

# UTAH SUPPLEMENT

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## **Jacques de Molay, Master of the Order from 1292 to 1312.**

The absence of correct archives prevents the exact establishment of the places and date of birth of Jacques de Molay. Nevertheless, indications found in the minutes of the lawsuit, in the archives of European kingdoms of that time, suggest that Jacques de Molay was born about 1245 in the French region of Haute-Saône, in the County of Burgundy, always vassal to the Germanic Empire. In 1265 he is received in the Order at the city of Beaune by Humbert de Pairaud, visitor of France and England and by Amaury de la Roche, Master of France.

Around 1270, he is in the Orient where his activity remains very discrete. It is not known if he is among the survivors of Acre who managed to escape with Thibaud Gaudin to Cyprus, but he participates a chapter which is held in the island in autumn 1291. He is elected Master of the Order before April 1292, shortly after the death of Thibaud Gaudin.

No sooner was elected that Jacques de Molay attends to the most pressing issues, to set up both the government and the defenses of the island of Cyprus and the Kingdom of Little Armenia, the last Frankish possessions in the East.

In the spring of 1293, he undertakes a long trip to Europe, where he settles various issues in the realm of the Order, and in particular seeks help from the Western princes and the Church to protect the last Christian States.

During this trip, he forges close ties with several monarchs, among them Edward 1st of England, Jacques II of Aragon and the pope Boniface VIII.

He returns to Cyprus in the fall of 1296 to settle issues that had arisen with the king Henri II.

In 1298, he organizes a raid in Cilicia after the fall of Roche-Guillaume, the last fortified town of the kingdom. Unfortunately, the Christian force were unable to benefit from the victory of Ghâzân Khan of Persia over the Mameluks at the Homs in December 1299.

In 1300 he continues to reinforce the small island of Ruad opposite Tortose to make it a base of advanced operations together with the Mongols. But they too, preoccupied with their own tribal wars, will never be able to combine with the Christians against the Mameluks.

In September 1302, the Templars of Ruad are massacred by the Egyptian Mameluks. Jacques de Molay then gives up this strategy of the Mongolian alliance which proves to be a total failure

In 1305, the new pope Clement V, seeks the opinion of the Masters of the religious Orders in preparation for a new crusade and the unification of the Orders. On June 6, 1306, Clement V officially convenes them in Poitiers, but because of the pope's ill health, he only meets Jacques de Molay in May 1307. As he had told the pope before, Jacques de Molay categorically rejects the prospect of uniting the Orders. This stance will have serious repercussions for the future Order of the Temple.

At first, the King of France takes umbrage to this decision, because it interferes not only with his ambitions but also with the negotiations between Clement V and Philippe IV to condemn the memory of Boniface VIII, and also in organizing new crusades.

On his trip west, Jacques de Molay finds that libellous rumours were spread about the Templars. Philippe IV and his advisers immediately take advantage of this weakness, and set a plan to destroy this uncompromising Order.

On June 24, Jacques de Molay is in Paris to meet with the King of France and discuss the charges against the Order. He returns to Poitiers, reassured by his interview with Philippe IV, but requests of the Pope an investigation to clear Order of any suspicion. On August 24, Clement V informs Jacques de Molay of a board of inquiry. Philippe IV seeks to precipitate events and remove them from the Pope's control. On September 14, with the help of Nogaret, he orders in utter secrecy all his bailiffs and seneschals to arrest all Templars of the Kingdom and the confiscation of all their goods. This wide-ranging operation begins on October 13, 1307 at dawn. All Templars of the kingdom of France are arrested. In some preceptories, Templars are massacred by treachery, because the royal men-at-arms are afraid to face these fierce warriors in direct combat.

Edited by Jay N Mitchell, Deputy Grand Commander