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of Change and Crisis



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ADDRESS OF EDITORIAL OFFICE:

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87-100 Toruń  
e-mail: rc@umk.pl  
juergen.sarnowsky@uni-hamburg.de

Subscriptions orders should be addressed to:  
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tel. (0) 56 611 42 95, fax (0) 56 611 47 05

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## CONTENTS

### I. STUDIES AND ARTICLES

<i>Alan Forey</i> (Kirtlington) A Hospitaller <i>Consilium</i> (1274) and the Explanations Advanced by Military Orders for Problems Confronting them in the Holy Land in the Later Thirteenth Century .....	7
<i>Shlomo Lotan</i> (Jerusalem) Empowering and Struggling in an Era of Uncertainty and Crisis – The Teutonic Military Order in the Latin East, 1250–1291 .....	19
<i>Sylvain Gouguenheim</i> (ENS Lyon) Die Vorschläge zum Zusammenschluss der Ritterorden am Ende des 13. und Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts Eine Konsequenz der Kritike oder eine Chance? .....	29
<i>Klaus Militzer</i> (Köln) Die Übersiedlung Siegfrieds von Feuchtwangen in die Marienburg .....	47
<i>Jochen Burgtorf</i> (Fullerton) Die Templer auf Ruad (1300–1302) .....	63
<i>Magdalena Satora</i> (Toruń) The Role of Cardinals in the Templars' Affair (1307–1308) .....	93
<i>Marek Smoliński</i> (Gdańsk) Die Johanniter und die Eroberung Pommerellens durch den Deutschen Orden .....	105
<i>Jürgen Sarnowsky</i> (Hamburg) Herausforderung und Schwäche: die Johanniter und die Anfänge der äußeren Bedrohung von Rhodos, 1428–1464 .....	125
<i>Stefan Kwiatkowski</i> (Szczecin) Verlorene Schlachten und Gefallene in der geistigen Tradition des Deut- schen Ordens .....	141

<i>Roman Czaja</i> (Toruń)	
Die Krise der Landesherrschaft. Der Deutsche Orden und die Gesellschaft seines Staates in Preußen in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts .....	159
<i>Johannes A. Mol</i> (Leeuwarden / Leiden)	
Crisis in Prussia, crisis in the bailiwicks? The case of Utrecht 1440–1470 .....	173
<i>Karl Borchardt</i> (München)	
Zucker und Mohren: Zur Krise der Johanniter auf Zypern im 15. Jahrhundert .....	191
<i>Grischa Vercamer</i> (Warschau)	
Ein Hochmeister wird zum Herzog: Reaktionen und Schicksal der letzten Ordensbrüdern in Preußen um das Jahr 1525 .....	213
<i>Udo Arnold</i> (Bonn)	
Hochmeisterverlust, Bauernunruhen und Reformation -Krisenbewältigung unter den Deutschmeistern Dietrich von Cleen und Walter von Cronberg .....	241
<i>Matthias Asche, Magnus von Hirschheydt</i> und <i>Mathis Mager</i> (Tübingen)	
Legitimationsdefizite, Bedrohungspotenziale und Bewältigungsstrategien der europäischen Ritterorden in der Krisenzeit der 1520er Jahre – Fallbeispiele und allgemeine Reflexionen .....	259
<i>Juhan Kreem</i> (Tallinn)	
Der Deutsche Orden in Livland unter Hermann von Brüggenei: Bemerkungen zu Regierungspraxis und Religionspolitik .....	303
II. MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER MATERIALS	
<i>Jochen Burgtorf</i> (Fullerton))	
Die erste urkundliche Erwähnung eines Großpräzeptors der Templer im Heiligen Land: Edition von Paris, Bibl. nat. de France, nouv. acquis. lat. 21, fol. 5 und 25 bis .....	319
III. BOOK NOTICES .....	323



MAGDALENA SATORA (Toruń)

