



Kent Academic Repository

Bombi, Barbara (2019) *Networking at the papal curia as a survival strategy: the Teutonic Order and the crisis of the military orders in the early fourteenth century*. In: Morton, Nicholas, ed. *The Military Orders Volume VII: Piety, Pugnacity and Property*. The Military Orders . Routledge. ISBN 978-1-138-49683-5.

Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/74448/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351020428>

This document version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

UNSPECIFIED

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal*, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

Networking at the papal curia as a survival strategy: the Teutonic Order and the crisis of the military orders in the early fourteenth century

The “balancing act” that the surviving military orders, especially the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights, had to perform in order to survive after the trial of the Templars in the early fourteenth century has been the object of much speculation among historians. In a recent essay on the relations between the military orders and the rulers of Christendom, Helen Nicholson maintained that “whatever their privileges in theory, in practice the military religious orders were not independent of secular powers, nor of the local ecclesiastical authorities, the bishops and the archbishops. In order to survive and to pursue their vocation of the defence of Christendom, they had to negotiate with those who held power, to protect their lands and their incomes and to ensure that they could export resources and personnel to the East. They relied on the powerful elites of Christendom to assist them in their work. However, those in power generally expected some return for their assistance, and not simply the spiritual reward of prayer”.¹ Ultimately, as Nicholson put it, it was this give-and-take relationship with royal and papal powers that determined the varied fate of the military religious orders in the early fourteenth century: those too close to kings, like the Templars, who also failed to revitalize their role in holy war and lacked an independent base outside the Holy Land, were destroyed, whereas those, such as the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Order, who were less reliant on kings for support, survived and became more involved in local and national conflicts.²

If anything, the widespread criticism, accusations of pride and cupidity and the opposition of some secular rulers to the military religious orders in the early fourteenth century raised the importance of their connections with the Apostolic See.³ Leaving aside Pope Clement V’s involvement during the trial of the Templars, which

¹ Helen J. Nicholson, ‘*Nolite confidere in principibus*. The Military Orders’ Relations with the Rulers of Christendom’, in *Élites et Ordres Militaires au Moyen Age. Rencontre d’autour d’Alain Demurger*, ed. Philippe Josserand, Luis F. Oliveira, Damien Carraz (Madrid, 2015), p. 261. See also Malcolm Barber, ‘Introduction’, in *The debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307-1314)*, ed. Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham, 2010), pp. 3-4; Jochen Burgtorf, Paul F. Crawford, Helen J. Nicholson, ‘Conclusion’, in *The debate*, pp. 361-362. Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305-1378* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 264-265, further maintained that the military orders collided with secular authority on financial and political ground (land controlled by the orders, fiscal exemptions, financial pressures in the fourteenth century aggravated all this).

² Nicholson, ‘*Nolite confidere*’, p. 276.

³ Alain Demurger, *Moines et guerriers: les ordres religieux-militaires au Moyen Age* (Paris, 2010), pp. 214-216. See also Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 261-262.

is outside the scope of this essay and has been recently debated at length among historians, throughout the fourteenth century, the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights repeatedly appealed to the Apostolic See, which was ultimately responsible for the arbitration of lawsuits concerning property and exemption as well as the protection of the order's prerogatives vis-à-vis secular and ecclesiastical authorities falling under papal jurisdiction. From the late twelfth century their members' service as officials and advisers in both royal and papal administrations was increasingly in demand. In particular, during the thirteenth century, members of the military religious orders were employed in administrative, diplomatic and military duties at the papal curia, where they are reported as chaplains, penitentiaries, notaries, almoners, marshals, doormen and chamberlains as well as diplomatic envoys, messengers, treasurers and judges-delegates. These connections allowed the orders to network at the papal curia and arguably enhanced their chances of receiving papal support, when needed.⁴ It should be noted, however, that after the papacy's move to the south of France (1305) members of the Teutonic Order, and to a lesser extent of the Hospitallers, were heavily outplayed by the secular clergy and members of other religious orders in their traditional involvement in the papal administration and diplomatic services, where they were no longer employed with the same frequency for at least seventy years.⁵

Whether this pattern indicates the on-going process of secularization of the surviving military religious orders after 1312 is a question open to investigation, as is the speculation that the surviving military religious orders found new effective ways of networking at the papal curia to secure their survival. In this essay, I shall investigate these two issues focusing on the Teutonic Order and its networks at the papal curia in the first three decades of the fourteenth century. Rather than approaching the question concerning the Teutonic Order exclusively from the milieu, already explored by those specializing in the history of the military religious orders, I will firstly address the nature of papal government and diplomacy in the early fourteenth century in order to see how the case of the Teutonic Order fits into the

⁴ Marie L. Bulst-Thiele, "'Templer in königlichen und päpstlichen Diensten' in *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm*, ed. Peter Classen – Peter Scheibert, I (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. 301-308; Nicholas Morton, 'Institutional Dependency upon Secular and Ecclesiastical Patrons and the Foundations of the Trial of the Templars', in *The debate*, pp. 36-43; Nicholson, *Nolite confidere*, pp. 269-270. See also Francesco Tommasi, 'Giovanniti al servizio dei papi (secc. XIII-XIV in.)', in *Élites et Ordres Militaires*, pp. 293-320; Kristjan Toomaspoeg, 'Les Ordres Militaires au service des pouvoirs monarchiques occidentaux', in *Élites et Ordres Militaires*, pp. 321-330.

⁵ Tommasi, 'Giovanniti al servizio', p. 313.

broader picture. I will then look at the challenges faced by the Teutonic Order in the first three decades of the fourteenth century and how they were addressed vis-à-vis the papal curia. And finally I will look at how the Teutonic Order reflected on its own existence and role within Christendom in the 1330s through the treatise that a brother of the Teutonic Order, Ulrich, dedicated to Pope Benedict XII in 1335 to defend and promote his order in Avignon.

1. Papal government and papal diplomacy in the early fourteenth century: was there any space for the military religious orders?

Arguably, the established assumption that the disappearance of members of the Teutonic Knights from the pope's inner circles in the fourteenth century arose from the mistrust and criticism against the military orders from the late thirteenth century ought to be revised. Undoubtedly, the trial of the Templars and their suppression staged at the Council of Vienne in 1312 had some repercussions for the popularity of the military religious orders among the papal entourage. However, it should be highlighted that the lack of members of the military orders among the curialists was partly, if not mostly, a consequence of the different organization of the papal curia after its move to the south of France. Guillemain notoriously described the fourteenth-century papal curia as a "patriarchal community".⁶ Taking this argument further, Bresc more recently maintained that the Avignonese curia was a "compartmentalized society composed of enclosed sections: horizontal cliques of cardinals, vertical groups which corresponded to their households and ... which were complicated by horizontal allegiances (professional bodies, university training) and regional groups, and which were further divided in sub-groups, each one with its own agenda and leader".⁷ In this respect, regional and personal connections played a very important part, especially when it came to the pope and cardinals' households as well as their clienteles. It was therefore difficult for the military religious orders, which enjoyed international recruitment patterns, to break through such nepotistic networks. Indeed, alongside the seven Frenchmen, who occupied the papal see between 1305 and 1377, the French and, to a lesser extent, the Italians took over the management of the papal household

⁶ Bernard Guillemain, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon, 1309-1376* (Paris, 1966), pp. 38-42.

