-Beucaire, where “most of the inquisitors...were convinced that they were dealing with guilty heretics....For reasons inherent to inquisitorial procedures, they tried to extract confessions whenever possible....Torture was only one means, perhaps not even the most effective, certainly not the most frequent” (p. 85). David Bryson's short, but very well-documented paper complements our knowledge with the vibrant testimony of Ponsard de Gisy, preceptor of the Templar house of Payens. De Gisy accused those who had “spoken falsely and disloyally” against the Order, in particular Guillaume Robert, Esquieu de Floyrac, Bernard Pelet, and Gérard de Boyzol. If this charge

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was true, then the original accusations against the Templars were centered on a very small area in southern France and could have resulted from the behavior of a single commander.

Less convincing is Magdalena Satora's article on Philip the Fair's propaganda, which neglects previous publications on the subject, thus arriving at debatable conclusions. Paul F. Crawford's presentation of the policy of the University of Paris as one component of a sequence of events in the long-term conflict between mendicants and seculars raises some questionable issues, as well. The comparison with the trial of Marguerite Porete, besides the chronological factor, seems rather bizarre in light of the University's policy vis-à-vis the kings of France both during the conflict with Pope Boniface VIII and, later on, during John XXII's pontificate. Again, a longer perspective may have produced more accurate results. Finally, Alain Provost contributes an interesting comparison of the Templars' trial with that of Bishop Guichard of Troyes in 1308, in which King Philip the Fair and Pope Clement V, the two main partners in the trial against the Templars, also played a central role. Both trials, which faithfully represented the world view of Philip the Fair, "express a vision of the world in which the order and the unity of the body of Christendom and the body of the kingdom are threatened by subversion" (p. 126).

The three articles devoted to the Iberian Peninsula extend our understanding of the Templars' trial across the Pyrenees, while contributing to a better understanding of the territorial development of all Military Orders. As against the historiographical attention devoted to the Kingdom of Aragon and its emissaries to the papal court—a result of Finke's monumental work on their archives—Clive Porro shows that by August 1307, King Dinis began the assault against Templar assets in the Kingdom of Portugal, at Soure and Idanha, on the grounds that the knights no longer performed their crusading functions. Luis García Guijarro Ramos complements the picture with the development of the Order of Montesa, the Temple's successor in the Kingdom of Valencia, and its distinctive relationship with the monarchy, which he defines as a case of transition from universalist to territorialized Military Orders. Sebastian Salvadó incorporates an archeological perspective through a detailed study of objects of veneration, all of them with a close connection to the Holy Land. As rightly claimed by Jochen Burgdorf, "the inventories are a gold mine for the prosopographer and an important textual aid for the medieval archaeologist" because of the important, one may say even crucial, insight they bring into contemporary daily life and material culture (p. 115).

The articles devoted to the British Islands focus on Edward II's policy and the painful transfer of Templar lands to the Hospitallers. Jeffrey S. Hamilton confirms well-known premises as to Edward's suspicions concerning the heresy charges, which did not prevent the king from displaying his energy and all the means at his disposal in order to take control of Templar property. Simon Phillips provides satisfactory answers as to when, by what means, and what were the results of the transference of Templar lands to the Hospitallers. This subject is further investigated in the excellent article by Theresa M. Vann, who reveals the Templars' considerable land possessions in France, much larger than those of the Hospitallers. Peter Edbury convincingly points at the political reasons that brought about the downfall of the Templar Order in Cyprus: Amaury of Lusignan's fears of a French-led crusade, coupled with France's ambitions in the area and Amaury's own unpopularity, actually convinced the king to leave his former allies to their tragic fate, thus sharing the anti-Templar policy chosen by the pope.

A very important section of the volume is devoted to the degree of success of the papal policy and its implementation. Helen Nicholson clarifies the failure of the papal inquisitors in Ireland to investigate the Templars with due rigor and the brothers' release on bail, without being forced to abjure heresies or to perform penance. Similar developments are analyzed by Elena Bellomo and Kristjan Toomaspoeg,

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who focus on the Templars' trial in northern Italy and their fate in Sicily. In both areas, the Templars received plenty of warning and some members found shelter in neighboring communities, thus ending their existence without much suffering. In Poland, as well, there was no trial, and Maria Starnawska demonstrates the predominance of local political and economic interests. Filip Hooghe confirms that many Templars remained fugitive in Flanders, though some joined the Hospitallers. Rather obviously, the diversity in the Templars' fate reflects the degree of Capetian influence in the different areas of Christendom.

The investigation of the Trial of the Templars thus offers a multifaceted perspective. As well claimed by Malcolm Barber, "[A]s a means of enabling Clement V to take over the proceedings, the bull *Pastoralis praeeminentiae*, which in November 1307 extended the trial to other countries, was a failure" (p. 8). Although developments in Christendom cannot disguise the importance of the trial in France, whose king remains its undisputable initiator and instigator, they still offer a more moderate perspective. More important still, it elucidates the weight of political and economic factors in the rulers' decisions to cooperate with the papal-Capetian policy with a low correlation, if any, to the heresy charges against the Templars.

The last chapters of the book deal with Templar renegades and priests of the Order, thus supplying additional information on peripheral sectors that have not yet received satisfactory attention in historical research. Christian Vogel brings substantial evidence of the state of affairs before the arrest, thus negating the possibility that the alleged acts of blasphemy led to any massive escape from the Order. Anne Gilmour-Bryson convincingly shows that the depositions of priests were very similar to those of other brothers, and their astonishment in face of the serious charges was in no way minor. Not surprisingly, John Walker's article closes the volume with an abridged account of the Templar myth as it developed during recent years.

As noted earlier, this volume is rich in content and presents important insights into the trial of the Templars. Yet, it seems that the editors' purpose to publish all the papers delivered at the two international conferences has allowed differences in standards and in the degree of innovation and/or elaboration of well-known data. In addition, the very fact that all the papers deal with the trial of the Templars in one way or another produces endless repetition about their arrest in France. On the other hand, what is missing is a chronological table of the main developments in Christendom, which could have facilitated a better understanding of the process.

The same can be said for the maps. Though there are five maps—of Europe, northwestern Europe, southwestern Europe, central Europe, and the eastern Mediterranean—they are all exclusively limited to locations mentioned in the text and without an up-to-date, much-needed presentation of all Templar preceptories or commanderies and/or their transfer to the Hospitallers. The fragmentary additional maps that appear in the text just justify the need for an accurate, more complete presentation of contemporary Christendom, the Templars' presence, and the developments of the trial and its aftermath. Though there are a few illustrations in the text, the lack of any illustration of the effect of the Templars' trial and their martyrdom as they appeared in contemporary pictorial representations, is to be much regretted. Finally, at the beginning of their conclusions, the editors actually follow much of Barber's introductory remarks, a redundant task. Their conclusions as to the research done in recent decades, on the other hand, and, more important still, in regard to the bulk of documentation still waiting to be published and analyzed, provide an important contribution to historical research of the Templars and the Military Orders.

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