## THE ROLE OF CARDINALS IN THE TEMPLARS' AFFAIR (1307–1308)

The Templars' affair was one of the most important issues of papal policy in the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. During the five years from the unexpected arrest of the French Templars, in October 1307, until the final suppression of the Order by the council of Vienne, in March 1312, pope Clement V (1305–1314) was carrying on a discussion with Philip the Fair (1285–1314) about the right way of proceeding against the Order, and later the use of its property. The King, who had been the first to accuse the Templars of heretical practices, was trying in different ways to urge the Pope to condemn immediately the Order, and to take over its wealth<sup>1</sup>. However, the final decision about the fate of an ecclesiastical institution rested with the Pope. His attitude towards the Templars' affair, especially in the first stage of proceedings, from the arrest of the French Templars until August 1308 when the decision to launch an official inquiry against the whole Order and its members was made, remains unclear, and cannot be explained only as an effect of constant struggle with Philip the Fair. It seems, however, that closer examination of another element of the political situation in that time can provide some additional explanations.

One should remember that the Pope, though he was the most important person in the Roman Church, was surrounded by a group of cardinals who participated in making the most important decisions and could have a significant influence on his policy. From the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the political importance of

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<sup>1</sup> On the negotiations between the King of France and the Pope concerning the Templars' affair, see especially: E. Boutaric, *Clément V, Philippe le Bel et les Templiers*, *Revue des questions historiques* 10: 1871, pp. 301–342; 11: 1872, pp. 5–42; G. Lizerand, *Clément V et Philippe le Bel*, Paris 1910, passim; B. Frale, *Il Papato e il processo ai Templari*, Roma 2003; M. Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, New York 2006 [II edition], passim.

the members of the Sacred College was gradually growing. This was already clearly visible during the pontificate of Boniface VIII (1294–1303), and even more visible in the time of Clement V<sup>2</sup>. The growth of the political importance of the Sacred College was accompanied by significant changes in its composition. In the 14th century, the Popes started more often to choose laymen as their advisors, rather than theologians as they had done before. This was a consequence of the increased importance of the law in political and social life<sup>3</sup>. Because of that, the importance of the Sacred College grew even more.

The political situation in the Papal Curia during the pontificate of Clement V was quite complex. His election to the papal throne had been preceded by a very long discussion between two opposing parties of cardinals, which were created during the conflict between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII<sup>4</sup>. Both sides had agreed to elect Bertrand de Got because they believed that he would carry out their political goals. As archbishop of Bordeaux, in 1302 he participated in the assembly of Paris, summoned by Philip the Fair against the Pope, and few months later he went to Rome for the Council convened by Boniface VIII against the king of France. Nonetheless, he maintained good relations with both sides of the conflict<sup>5</sup>. However, it became evident briefly after the coronation that Clement V was going to base his policy on his close collaboration with the French court. The new Pope in his first encyclical, issued two days after his coronation, declared the organization of a new crusade to be the main goal of his pontificate<sup>6</sup>. Philip the Fair was his most important partner in the realization of this aim. Therefore, Clement V made efforts to maintain good relations with the French King. During the first years of his pontificate he granted many privileges to Philip the Fair and the French Crown<sup>7</sup>. This was the reason for the constant opposition of a number

<sup>2</sup> J. Lulves, *Die Machtbestrebungen des Kardinalcollegiums gegen das Papsttum*, Mitteilungen des öster. Instituts für Geschichtsforschung 35: 1914, pp. 465–466; R. Gagnard, *Le gouvernement pontifical au travail: L'exemple des dernières années du règne de Clément V, 1<sup>er</sup> août 1311–20 avril 1314*, Annales de Midi 72: 1960, p. 208; B. Guillemain, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon (1309–1376): Étude d'une société*, Paris 1962, pp. 181–183; E. Pásztor, *Onus apostolicae sedis: Curia romana e cardinalato nei secoli XI–XV*, Roma 1999, pp. 350–351.