⁷ Henri Bresc, 'La genèse du schisme: les partis cardinalices et leurs ambitions dynastiques', in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident* (Paris, 1980), p. 49 (my translation).

and its offices as well as the college of cardinals. In Guillemain's calculations, only 1% of curialists came from the regions of the Empire and 2,6% came from the Iberian Peninsula.⁸ This data, I believe, has to be taken into account when considering the role of the military religious orders at the papal curia during the fourteenth century. In particular, it is hardly surprising that no brother of the Teutonic Order is listed in any official capacity at the papal curia during the Avignon period, given that the Order had by then settled in its German heartland, which was in any case poorly represented in Avignon. Even less remarkable is the fact that members of the military religious orders were not any longer used with the same frequency for important political diplomatic missions outside areas connected to crusading activities, as had happened during the thirteenth century. Once more, this state of affairs not only reflects the changing political importance of the military religious orders in the fourteenth-century European milieu, but also the increasing professionalization of diplomatic services across Europe, especially after the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War in 1337.⁹ Nevertheless, a few notable exceptions to this pattern are recorded. For instance, the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, Folques de Villaret, was continually present at the papal curia at the time of the trial of the Templars in 1308, as noted by Anthony Luttrell. Similarly, the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, Hélión of Villeneuve, was dispatched together with the archbishop of Toulouse as papal *nuncius* to settle a peace agreement between Edward of Savoy-Achaia and the Dauphin of Viennoise in 1326.¹⁰ Accordingly, members of the military orders, such as Hélión of Villeneuve, seem to have still been employed as papal diplomatic envoys when their personal and institutional connections could effectively contribute to papal diplomatic efforts and enhance the chances of success of a mission. This was the case for the Savoy household that had entertained strong links with the principality of Achaia

⁸ Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a statistical comparison with the thirteenth-century papal curia owing to the unevenness of the data. However, scholars have pointed out the nepotistic nature of curial appointments during the thirteenth century, especially with regard to the connections between the papacy and the Roman nobility: A. Paravicini Bagliani, *Il trono di Pietro. L'universalità del papato da Alessandro III a Bonifacio VIII* (Roma, 1996), pp. 186-188; S. Carocci, *Il nepotismo en la edad media. Papi, cardinali e famiglie nobili* (Roma, 2007).

⁹ On this point see George P. Cuttino, *English Diplomatic Administration, 1259-1339* (Oxford – London, 1940), pp. 96-97.

¹⁰ Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers and the Papacy, 1305-1314', in Anthony Luttrell, *Studies on the Hospitallers after 1306. Rhodes and the West* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 602-603.

since 1301, when Philip of Savoy married Isabelle de Villehardouin, heiress of the principality of Achaia.¹¹

However, although they were diminished in their position in the pope's inner circles, during the fourteenth century the Teutonic Knights found different ways of consolidating their presence at the papal curia. Like other contemporary international religious orders, most notably Franciscans and Dominicans, from the mid-thirteenth century, the military orders had in fact established general proctors at the papal curia. The latter were appointed as resident agents, who acted on behalf of the entire order before the various departments of the papal curia as well as representatives of individual houses, often liaising with other proctors who were dispatched from the localities to deal with specific business at the curia.¹² Although proctors and general proctors were not strictly speaking members of the curia's personnel, their established and permanent presence at the papal curia allowed them to develop formal and informal acquaintances among the curialists and the pope's inner circles and, in many respects, their duties resembled those of the fifteenth-century resident ambassadors. All in all, the general proctors' involvement in financial, administrative and judicial business as well as their political connections in Avignon made them an essential tool

¹¹ Eugene L. Cox, *The Green Count of Savoy. Amadeus VI and Transalpine Savoy in the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1967), p. 21; John Law, 'The Italian North', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, VI, ed. Michael Jones (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 454-457.

¹² The Hospitallers only established a general proctor at the papal curia since 1267, while the Templars were represented by Peter of Bologna at the time of the trial (1308-1312): Elena Bellomo, *The Templar Order in North-West Italy (1142-c. 1330)* (Leiden – Boston, 2008), pp. 206-207; Elena Bellomo, 'Rinaldo da Concorezzo, Archbishop of Ravenna, and the Trial of the Templars in Northern Italy', in *The debate*, pp. 263-272; *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie. Die Geschichte der Generalprokuratoren von den Anfängen bis 1403* (Göttingen, 1961), pp. 16-17. See also G. van den Broek, 'Procuratore generale', in *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, VII (Roma, 1983), pp. 879-883; Philipp Hofmeister, 'Die Generalprokuratoren der Ordensleute beim Hl. Stuhl', in *Im Dienste des Rechtes in Kirche und Staat. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Franz Arnold*, ed. Willibald M. Plöchl (Wien, 1963), pp. 235-260; Andreas Sohn, 'Les procureurs à la curie romaine pour une enquête internationale', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge*, 114/1 (2002), pp. 371-389. On specific religious orders see Innocentius Taurisano, *Hierarchia Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Romae, 1913), pp. 84-90; P. N. Racanelli, 'La Gerarchia Agostiniana: I Procuratori Generali dell'Ordine (1216-1931)', *Bollettino Storico Agostiniano*, 10 (1934), pp. 109-114; Emanuele Boaga, 'Il procuratore generale nell'ordine Carmelitano. Origine e sviluppo della figura e del ruolo', *Carmelus*, 43 (1996), pp. 42-98; Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, pp. 62-63; Jan E. Beuttel, *Der Generalprokurator des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie* (Marburg, 1999); Barbara Bombi, 'I procuratori dell'Ordine Teutonico tra il XIII e XIV secolo. Studi sopra un inedito rotolo pergameneo del Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz di Berlino', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 44 (2002), pp. 193-297; Barbara Bombi, 'Un inedito memoriale dell'Archivio dei procuratori dell'Ordine Teutonico del principio del XIV secolo', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 82 (2002), pp. 47-121. In 1306 the statutes of the papal *cursores* (messengers) already draw a distinction between *procuratores* and *ambassiatores*: Tilmann Schmidt, 'Das päpstliche Kursorenkollegium und seine Statuten von 1306.', *Deutsches Archiv* 50 (1994), p. 598, n. 8.

for the orders' survival and networking, especially given the nature of papal arbitration, which mainly dealt with lawsuits on jurisdictional and financial matters.¹³

The Teutonic Order was especially successful in organizing its representatives at the papal curia between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Since the 1220s the order probably already had permanent representatives in Rome. The latter were always chosen from among the brothers of the Order. They were responsible for the administration of the Teutonic Order's Roman house, and often followed the curia during its journeys outside Rome.¹⁴ Between the 1250s and the 1280s the general proctors were usually Italian brothers of the Order, while by the end of the thirteenth century they were chosen from among the German brothers in accordance with the more general Germanisation of the Order, implemented after the move of the Knights' headquarters to Prussia in 1309.¹⁵ Evidence shows that the general proctor of the Teutonic Order fulfilled three main functions: he represented the order and its houses in judicial disputes before the curia's departments; he dealt with payments before the apostolic chamber; and he managed the organization of the central documentary repository of the Order in Rome.¹⁶ Ultimately, when the papal curia moved to the south of France in 1305, the general proctors of the Teutonic Order moved as well along with part of their archive.¹⁷

Together with political and strategic resolutions, it was therefore the successful contribution of the Teutonic Order's general proctors, who properly advised the higher ranks of the order and understood how to negotiate what the Italian poet Petrarch termed the "intricate maze" of the papal curia in Avignon, that ultimately secured the order's survival in the first three decades of the fourteenth century.¹⁸ Indeed, during the fourteenth century, lengthy judicial, diplomatic and administrative proceedings at the papal curia not only required a good degree of legal

¹³ On the military orders and the papacy in the fourteenth century see Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, p. 260-292.

¹⁴ Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, pp. 18-22; Barbara Bombi, 'L'Ordine Teutonico nell'Italia centrale. La casa romana dell'Ordine e l'ufficio del procuratore generale', pp. 205-214; Sylvain Gouguenheim, *Les Chevaliers Teutoniques* (Paris, 2007), pp. 114-117.

¹⁵ Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, pp. 62-72; Kristjan Toomaspoeg, 'Die Deutschordenskirche Santa Maria in Domnica im Licht eines unbekanntes Inventars von 1285', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 83 (2003), pp. 83-101; Bombi, 'L'Ordine Teutonico', p. 209.

¹⁶ Bombi, 'L'Ordine Teutonico', pp. 210-214. See also W. Urban, 'The Diplomacy of the Teutonic Knights at the papal curia', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 9 (1978), pp. 120-121.

¹⁷ Barbara Bombi, 'An Archival Network: The Teutonic Knights between the Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Century', in *International Religious Networks*, ed. Jeremy Gregory – Hugh McLeod (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 83-95; Bombi, 'Un inedito memoriale', pp. 86-91.

¹⁸ Francesco Petrarca, *Le Familiari*, ed. Vittorio Rossi, III (Firenze, 1933-1942), p. 112.

expertise and political weight, but also specialised acquaintance with the mechanisms that governed the Apostolic See's administrative and diplomatic practices.

2. The Teutonic Order and its challenges in the first three decades of the fourteenth century.

After 1291 the Teutonic Order successfully moved its headquarters firstly to Venice and then, in 1309, to Marienburg in Prussia, following the conquest of eastern Pomerania and Danzig in 1308-1309. The move to Prussia gave the Teutonic Order a new *raison d'être* as promoter of Christendom through missionary and crusading activities in northern Europe, to some extent safeguarding its position vis-à-vis secular and papal powers and providing a renewed vocation, which had been lacking in the case of the Templar Order.¹⁹ However, as Norman Housley pointed out, during the first three decades of the fourteenth century “the Teutonic Knights faced judicial proceedings which were as serious in their implications as those which destroyed the Templars”.²⁰ The latter mostly concerned the Order's presence in Livonia, where the Knights occupied by the late thirteenth century about two-thirds of the territories in the dioceses of Dorpart, Ösel and Courland, facing the opposition of the archbishop of Riga, his suffragan bishops and their vassals. The dispute in Livonia between the Order and the archbishop of Riga ultimately fell under papal jurisdiction because of the nature of the accusations against the order and due to the fact that Livonia and Estonia had been put under papal protection after their conquest in the second decade of the thirteenth century.²¹

When in 1297 the citizens of Riga attacked the Teutonic Order, killing over sixty brothers, the dispute degenerated into open hostilities. In 1298 the Order occupied the city, which was ruled over by the archbishop of Riga, and settled a garrison in the town. The Order focused on taking over the control of Riga's economic and military activities as well as administering pastoral care in the town

¹⁹ Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 266-269; Gouguenheim, *Les Chevaliers*, pp. 263-273.

²⁰ Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, p. 267.

²¹ Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 267-268. See also Barbara Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei. Missione e crociata nel Nord Europa tra la fine del XII e i primi decenni del XIII secolo* (Roma, 2007), pp. 236-238.

against the prerogatives of the secular clergy.²² In 1298-1299 the citizens and archbishop of Riga, Isarno of Fontiano, appealed to the papal curia against the Order. However, Isarno's translation to the see of Lund in 1302, followed by a two-year vacancy of the see of Riga, halted the proceedings at the papal curia, ultimately exacerbating the conflict.²³ Nor did the election of Frederick of Pernstein to the archbishopric of Riga in March 1304 help to pacify the parties. Frederick was in fact from Moravia, belonged to the Franciscan order, and was well connected at the papal curia, where he had been a minor penitentiary and spent most of his episcopate - Frederick was in fact archbishop of Riga between 1304 and 1341, but resided in Riga only for about four years (1305-1307, 1311-12 and 1324-1325).²⁴ In this respect, we can concur with Forstreuter that the Apostolic See probably favoured Frederick's appointment to the See of Riga in order to limit the Order's power in Livonia, although *de facto* it produced the opposite outcome.²⁵

In 1305, despite Frederick's attempts to put the Knights in Livonia under his protection, the Order did not allow the archbishop to return to Riga, having secured control over the river Düna, after purchasing the Cistercian monastery of Dünamünde.²⁶ As a result, Frederick and the citizens of Riga newly appealed to the papal curia listing five major charges against the Teutonic Knights: personal and jurisdictional offences against the Church in Livonia and the archbishop of Riga; abuses against the citizens of Riga, especially impeding the city's traders; deficiencies in the defence of the Church and Faith in Livonia; obstruction of the missionary activities in the region; and corruption and misbehaviours of the Knights in contempt of the Order's rule and statutes.²⁷ The Teutonic Knights obviously denied these accusations, emphasising their achievements in Livonia. After several hearings in

²² J. Haller, 'Die Verschwörung von Segewold (1316)', *Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Esth- und Kurlands* 20 (1910), pp. 125-128; August Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus de Moliano (1312). Quellen zur Geschichte des deutschen Orden* (Königsberg, 1912). pp. VIII-IX. Bernard Jähnig, 'Das Rigen zwischen Deutschem Orden und bischöflicher Gewalt in Livland und Preußen', *Römische Quartalschrift* 97 (2002), pp. 230-237, maintained that the Teutonic Order did not manage to strengthen its control over the Church in Livonia until the Reformation, while it achieved better results in Courland and Prussia. See also Reinhard Wittram, *Baltische Geschichte* (München, 1954), pp. 36-41.

²³ Haller, 'Die Verschwörung', p. 128; Kurt Forstreuter, 'Erzbischof Friedrich von Riga (1304-1341). Ein Beitrag zu seiner Charakteristik', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 19 (1970), pp. 657-658.

²⁴ Forstreuter, *Erzbischof Friedrich*, pp. 653-656.

²⁵ Forstreuter, *Erzbischof Friedrich*, p. 658. See also Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör*, pp. IX-X; Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 127-128; Jähnig, *Das Rigen zwischen Deutschem*, pp. 230-231.

²⁶ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 128-130; Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör*, pp. X-XI, p. 164; Forstreuter, *Erzbischof Friedrich*, p. 658.

²⁷ Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör*, p. XI; Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 266-268.