<sup>3</sup> Guillemain, (as n. 2), pp. 217–219; S. Menache, *Clement V*, Cambridge 1998, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Lizerand, (as n. 1), pp. 13–16; G. Fornaseri, *Il conclave perugino del 1304–1305*, Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia 10: 1956, pp. 323–344; J. Favier, *Philippe le Bel*, Paris 1978, pp. 397–398; Menache, (as n. 3), pp. 11–12.

<sup>5</sup> On the participation of Bertrand de Got in both assemblies, and its consequences, see: G. Lizerand, op. cit., pp. 33–35; Menache, (as n. 3), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Registrum Simonis de Gandavo diocesis Sarebiriensis, AD 1297–1315*, ed. C. T. Flower, M. C. B. Dawes, Vol. 1, Oxford 1914, pp. 220–223; Menache, (as n. 3), p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> On Clement V's policy towards the French Crown during the first years of his pontificate, see: Lizerand, (as n. 1), pp. 55–57.

of cardinals towards papal policy. The pope was conscious of the difficulties this could have caused and tried to resolve this problem by the nomination of ten new cardinals two months after his coronation, in December 1305. Among which were relatives, friends and persons closely related to the French and English courts<sup>8</sup>. They became his closest collaborators and participated in making the most of important decisions and in negotiations with the main political partners of the Apostolic See. However, this did not completely eliminate the influence of those cardinals opposed to the pro-French policy of Clement V's<sup>9</sup>. Very deep divisions within the Sacred College also became apparent when different aspects of Templars' affair were discussed.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the cardinals' opposition influenced papal decisions and the role of his closest collaborators during the first stage of the proceedings, from the arrest of the French Templars until August 1308 when Clement V decided to open an inquiry against the whole Order and its members.

Shortly before the arrest of the French Templars the atmosphere in the Curia was rather tense. In the spring of 1307 Philip the Fair met with the pope in Poitiers. They discussed different subjects: preparations for a new crusade, the terms of peace between France and England and Templars' alleged crimes<sup>10</sup>. According to an Italian chronicler closely connected to the papal curia, Ptolemeo of Lucca, the cardinals considered the demands made at that time by Philip the Fair to be "absurd", and they felt that he wished to exceed a secular ruler's authority<sup>11</sup>. However this did not spoil good relations between the Pope and the King.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1307 Clement V informed the King of France that he had decided to open a formal investigation into the alleged crimes of the Order. However, he emphasized that neither he nor the Sacred College believed the charges to be true. He ordered an inquiry to be carried out, at the request of the Grand Master, James of Molay. It was supposed to begin about mid October<sup>12</sup>. This letter

<sup>8</sup> *Secunda Vita Clementis V auctore Ptoleameo Lucensi ordinis praedicatorum* (excerpta ex *Historia Ecclesiastica*) in: *Vitae Paparum Avenionensium*, éd. E. Baluze, réed. G. Mollat, vol. 1, Paris 1914, p. 25; *Tertia vita Clementis V auctore Bernardo Guidonis, episcopo lodovensis* (excerpta e *Catalogo brevi romanorum pontificum*) in: *Vitae Paparum Avenionensium*, éd. E. Baluze, réed. G. Mollat, vol. 1, Paris 1914, p. 55; Menache, (as n. 3), pp. 40–43.

<sup>9</sup> On the political situation in the curia during the pontificate of Clement V, see: T. Schmidt, *Der Bonifaz – Prozess. Verfahren der Papstanklage in der Zeit Bonifaz' VIII. und Clemens' V.*, Köln–Wien 1989, pp. 144–178; Pásztor, (as n. 2), pp. 353–354.

<sup>10</sup> On the meeting in Poitiers in the spring of 1307 and its results, see: Lizerand, (as n. 1), pp. 65–71.

<sup>11</sup> *Secunda Vita* (as n. 8), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Boutaric (as n. 1), pp. 324–325.

clearly shows the attitude of the pope and the cardinals towards the Templars' case at his time.