Avignon, where Frederick arrived in 1307, in 1310 Clement V decided to dispatch *in partibus* John, archbishop of Brema, and Albert of Milano, provost of Ravenna, who was replaced in 1311 by Francis of Moliano.²⁸ Exacerbating his clash with the Teutonic Knights, in 1311 Frederick further endorsed the plan of his fellow brothers, the Franciscans from Saxony, who intended to undertake the conversion of Lithuania in defiance of the Teutonic Order's prerogatives in the region.²⁹ Once in Livonia Francis of Moliano excommunicated the Teutonic Knights and carried out his investigation throughout 1312.³⁰ The timing of Francis of Moliano's investigation in 1312 could not have been more unfavourable to the Teutonic Order, which then seriously feared the possibility of dissolution alongside the Templars. However, as Housley put it, the Teutonic Order managed to avoid the same fate of the Templars for three reasons: firstly, although some of the accusations against the Teutonic Knights (especially those of corruption and poor performance in the conversion of the pagans) were in some respects as serious as the ones moved against the Templars, the opponents of the Teutonic Order in Livonia were in a different league from the king of France and could only exercise limited pressure on the pope and his advisers, notwithstanding Archbishop Frederick's personal connections and acquaintance with the curia; secondly, despite the accusations against the Teutonic Knights, Clement V probably valued their political importance vis-à-vis the Danish and Swedish monarchies and their role in promoting and expanding Christendom against the Lithuanians, whose conversion was left to the Order's initiative throughout the fourteenth century; and last but not least, the Teutonic Order's general proctor and its Grand Master Charles of Treviri managed to stage a robust defence in Avignon.³¹ The latter point is reinforced through the colourful evidence given in the fourteenth-century pro-Teutonic Order chronicles of Herman of Wartberge and Peter of Dusburg. In Hermann's account, when presenting their evidence before the public consistory in 1310, the proctors of the Teutonic Order managed to persuade Clement V that the actions of the Order's commander in Winda, Everardus de Munheim, guilty of having hanged some citizens of Riga by their feet from a tree without a proper trial (*sine*

²⁸ Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör*, pp. XII-XIV; Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, p. 270.

²⁹ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 131-133; Forstreuter, *Erzbischof Friedrich*, p. 656. See also Manfred Hellmann, 'Die Päpste und Litauen', in *La cristianizzazione della Lituania* (Città del Vaticano, 1989), pp. 35-46.

³⁰ For the edition of Francis of Moliano's proceedings see Seraphim, *Das Zeugenverhör*, pp. 1-145. See also Ulrich Niess, *Hochmeister Karl von Trier (1311-1324)* (Marburg, 1992), pp. 77-86.

³¹ Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 270-273.

causa), were lawful since they followed local customs (*secundum illius partis iusticiam iudicavit*).³² Even more explicitly, Peter of Dusburg praised the joint action of the Order's general proctor at the papal curia and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Charles of Treviri, who remained in Avignon in 1311 to deal with the accusations against the Order. In particular, Peter's description of the personal qualities of the Grand Master gives a very interesting insight into how lawsuits were managed at the fourteenth-century papal curia. Peter says: "(Charles) knew French as his own language and spoke before the pope and the cardinals without an interpreter; he was so pleasant and eloquent that even his enemies enjoyed listening to him".³³ In other words, Charles's eloquence alongside the general proctor's acquaintance with the curial administrative practice saved the Order.

Indeed, in 1313 the Teutonic Order not only managed to survive its opponents' challenges in Livonia and secure its continued existence at the papal curia, but reinvigorated its position in Riga, where Frederick could not come back until 1324. While the Order repeatedly used Frederick's absence from Riga as an argument against the archbishop, deemed responsible for the poor administration of his diocese, Frederick and his supporters fought back these accusations, blaming the Teutonic Knights for their continuous intimidations and threats in Livonia.³⁴ Moreover, after the election of the new pope John XXII in 1316, the hostilities among the parties in Riga reopened, when some citizens attacked the monastery of Dünamünde and killed a brother of the Order.³⁵ Meanwhile, in 1316 the election to the provostship of Riga disputed between Lutfrid, prior of Riga and close ally of Archbishop Frederick, and John of Münster, a canon of Riga supported by the Teutonic Order, degenerated into an open clash between the archbishop and the order, after the Teutonic Knights

³² Hermann von Wartberge, *Chronicon Livonie*, in *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der Prußischen Vorzeit*, ed. Theodor Hirsch (Leipzig, 1861-74), II, pp. 57-58.

³³ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronicon Terrae Prussiae*, in *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der Prußischen Vorzeit*, ed. Max Toppen I (Leipzig, 1861), p. 178: "Lingua Gallicam novit sicut propriam sine interprete loquebatur coram papa et cardinalibus, adeo affabilis et facundus fuit, quod etiam inimicij eius delectabantur eum audire" (my translation in the text). See also the recent edition and Italian translation of Peter of Dusburg's chronicle: Pietro di Dusburg, *Cronaca della Terra di Prussia. L'Ordine Teutonico dalla fondazione al 1326*, ed. and trans. Pietro Bugiani (Spoleto, 2012), no. 314, p. 460.

³⁴ Forstreuter, *Erzbischof Friedrich*, pp. 658-659. As Forstreuter pointed out three of Frederick's successors to the archbishopric of Riga, Engelbert († 1347), Fromhold († 1369) and Siegfried († 1374), were also forced out of their diocese and died in Avignon. See also Barbara Bombi, 'Una disputa tra l'arcivescovo di Riga e l'Ordine Teutonico ad Avignone', in *L'Ordine Teutonico tra Mediterraneo e Baltico*, ed. Hubert Houben – Kristjan Toomaspoeg (Galatina, 2008), p. 128.

³⁵ Hermann von Wartberge, *Chronicon Livonie*, p. 58.

sacked the episcopal manor of Segewold.³⁶ Lutfrid's initial attempts at seeking arbitration before the Livonian master of the Order, Gerard of Jorke, soon failed. Gerard in fact accused Archbishop Frederick of being responsible for the decay of his see owing to his prolonged absence and use of episcopal income to remain in Avignon and exploited the positive outcome of Francis of Moliano's enquiry to its advantage.³⁷ Certainly, the Knights' accusations against Frederick (that he entertained a good life-style in Avignon) do not seem completely unfounded. Indeed, Frederick's accounts, preserved in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, show that he enjoined a good life-style, purchasing clothes, wine, goods, jewellery and parchment for books for himself and members of his entourage.³⁸ Ultimately, on 23 April 1316 Lutfrid and his opponent agreed to some formal truce-negotiations (*confederatio*) overseen by the Teutonic Order in Segewold.³⁹ However, Lutfrid later claimed that during these negotiations he had been pressured into agreeing with the Teutonic Order's requests, namely that Archbishop Frederick should withdraw his appeals against the Order at the papal curia and that the archbishop's revenues should be seized, so that Frederick, unable to pay for his lawyers and legal expenses in Avignon, would have been forced to return to Livonia, where he would have been *de facto* imprisoned by the Order.⁴⁰

When in the second half of 1316 the Teutonic Order managed to persuade some of Frederick's supporters to switch to their side, the situation once more deteriorated. Lutfrid was imprisoned by the Order and forced, in his version of the story, to write letters to the pope and the cardinals, asking that they lift the excommunication against the order.⁴¹ Finally, following the advice given by the Grand Master of the Order, Charles of Treviri, and the general proctor at the papal curia, Conrad of Bruel, Lutfrid agreed to travel to Avignon and give evidence against Frederick as a means to end his captivity.⁴²

³⁶ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 125-168; Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, no. 53, pp. 211-213; Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 129-131.