A few months later, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, Clement V learned of the unexpected arrest of the French Templars the day before. Despite the papal announcement of August 1307, Philip the Fair had decided to take action against the Templars without the knowledge or permission of the Apostolic See. Clement V immediately summoned all cardinals for a consistory the following day<sup>13</sup>. As the result of a long discussion on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1307 the Pope issued the bull *Ad preclaram sapientiae*, in which he strongly condemned the French king's actions as a frontal assault on the authority of the papacy and the Roman Church. He also demanded handing over the proceedings to his representatives. However, in the same letter, he emphasized that he had decided to send to Paris two cardinals, who were well known and valued by Philip the Fair – Beregnier Frédol and Etienne de Suisy<sup>14</sup>. Both of these men belonged to the group of cardinals appointed in December 1305. Frédol was Boniface VIII's chaplain; however, during the conflict between the king of France and the Pope he had participated both in the Synod of Rome and the assembly of Paris, from which time Philip the Fair had considered him a friend<sup>15</sup>. Suisy had supported Philip the Fair during the conflict with Boniface VIII. He was appointed the French king's chancellor in about 1303. When he became cardinal, Philip the Fair granted him an annual pension<sup>16</sup>. For a few years, Frédol and Suisy were intermediaries between the pope and the king of France, and participated in the most important, secret negotiations between both sides.

As a result of their visit to Paris the pope changed his attitude towards the Templars' case. In the bull *Pastoralis praeeminentiae*, of 22 November 1307, he ordered all Christian rulers to arrest all Templars in their territories and to seize their properties. He also explained why the king of France had decided to arrest the members of the Order. Philip the Fair had taken action against the Templars at the request of French inquisitors and prelates<sup>17</sup>. It seems that at least some of the

<sup>13</sup> H. Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang der Templerordens*, (henceforth PUT), t. 2, München 1907, no 39, pp. 58–59.

<sup>14</sup> Boutaric (as n. 1), pp. 332–335.

<sup>15</sup> J. P. Migne, *Dictionnaire des cardinaux*, Paris 1857, col. 94; P. Viollet, *Berénger Frédol, canoniste* in: *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. 34, Paris 1914, pp. 80–81; Menache, (as n. 3), p. 42, n. 37.

<sup>16</sup> Migne (as n. 15), col. 886–887; L. Perrichet, *La grande chancellerie de France des origines à 1328*, Paris 1912, p. 524; Menache (as n. 3), p. 42, n. 39.

<sup>17</sup> *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta publica*, ed. T. Rymer, vol. 1, part 4, La Haye 1745, pp. 99–100. For different opinions on the reasons of issuing the bull *Pastoralis praeeminentiae*, see: C. – V. Langlois, *Le procès des Templiers*, *Revue des Deux Mondes* 61: 1891, p. 403; A. Beck, *Der Untergang der Templer: größter Justizmord des Mittelalters*, Freiburg



cardinals did not share the pope's new attitude. According to the letter of a Catalan correspondent, Bernard of Banyuls, writing to his brother – preceptor of Gardeny in Aragon – in the beginning of 1308, after the visit of cardinals in Paris, a debate concerning the Templars' Affair took place in the Curia. During a consistory ten new cardinals offered to resign because they did not believe Clement V, who had appointed them, to be the true pope. When asked their reason for making this statement, they answer that the Pope had always been the lord of the world, more powerful than all secular rulers. In their opinion, Clement V was dominated by Philip the Fair and was bending to Philip's will. As an example, they cited the Templars' affair. They thought that the pope allowed the destruction of an innocent, universally respected order<sup>18</sup>.

Historians agree that even if the letter is not entirely reliable, it reflects the atmosphere in the Curia in the last months of 1307<sup>19</sup>. The opinion that Clement V was dominated by Philip the Fair was certainly repeatedly expressed by the members of the anti-French party of cardinals. However, it is difficult to say if cardinals appointed by Clement V were also opposed to the pope's policy at that time. It seems unlikely, but it is not impossible.

In the same letter, the Catalan correspondent also gave another piece of information. He wrote that after the consistory Clement V decided to send Frédol and Suisy once more to Paris, to accomplish the mission they had started two months earlier. According to Baynuls, this time the pope told the cardinals to threaten to excommunicate Philip the Fair and his kingdom if he would not agree to fulfill the orders of the Apostolic See<sup>20</sup>. However, there is no other source confirming this latter information. Quite the opposite, the letter of Clement V to the king, dated 1 December 1307, in which the pope announced he would send the cardinals to Paris for a second time, suggests that there was no conflict between them at that time. The Pope praised Philip the Fair for his declarations of intentions to protect the Faith and the Church. He then asked the king to allow Frédol and Suisy to take over the proceedings against the Templars, in accordance with Philip's earlier assurances<sup>21</sup>. In a letter dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, Philip the Fair promised to

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1992, s. 79; Menache (as n. 17), p. 217; A. Demurger, *Les Templiers. Une chevalerie chrétienne au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2005, p. 444; Barber (as n. 1), p. 73; M. Satora, *Polityka Klemensa V wobec sprawy templariuszy w pierwszych miesiącach po aresztowaniu członków zakonu (1307–1308)*, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 100: 2009, pp. 244–245.

<sup>18</sup> PUT (as n. 13) vol. 2, no 71, pp. 110–111.

<sup>19</sup> Barber (as n. 1), p. 94; B. Frale, *The Chinon chart. Papal absolution to the last Templar Master Jacques de Molay*, *Journal of Medieval Studies* 30: 2004, p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> PUT (as n. 13) vol. 2, no 71, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> *Collectio actorum veterum* in: *Vitae Papparum Avenionensium*, éd. E. Baluze, réed. G. Mollat, vol. 3, Paris 1921, pp. 91–92.

carry out papal requests<sup>22</sup>. Further, the threat of excommunication was not mentioned in a later Catalan letter, reporting the course of the cardinals' second visit in Paris. Its author – a certain Leget F., writing to his brother in Mallorca – simply related that the papal representatives came to Paris for the second time in order to personally interrogate the Templars who they could not interrogate during their first visit<sup>23</sup>. So the question remains, whether there was any connection between the protest of the cardinals against the papal policy and the decision to send Frédol and Suisy to Paris for a second time. It seems there may have been. In the bull *Ad preclaram sapientiae* Clement V demanded that the king of France hand over the proceedings to the Church. Philip the Fair explained to the papal representatives that he had acted at the request of the prelates and inquisitors. This was clearly sufficient justification for Clement V, but not for the Sacred College. The effect of that was that the Pope ordered all Christian rulers to arrest the Templars; but the cardinals did not agree with this decision. Only after their firm protest did Clement V decide to make sure that the Templars were really guilty, and that the French inquisitors were acting according to the law. In order to do that, he wanted the Templars to be interrogated by his closest advisors. And that is why Frédol and Suisy personally met with the Grand Master and other brothers only in December 1307, during their second visit in Paris.

From the letter of Leget we also learn that James of Molay and others brothers testifying in the presence of the cardinals, in December 1307, denied everything they had formerly admitted<sup>24</sup>. About one month later, Clement V issued a bull suspending the activities of the French inquisitors. The bull did not survive, so we do not know how exactly he justified his decision. However, few months later, in June 1308, the pope mentioned some doubts concerning the authenticity of testimonies given by the Templars before French inquisitors. As related by an English envoy to the Curia, during a public consistory when the Templars' case was discussed, Clement V said that sometimes persons accused of heresy confessed only because of the fear of torture, and there was a suspicion that this was the real reason behind French Templars' confessions<sup>25</sup>. According to canon law, if a confession made during an interrogation employing torture was not voluntarily repeated afterwards it could not be used as an evidence in further proceedings<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Ebd, pp. 92–94.

<sup>23</sup> PUT (as n. 13), vol. 2, no 75, pp. 115–116.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> L. Blancard, *Documents relatifs au procès des Templiers en Angleterre*, Revue des sociétés savantes, 4th. ser. 6: 1867, p. 417.

<sup>26</sup> P. Kras, *Ad abolendam diversarum haeresium pravitatem. System inkwizycyjny w średniowiecznej Europie*, Lublin 2006, s. 219.