³⁷ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, p. 159: "Ecce ... archiepiscopus vester iacet in Romana curia et consumit omnia bona vestra et ecclesie vestre".

³⁸ Leonid Arbusow, 'Römischer Arbeitsbericht, I', *Acta Universitatis Latviensis* 17 (1928), pp. 401-410; Leonid Arbusow, 'Römischer Arbeitsbericht, III', *Acta Universitatis Latviensis* 1 (1929-1931), pp. 143-144.

³⁹ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, p. 135 (wrongly dating the agreement on 24 April 1316). For another edition of this document see *Liv-, est- und kurländisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. Frederick G. von Bunge, II (Aalen, 1855), no. 654, col. 92-94.

⁴⁰ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 161-163.

⁴¹ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 141-142; 163. Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 131-132.

⁴² Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 165-166; Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, no. 52, pp. 210-211. On Conrad of Bruel's activity at the papal curia see Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, pp. 76-90

As I argued elsewhere, the hearings, which took place before the consistory in December 1317, are uniquely recorded in two documents, preserved in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano.⁴³ Both these documents in fact demonstrate the importance of following the correct procedures and being properly represented by legal advisers and experts, when petitioning and facing legal challenges at the fourteenth-century papal curia. Indeed, while the defence of the Teutonic Order was orchestrated in a masterly fashion by its general proctor, Conrad of Bruel, and his entourage, who, in Lutfrid's account, enjoyed financial resources to corrupt their witnesses and acquaintances among the cardinals, Frederick and his supporters could only count on a free-lance proctor, Certano Filomani of Bologna, and two Franciscan friars of Slavic origins, *Siffridus* and *Pribislaous*.⁴⁴ Ultimately, Frederick's proctor just managed to produce before the curia the notarized depositions against the Order given by Lutfrid and John of Krakow, another of Frederick's supporters, who accused the Knights of having pressured them into witnessing against the archbishop through the use of force. In doing so, Frederick's proctor tried to undermine the validity of the truce (*confederatio*) agreed at Segewold in 1316, which had been sealed without Lutfrid's consent by his officials in Livonia, who had been corrupted by the order and physically threatened.⁴⁵

Whereas in December 1317, during the first hearing, John XXII annulled the truce-agreement (*confederatio*) of Segewold, as requested by Archbishop Frederick, on 22 and 23 February 1318 the pope summoned to Avignon all the parties involved in the Livonian dispute, demanding their presence within three months.⁴⁶ As I argued elsewhere, the Teutonic Order's general proctor, Conrad of Bruel, and his entourage managed to gather an impressive dossier of 131 papal documents, preserved in their archive, confirming their rights, privileges and exemptions in Livonia, Prussia and the Holy Land.⁴⁷ This dossier was probably employed by the Order's hierarchy to prove

⁴³ Città del Vaticano, ASV, *Instr. Misc.* 630-631. For my dating of the proceedings at the papal curia see Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 129-130, where I challenge Haller's chronology: Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, pp. 135-137.

⁴⁴ Haller, *Die Verschwörung*, p. 145; 152-157; Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, no. 52, p. 210-211; Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 133-134.

⁴⁵ Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 134-136.

⁴⁶ *Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae*, ed. Augustinus Theiner, I (Roma, 1860), no. 214, pp. 130-132; no. 217, p. 133; no. 219, p. 135-137; Bombi, 'I procuratori', no. 114-115, p. 294. On Charles of Treviri's defence of the Order in 1318 see Klaus Conrad, 'Karl von Trier', in *Die Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens (1190-1994)*, ed. Udo Arnold (Marburg, 1998), pp. 58-60; Niess, *Hochmeister Karl*, pp. 128-133.

⁴⁷ *Vetera Monumenta*, I, no. 218, pp. 133-135; 'I procuratori', pp. 206-213; 247.

its rights vis-à-vis Frederick of Riga during the hearings, which took place in Avignon in July 1318. Indeed, on 25 July 1318 the Teutonic Knights obtained papal confirmation of their rights over the monastery of Dünamünde, which gave the Order pivotal control on the access to the town of Riga along the estuary of the river Düna. John XXII clearly stated that the Order had in fact lawfully acquired Dünamünde, whereas Frederick's claims over it had not been proven (*nil probavit*).⁴⁸ Once more the latter statement, I believe, is of crucial importance, as it shows how the right use of the judicial and administrative procedures, supported by certified written evidence, could win a long and complex case at the fourteenth-century papal curia. Equally, Lutfrid's notarized deposition, produced by Archbishop Frederick and his proctor Certano, allowed the archbishop to regain control over some episcopal income in Livonia.⁴⁹ Ultimately, it was the amount of certified written evidence, produced by the parties, and their proctors' ability to use it effectively in order to prove their points before the papal court that helped the Order to win the 1317-1318 lawsuit at the papal curia and safeguard its position vis-à-vis the Apostolic See. As pointed out in John XXII's mandate of 25 July 1318, the Teutonic Order's general proctor could in fact count on the order's archive to prove the Knights' exemptions and jurisdictional rights. On the contrary, its counterpart, Archbishop Frederick, lacked the right amount of paperwork and possibly the income to pay a good team of proctors.⁵⁰

However, a few years later in 1324 Archbishop Frederick seems to have learnt his lesson and, when he again challenged the Teutonic Order at the papal curia, he made sure that his paper trail was better prepared. In 1323 John XXII had become interested in the conversion of Gediminas, the pagan ruler of Lithuania, who had approached the pope claiming his desire to convert to Christianity.⁵¹ Therefore, in 1324 the pope involved the Franciscans in the planned conversion of Gediminas, disregarding the prerogatives over missionary activities and crusading in the region, traditionally claimed by the Teutonic Knights.⁵² John XXII dispatched his nuncios to

⁴⁸ Hermann von Wartberge, *Chronicon Livonie*, pp. 58-59; *Vetera Monumenta*, I, no. 225, p. 146.

⁴⁹ *Vetera Monumenta*, no. 228, pp. 133-135.

⁵⁰ Bombi, 'Una disputa', pp. 138-140.

⁵¹ Hellmann, 'Die Päpste', pp. 48-51; Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 274-275; Raisa J. Mazeika – Stephen C. Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi: Pope John XXII, Archbishop Frederick of Riga and the Baltic Mission, 1305-1340', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 31 (1993), pp. 34-38.

⁵² William Urban, 'The Teutonic Order and Lithuania', in *La cristianizzazione*, pp. 115-118; Mazeika – Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', pp. 38-40; 59-62, argued that John XXII was seeking an alliance with Gediminas against Ludwig of Bavaria (excommunicated in 23 March 1324), to whom the Teutonic Order was allied. See also Gouguenheim, *Les Chevaliers*, pp. 523-524.