Because of that, when Jacques of Molay and others brothers denied everything that had been confessed, there was no longer basis for inquisitional proceedings, and the pope was obligated to suspend the actions of the French inquisitors, regardless of his attitude to the Templars' Affair. From one of his later letters to Philip the Fair, it appears that this decision was strongly supported by Sacred College. During the negotiations in Poitiers, in the summer of 1308, the pope promised the king that he would try to convince the cardinals to change their mind in this matter<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, one can assume that if the pope had not decided to suspend the French inquisitors, he would have had to stand up to another deep crisis in the Curia.

As a response to Clement V's decision, Philip the Fair launched a propaganda campaign that aimed to convince the pope to reopen the proceedings. The king summoned an assembly of estates and asked the masters of theology at the University of Paris to explain some juridical problems concerning the Templars' case<sup>28</sup>. It was an effective strategy, because, probably already in April 1308, briefly after the university masters had answered the questions posed by Philip the Fair<sup>29</sup>, Clement V changed his mind. According to a letter of an anonymous correspondent, writing to the Templars' commanders in Gardeny and Asco, cardinal Frédoł had told him that during the consistory which took place in the middle of April the pope had declared that the question of the dissolution of the Order had already been settled, and it had been necessary to discuss the later fate of the Templars' goods. However, one French cardinal, who was also a jurist, reminded the pope that the first question to be resolved should concern persons, and afterwards one could talk about their properties. Clement V answered him by saying that this would be discussed during the meeting with Philip the Fair in Poitiers, which was planned for the next month<sup>30</sup>. From this letter, it appears that the pope, by this moment, had already taken the most important decision of the Templars' Affair, but could not carry it out immediately only due to the opposition of one of the cardinals concerning legal practicalities. This debate shows that even French cardinals sometimes openly criticized Clement V's decisions, and that he had to take into consideration their opinions.

<sup>27</sup> Boutaric (as n. 1), p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> *Le Dossier de l'Affaire des Templiers*, éd. et trad. par G. Lizerand (Les classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Âge), Paris 1923, pp. 56–62 and 102–106. On the propaganda campaign of the French court in 1308, see especially: Barber, (as n. 1), pp. 95–105; M. Satora, *Społeczny odbiór procesu i upadku zakonu templariuszy we Francji w pierwszej połowie XIV wieku*, Malbork 2008, pp. 13–73, passim.

<sup>29</sup> *Le Dossier*, pp. 62–70.

<sup>30</sup> PUT (as n. 13), vol. 2, no 78, p. 123.

Philip the Fair came to Poitiers on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1308. He did not know that Clement V had already decided to continue the proceeding against the Templars. Because of that, during the public consistory which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, one of king's closest advisors, William of Plaisians, gave a speech in which he fiercely attacked the pope for delaying the condemnation of the Templars<sup>31</sup>. He repeated the same accusations and requests for immediate condemnation of the Order on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June<sup>32</sup>. The pope first answered that he was not ready to make the final decision in the Templars' case, and then asked Philip the Fair to hand over to the Apostolic See all brothers still detained in French prisons<sup>33</sup>.

Unfortunately, there is no information regarding the Sacred College's attitude towards the Templars' trial at this time. However, it seems that Plaisians's attacks on the pope could only have exacerbated the anti-French attitude of a part of the Sacred College. A few months later, in 1309, some of the cardinals still considered the Templars' affair a "stupidity", and felt that it could bring dishonor to the Church<sup>34</sup>.

After the first debates during the public consistories, secret negotiations started. Philip the Fair presented to Clement V a complete plan of administration of the Templars' properties. He also promised to hand over the brothers remaining in French prisons to the Apostolic See's representatives<sup>35</sup>. The pope accepted most of the suggestions and promised that he would try to convince the cardinals to agree to revoke the suspension of the French inquisitors<sup>36</sup>. This means that the pope could not have taken this decision without the consent of the Sacred College.

As a result of the negotiations, Philip the Fair ordered that seventy two Templars be brought to Poitiers so that they could testify before the pope. Historians usually believe that the king selected brothers who were expected to confess to all crimes of which they were accused<sup>37</sup>, but there is no source confirming this. They testified, at first, before the commission of cardinals designed by the pope, composed of his closest advisors. The hearings were secret. Almost all of the Templars confessed to being guilty of the charges of which they were accused<sup>38</sup>. Only afterwards did they repeat their testimonies in the presence of the whole Sacred College. A few days

<sup>31</sup> Ebd., no 88, pp. 140–150; *Le Dossier*, pp. 110–124.

<sup>32</sup> *Le Dossier*, pp. 124–136.

<sup>33</sup> PUT (as n. 13) vol. 2, no 88, pp. 148–150; Blancard (as n. 25), p. 417.

<sup>34</sup> PUT (as n. 13) vol. 2, no 101, p. 183.

<sup>35</sup> Boutaric (as n. 1), p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Ebd., pp. 11–12.

<sup>37</sup> Menache (as n. 3), pp. 224–225; Frale (as n. 19), p. 125; Barber (as n. 1), p. 120; A. Demurger, *Jacques de Molay. Le crépuscule des Templiers*, Paris 2007, p. 251.

<sup>38</sup> On the testimonies of individuals brothers, see: Barber (as n. 19), pp. 116–121.

later, their testimonies were translated and read out during a public consistory, before they were then fully absolved by the pope. Just afterwards, Clement V decided to reverse his decision to suspend the actions of French inquisitors and to reopen an inquiry against individual Templars<sup>39</sup>. A few weeks later, in the bull *Faciens misericordiam*, he also ordered that proceedings be begun against the Order as a whole<sup>40</sup>. In this document, the Pope also related that he wanted to interrogate the grand master and other Templar leaders in person, but they had not reached Poitiers. Because of the illness, they remained in a royal castle in Chinon, close to Poitiers. Historians usually believe that it was Philip the Fair who prevented them from testifying before the pope<sup>41</sup>, but it seems that another explanation is possible. Clement V decided to send three cardinals there: Fredol, Suisy and an Italian, Landolfo Brancaccio<sup>42</sup>, to interrogate the prisoners on his behalf<sup>43</sup>. They went to Chinon only after the end of the meeting in Poitiers, in the middle of August 1308, after the decision to reopen the inquiry had already been made and announced, and Philip the Fair had left Poitiers. There is no reason to believe that the result of the hearings of the Grand Master and his companions could have changed the pope's attitude. If the French king had not been convinced that the question of reopening the proceedings against the Templars had been settled, he would not have finished the negotiations and left Poitiers. For this reason, it seems that he had no reason to prevent the Templars' leaders from testifying before the pope; while Clement V was in a completely different situation. He wished to continue the proceedings against the Templars, as he declared in April 1308, but he had to act in accordance with ecclesiastical law. When the Grand Master and other leaders denied their confessions, the pope suspended the inquisitorial proceedings. If he wanted to continue the inquiry, he had to convince the Sacred College that their previous doubts were baseless. He was successful in doing that one month earlier, when the confessions of the brothers brought by Philip the Fair to Poitiers were presented to all members of the Sacred College. If James of Molay had repeated his statement from December 1307 before the cardinals, it could have sparked new

<sup>39</sup> *Livre de Guillaume le Maire*, éd. C. Port in: *Mélanges historiques, choix de documents*, vol. 2 (Collection des Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France), Paris 1874, pp. 234–239

<sup>40</sup> *Livre*, pp. 251–257.

<sup>41</sup> M. L. Bulst – Thiele, *Der Prozeß gegen den Templerorden* in: *Die geistlichen Ritterorden Europas*, hrsg. v. J. Fleckenstein, M. Hellmann, Sigmaringen 1980, p. 386; Beck (as n. 17), pp. 107–108; Frale (as n. 19), p. 125; Barber (as n. 1), p. 120–121; Demurger (as n. 17), p. 251.