Lithuania, whereas Frederick of Riga, who was after all a Franciscan and grasped that he could profit from the papal plans in Lithuania, put himself forward as Gedeminas's agent at the papal curia.⁵³ Exploiting the favourable circumstances, in 1324 Frederick therefore appealed to the Apostolic See against the Teutonic Knights with regard to the Order's control over Riga. This time Frederick's calculations were indeed right and, despite the fierce defence of the Order in Avignon through its proctor Conrad of Bruel and the preceptor of Livonia, on 10 February 1324 John XXII reprimanded the Teutonic Knights for their abuses against the citizens of Riga and the secular church in Livonia, requiring that the Order should collaborate with the episcopate and should discipline its members guilty of uncanonical practices in the region.⁵⁴

Arguably, as Mazeika and Rowell convincingly suggested, in February 1324 the Teutonic Order was politically weakened vis-à-vis the papal curia because of its support for the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, who had been excommunicated on 23 March 1324.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the failure to defend the Order's prerogatives in Livonia and the papal condemnation of the Order in 1324 overlapped with the deterioration of Charles of Treviri's health, who ultimately resigned his office on 12 February, opening a Grand Master's vacancy in the Order until 6 July 1324, when Werner of Orseln took over this office.⁵⁶ Finally, it is worth noting that the Order's debacle in 1324 and Charles of Treviri's resignation further coincided with the Order's appointment of a new general proctor at the papal curia, when Conrad of Bruel stepped down at some point after 16 March 1324 and was replaced by Henry of Dorpart, whose activity is recorded since December 1324.⁵⁷

Yet, alongside the unfavourable political circumstances and the domestic divisions within the Order, old and new evidence, recently examined by Patrick Zutshi, suggests that Archbishop Frederick's victory over the Order in February 1324 should be also ascribed to the fact that the archbishop was better prepared for the judicial challenge. Zutshi has in fact drawn attention to three of Frederick's financial

⁵³ Hermann von Wartberge, *Chronicon Livonie*, pp. 61-62; Mazeika – Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', pp. 51-52.

⁵⁴ *Vetera Monumenta*, I, no. 279, pp. 182-184; *Lettres communes de Jean XXII (1316-1334)*, ed. Guillaume Mollat (Paris, 1904-1946), no. 49555. See also Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, p. 276.

⁵⁵ Mazeika – Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', pp. 40-42. . Housley, p. 280-281, points out that the Teutonic Order allied with John of Bohemia and Louis of Bavaria to face their unpopularity at the papal curia.

⁵⁶ Conrad, 'Karl von Trier', p. 60; Niess, *Hochmeister Karl*, pp. 157-162.

⁵⁷ Forstreuter, *Die Berichte*, pp. 89-91.

accounts and inventories, dating 1323-1325.⁵⁸ The latter show that in 1323-1325 the archbishop's library and archives included rolls, documents, and manuscripts, some of which clearly concerned the rights of the Church of Riga and the dispute with the Teutonic Order.⁵⁹ Among the other documents listed in Frederick's inventories, two undoubtedly stand out: the copy of a register of letters of Pope Innocent III, who had been responsible for arbitrating in 1210 the early stages of the dispute between the military religious order of the Sword Brothers, incorporated into the Teutonic Order in 1237, and the episcopate of Riga;⁶⁰ and letters and other documents concerning Gediminas of Lithuania, who had chosen Archbishop Frederick as an agent at the papal curia in 1324.⁶¹ The presence of a copy of a register of Innocent III among Frederick's possessions is most significant, since in 1318 the Teutonic Order's defence against Frederick had focused on the rights acquired by the Sword Brothers in Livonia during the pontificate of Innocent III. Indeed, it is worth noting that, unlike Frederick, in 1318 the Teutonic Knights could produce before the papal curia extracts of Innocent III's letters based on the copies recorded in the papal registers, which were not available in Avignon at that time, given that they were only moved from Italy to France in 1339.⁶² Furthermore, Frederick's accounts for the period 1 February – 12 July 1319 suggest that the archbishop was by then employing for legal advice one of the most important jurists at the Avignon curia, Oldradus da Ponte.⁶³ Such evidence ultimately highlights that Frederick had learnt his lessons from the legal debacles of 1313 and 1318. By 1324 he was better prepared: he could in fact prove properly his rights through written evidence, preserved in his personal library and archive; he took advice from renowned legal experts such as Oldradus dal Ponte; and, finally, he could suitably exploit the pope's plan to convert Gediminas of Lithuania through his fellow Franciscans in defiance of the Teutonic Order's prerogatives in the region, further taking advantage of the vacancy of the Order's Grand Master and

⁵⁸ Patrick Zutshi, 'Frederick, Archbishop of Riga (1304-1341), and his books', in *The Medieval Book. Glosses from Friends and Colleagues of Christopher de Hamel*, ed. James H. Marrow – Richard A. Linenthal – William Noel (Hes et De Graaf Publishers, 2010), pp. 327-331. Frederick's inventories have been edited in *Bibliothèques ecclésiastiques au temps de la papauté d'Avignon*, I, ed. Daniel Williman (Paris, 1980), pp. 147-151.

⁵⁹ Zutshi, 'Frederick', pp. 328-329.

⁶⁰ *Bibliothèques ecclésiastiques*, p. 150: "Item Registrum Innocentii III"; Zutshi, 'Frederick', p. 328. See also Barbara Bombi, 'Innocent III and the Origins of the Sword Brothers', in *The Military Orders. History and Heritage. III*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 147-154.

⁶¹ *Bibliothèques ecclésiastiques*, p. 148: "Item litere regis Letonie cum aliis literis quamplurimus necessariis".

⁶² Bombi, 'I procuratori', pp. 216-222; 230-233; 242-248.

⁶³ Zutshi, 'Frederick', no. 8, p. 331.

general proctor as well as the political weakness of the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, who was a notorious supporter of the Order.

Meanwhile, alongside its problems on the Livonian front, the Teutonic Order was also challenged at the papal curia for its arrears in the payment of the Peter's Pence. Since 1317, John XXII had in fact tried to recover this money from the Teutonic Knights, who owed the Apostolic Chamber arrears on their feudal census in Prussia and Poland, especially in the dioceses of Cammin and Culm, where the papal collectors issued severe sanctions in 1321.⁶⁴ Although the Teutonic Knights and their vassals objected to these fiscal requests, in March 1323 their general proctor at the papal curia, Conrad of Bruel, paid some of the arrears at the Apostolic Chamber on behalf of the bishops of Culm and Curland.⁶⁵ However, these payments were not sufficient, since in 1325 the payment of arrears were newly demanded by the papal collectors Andreas of Veroli and Peter of Auvergne, dispatched to Prussia by John XXII.

3. A Teutonic Brother reflecting on the Order in the 1330s: Brother Ulrich and his treatise.

Indeed, the pressure on the Teutonic Order at the papal curia continued well into the 1330s, when the Knights had to confront new challenges from the archbishop and the citizens of Riga as well as in Poland, where Order faced the attacks of John, king of Bohemia, Gediminas of Lithuania and Frederick of Riga, who was originally from Bohemia and managed to be appointed as executor of several papal mandates concerning that region after 1325.⁶⁶ In 1329 a coalition including John of Bohemia, Gediminas of Lithuania and the Poles tried to recover the disputed territories of Pomerania (namely Pomorze, Kuyavia and Dobrzyn) under the Order's control. Finally, in 1334, facing the appeal of the Order and its allies, John XXII dispatched *in partibus* his *nuncius* Galhard *de Carceribus* and in 1335 at the Vissegrad Conference the King of Hungary and Bohemia recommended that the contended lands should be retained by the Order.⁶⁷ However, its opponents put further pressure on Benedict XII, whose nuncios ultimately ruled against the Order at the Process of Warsaw in 1339,

⁶⁴ E. Maschke, *Der Peterspfennig in Polen und dem deutschen Osten* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 146-188; Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, pp. 279-280.

⁶⁵ Città del Vaticano, ASV, Cam. Ap., *Oblig. et Sol.*, 3, fol. 107r; ASV, Cam. Ap., *Oblig. et Sol.*, 5, fol. 143r; ASV, Cam. Ap., *Oblig. et Sol.*, 7, fol. 45v; 53r; ASV, Cam. Ap., *Oblig. et Sol.*, 10, fol. 32v.

⁶⁶ Mazeika – Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', pp. 54-59.

⁶⁷ *Vetera Monumenta*, I, no. 447-448, pp. 340-341; no. 470, p. 355; no. 473-476, pp. 356-357.

when the knights were asked to return the disputed territories to Poland and pay a substantial indemnity to the Polish king.⁶⁸

Within this context of joint attacks against the Order in Pomerania and Livonia between the 1320s and the 1330s, I believe, we need to place the compilation of an important Latin treatise by a brother of the Order, Ulrich, who dedicated his work to Pope Benedict XII in 1335. The treatise is now preserved in a Vatican Library manuscript (BAV, Ottobon. Lat. 528) as well as in a fifteenth-century German translation (now Vienna, Deutschordenszentralarchiv - DOZA, Codex 101). Ulrich's Latin treatise survives in an octavo manuscript, which already belonged to the papal library by 1369.⁶⁹ The work is organized in three sections: the first on the rule of the Order; the second on its statutes and customs; the third concerning the papal privileges granted to the Order. As Ulrich points out in his dedicatory letter addressed to Benedict XII, he intended to read the Order's legislative texts in an eschatological perspective in order to demonstrate the devout and spiritual nature of the Teutonic Order (significantly referred to as a *religio*) against the attacks of its opponents.⁷⁰ In doing so, Ulrich set out to show how the Teutonic Knights' rule forged the Order as an "earthly paradise" in Jerusalem, while their statutes and customs made the Order comparable to the "spiritual congregation" of the "heavenly Jerusalem". Finally, using ninety-nine papal privileges granted to the Order since its foundation and preserved in the Order's archives, Ulrich suggested that the Knights should be likened to Noah's ark and, thus, seen as a means of salvation for the entire Church. On these grounds, in his Prologue, Ulrich asked the pope to intercede before the Order's enemies, most notably the secular clergy and Archbishop Frederick, persuading them of the spiritual nature and mission of the Teutonic Knights.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Vetera Monumenta*, I, no. 541-542, pp. 411-414; no. 544, pp. 415-416; Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, pp. 277-278.

⁶⁹ Kurt Forstreuter, 'Ein Traktat des Deutschen Ordens aus dem 14. Jahrhundert, in *Recht im Dienste der Menschenwürde*', in *Festschrift für Herbert Kraus. Herausgegeben vom Göttinger Arbeitskreis* (Würzburg, 1964), p. 446.

⁷⁰ BAV, Ottobon. Lat. 528, fol. 1v; Houben, 'Eine Quelle', pp. 141-145. On the spirituality of the military religious orders and Ulrich's treatise see Kaspar Elm, 'Die Spiritualität der geistlichen Ritterorden des Mittelalters. Forschungsstand und Forschungsprobleme', in *Milita Christi e Crociata nei secoli XI-XIII* (Milano, 1992), pp. 506-518.

⁷¹ BAV, Ottobon. Lat. 528, fol. 5v: "ac per eam totam ecclesiam tibi commissam et omnium fidelium animos contra infideles armando confortare et pastorem mentem Rigensis archiepiscopi ad eius amorem inclinare. Utinam tua benedictio tam larga super paradysum huiusmodi religionis spiritualem tam larga descendat ut et eidem venerabili archiepiscopo ut paradysus amenus et delectabilis ac dulcis esse apareat. Deus omnipotens, qui congregavit Maria in unum locum ut aparet et ardida sicut sacra dicit scripta et qui aquam in vinum mutavit ut ewangelista Iohannes dicit, ille eiam mentem episcopalem Rigensis archiepiscopi dignetur pium intellectum illustrare, ut studeat hanc domum

Kurt Forstreuter, Marian Biskup and Hubert Houben examined Ulrich's treatise, focusing on its function, authorship and dating.⁷² Initially, Forstreuter identified the author of the manuscript as the brother of the Order Ulrich von Gumpoldskirchen, basing his argument on two main assumptions: firstly, owing to the fact that the fifteenth-century German translation of the treatise is heavily influenced by Austrian dialectal expressions. Forstreuter assumed that its compiler was a brother of the Order from Austria, the mentioned Ulrich von Gumpoldskirchen; secondly, building on the work of Annalise Maier, Forstreuter speculated that Ulrich also compiled another treatise on the beatific vision, now preserved in BAV, Vat. Lat. 4005, which is similarly dedicated to Benedict XII and attributed to a certain "brother Ulrich", probably of Austrian origin as well.⁷³ However, Forstreuter's identification of Ulrich, his background and connections have been since challenged. In particular, Houben convincingly questioned Ulrich's combined authorship of Ottobon. Lat. 528 and Vat. Lat. 4005 and his Austrian background, instead maintaining that Ulrich compiled his work in the Rhineland, where he borrowed information on the Order's history and papal documentation. In Houben's opinion, this hypothesis is supported through the treatise's internal evidence, since Ulrich indicated that most of the papal privileges collected in the third section of his work came from regional German archives of the Order, especially Mergentheim and other houses in the Rhineland.⁷⁴ Accordingly, different suggestions have been made with regard to the rationale behind the compilation of Ulrich's treatise. Forstreuter maintained that Ulrich had close contacts with the general proctors of the Teutonic Order in Avignon and borrowed from their archive some of the papal privileges included in the third section of his treatise.⁷⁵ More recently, Biskup agreed with Forstreuter on Ulrich's identity and emphasised that the treatise witnesses the fourteenth-century mentality and

Theotonicam quia Ierosolimitanam civitatem spiritualem contra omnia vicia ordinatam et munitam considerare". See also Houben, 'Eine Quelle', p. 143.

⁷² Forstreuter, 'Ein Traktat' pp. 445-462; Marian Biskup, 'Über quellenkundliche Fragen und einige Forschungsaspekte der Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens. Ein Beitrag zu den Werkstattproblemen des heutigen Forschers', in *Werkstatt des Historikers des mittelalterlichen Ritterorden. Quellenkundliche Probleme und Forschungsmethoden*, ed. Zenon H Nowak (Torun, 1987), p. 16; Houbert Houben, 'Eine Quelle zum Selbstverständnis des Deutschen Ordens im 14. Jahrhundert: der Codex Vat. Ottobon. Lat. 528', in *Selbstbild und Selbstverständnis der geistlichen Ritterorden*, ed. Roman Czaja – Jürgen Sarnowsky (Torun, 2005), pp. 139-153. See also Mazeika – Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', pp. 55-56.