<sup>42</sup> Brancaccio was appointed cardinal by Celestin V in 1294. During the pontificates of Boniface VIII and Clement V he participated in many diplomatic missions. He was in the pro – French party of cardinals during the conclave of Perugia in 1305 – Migne (as n. 15), col. 590–591; Lizerand (as n. 1), p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> *Livre*, pp. 254–255.

protests by the Sacred College. Probably because of this, it was Clement V who did not want the Grand Master and his companions to come to Poitiers. The results of the hearings from Chinon seem to confirm this thesis.

Over the course of a few days, the three cardinals sent by the pope questioned James of Molay and others dignitaries. According to the record of this hearing all of them confessed to almost all of the crimes of which the Order was accused. After that, they were absolved by the cardinals on pope's behalf. Clement V presented the result of this hearing in the bull *Faciens misericordiam*<sup>44</sup>. A few months later James of Molay denied, however, the official version of events that took place in Chinon. In November 1309 he was called by a papal commission conducting an inquiry against the Order as a whole in Paris. The commissioners asked him if he wanted to defend the Order and then read out the most important documents concerning Templars' Affair. During the reading of the bull *Faciens misericordiam*, and other documents concerning his confession before three cardinals, he showed great agitation. He suddenly made twice the sign of the Cross and said that he would have something else to say if certain persons were present<sup>45</sup>. For a long time historians have tried to clarify what really happened in Chinon. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Paul Viollet thought that the cardinals had falsified records from Chinon, because they wanted to protect the Templars against Philip the Fair<sup>46</sup>. M. Barber gave another explanation. They thought that James of Molay was confused and "crushed" by two years of prison, and because of that he did not remember what he said more than one year earlier<sup>47</sup>. However, while it seems true that the cardinals really did change the content of protocols, they did not do it to help James of Molay and his companions, but to prevent the Sacred College from obstructing the carrying out of papal decisions. In doing so, they were executing Clement V's orders<sup>48</sup>. They probably did the same thing during the hearings of seventy two brothers brought to Poitiers by Philip the Fair. The cardinals, who first interrogated them during the secret sessions, convinced them to confess, probably by promising them the absolution. Only after that did the brothers testify before all of the cardinals.

<sup>44</sup> *Livre*, p. 255.

<sup>45</sup> *Le Procès des Templiers*, éd. J. Michelet, (Collection des Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France), Paris 1841–1851, vol. 1, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> P. Viollet, *Les interrogatoires de Jacques de Molay, grand maître du Temple. Conjectures*, Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles – lettres 38: 1909, p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Barber (as n. 1), p. 145.

<sup>48</sup> See: M. Satora, *Przyczyny zmiany zeznań wielkiego mistrza templariuszy Jakuba de Molay w latach 1307–1314*, (Studia z Dziejów Średniowiecza, nr 14), pp. 265–284.

Taking into consideration all that has been said, we can finally note that the influence of the Sacred College on the actions taken by the pope from the beginning of the proceedings against the French Templars until the summer of 1308 was more important than scholars usually think. First of all, the cardinals were trying to prevent Clement V from taking decisions contrary to ecclesiastical law. It seems that this was the most important argument in the hands of the cardinals opposed to Clement V's pro-French policy. Because of their protest the pope decided to send Frédol and Suisy to Paris for a second time, in December 1307. The effect of this visit was that Clement V was obliged to suspend the inquisitional proceedings against the French Templars. A few months later, in April 1308, probably after the consultation of the university masters, the pope found the question of the dissolution of the Order already settled. From that moment, he set about trying to remove all obstacles to continuing the proceedings against the Templars. In order to do that, during the meeting of Poitiers, he prevented the Sacred College from hearing the testimonies of the Grand Master and other brothers. The only persons who participated in the secret interrogations were Clement V's closest advisors. It seems that they influenced the content of the testimonies in order to provide the pope with a basis on which to reopen the proceedings against the Order. This could explain some elements of the Templars' affair which have, until now, remained unclear.