⁷³ Forstreuter, 'Ein Traktat', pp. 451-453. See also Annalise Maier, 'Zwei Prooemien Benedikts XII.', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 7 (1969), pp. 143 n. 44.

⁷⁴ Houben, 'Eine Quelle', pp. 147.

⁷⁵ Forstreuter, 'Ein Traktat', pp. 445-446; 454-455.

ideology of the Teutonic Order in Livonia and Prussia.⁷⁶ Finally, Houben argued how Ulrich's work signifies the Knights' attempt at presenting an apology before the papal curia in the 1330s and evidencing the importance of their religious mission in face of widespread criticism. In this respect, Houben significantly compared Ulrich's treatise to the almost contemporary chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, which, although cast in a different format, had a similar scope.⁷⁷

Another conceivable suggestion, which I personally favour, is that Ulrich compiled his treatise in Prussia, possibly making use of the central archive of the Grand Master, which was moved to Marienburg in 1309.⁷⁸ Here in the early fourteenth century the papal letters granted to the Teutonic Knights were collected from Order's regional archives across Europe, as evidenced in two fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cartularies, known as *Ordensfoliant 66* and *Ordensfoliant 69*. The latter in fact contain a number of documents, which are also included in Ulrich's work, listing them among those preserved in the same German regional archives of the Order, where Ulrich also claims to have found his documentation.⁷⁹ If so, the treatise should be seen as the attempt of a brother of the Order, Ulrich, to support and defend the Order in about 1335 from its enemies' attacks both in Livonia and Poland and at the papal curia.

In this respect, Ulrich's treatise should be read alongside the Teutonic Knights' early-fourteenth-century production and reading of Biblical and apocalyptic literature. This corpus of literature developed along with more general attempts to reform the Order and its statutes under the tenure of the Grand Masters Werner von Orseln (1324-1330) and Dietrich von Aldenburg (1335-1341), and, as Fisher put it, it had the "purposes of education, self-definition or popularizing" the Order's cause and "was part of a centrally controlled policy within the Order with conscious and far-

⁷⁶ Biskup, 'Biskup, 'Über quellenkundliche Fragen', p. 16.

⁷⁷ Houben, 'Eine Quelle', p. 146-147.

⁷⁸ Rudolf Grieser, 'Das älteste Register der Hochmeisterkanzlei des Deutschen Ordens', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 44 (1930), pp. 417-456; Kurt Forstreuter, *Das Preußische Staatsarchiv in Königsberg* (Göttingen, 1955), pp. v-vi; Kurt Forstreuter, 'Zur Frage der Registerführung in der zentralen Deutschordenskanzlei', *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 52 (1956), pp. 48-61; Max Hein, 'Die Ordenskanzleien in Preussen (1310-1324)', *Altpreußische Forschungen* 9 (1932), pp. 9-21; Klaus Neitmann, 'Zu den Handfestensammlungen Deutschen Ordens in Preußen. Eine Untersuchung des Ordensfolianten' 95, *Archiv für Diplomatie* 36 (1990), pp. 187-220.

⁷⁹ The archives mentioned in Ulrich's treatise are Merghentheim, Koblenz, Prag, Marburg, Cologne, Mainz, Liege, Nürberg: Forstreuter, 'Ein Traktat', p. 451. Significantly, only nine of the ninety-nine letters included in Ulrich's treatise are also found in the papal registers. These data confirm Ulrich's annotations, which give us references to the provenance of the papal letters copied in the treatise. See also Bombi, 'I procuratori', pp. 239-240.

reaching aims”.⁸⁰ This fourteenth-century literary production of the Order included lives of saints, didactic stories, chronicles and translations of Biblical texts. Among the latter some apocalyptic and eschatological texts, thematically echoing Ulrich’s work, stand out: the *Apokalypse* of Heinrich von Hesler, produced in Franciscan circles in about 1309, which was very popular among the Teutonic Knights; the translation of the Book of the Maccabees attributed to the Grand Master Luder von Braunschweig (1330-1335); the translation of the Book of Daniel, which was completed by 1335 and commissioned by the same Luder von Braunschweig; the translation of the Book of Job, dedicated to the Grand Master Dietrich von Aldenburg and completed by 1338; and the apocalyptic work of Tilo von Kulm, entitled *Von den siben ingesigelen*, which was completed in 1331.⁸¹ Equally, as Houben also noted, apocalyptic tones are found in the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, whose Latin *Chronicon Terre Prussie* was completed in 1326 and translated into German by Nicholas von Jeroschin on request of the Grand Master Luder von Braunschweig. Peter of Dusburg’s work in fact served diverse purposes and was addressed to different audiences: it provided a plot for the priests of the Order, preaching the Baltic crusades across the lands of the Empire; it was suitable for the consumption and education of the Knights, who wished to be instructed in the history of their Order; and it was a good piece of propaganda for the defence of the Order before its enemies, in this respect sharing the same concerns as Ulrich’s treatise.⁸²

Finally, the compilation of Ulrich’s treatise ought to be further linked to the attempts by the Order’s supporters to petition the papal curia between 1335 and 1338 in defence of the Knights and as a response to the mission of the papal nuncios in Prussia, Jacobus de Rota and Galhardo de Carceribus.⁸³ Significantly, among the Order’s supporters petitioning the curia in 1335, the priors of the Dominican and

⁸⁰ Jelko Peters, ‘Zum Begriff “Deutschordensdichtung”. Geschichte und Kritik’, *Berichte und Forschungen* 3 (1995), pp. 7-38; Mary Fischer, ‘Biblical Heroes and the Uses of Literature: The Teutonic Order in the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries’, in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150-1500*, ed. Alan Murray (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 264-265; Bugiani, ‘Introduzione’, in Pietro di Dusburg, *Cronaca della Terra di Prussia*, pp. lxii-lxiv. See also Gougenheim, *Les Chevaliers*, pp. 125-129.

⁸¹ Karl Helm – Walther Ziesemer, *Die Literatur des Deutschen Ritterordens* (Giessen, 1951), pp. 71-117; Fischer, ‘Biblical Heroes’, pp. 266-267. On Henrich von Hesler’s text and its reception among the Teutonic Knights see Susanne Ehrlich, *Die ‘Apokalypse’ Heinrichs von Hesler in Text und Bild. Traditionen und Themen volkssprachlicher Bibeldichtung und ihre Rezeption im Deutschen Orden* (Stuttgart, 2010), pp. 158-168.

⁸² Fischer, ‘Biblical Heroes’, pp. 268-269, only argues for the use of Peter of Dusburg’s work inside the Order and for crusade preaching. See also Bugiani, ‘Introduzione’, in Pietro di Dusburg, *Cronaca della Terra di Prussia*, pp. xviii-xix, lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

⁸³ Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, pp. 274-275.

Franciscan convents in Prussia as well as the abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Oliva in Prussia, who petitioned Benedict XII on the order's behalf in 1338, stand out.⁸⁴ These petitions, known to Housley who however did not connect them to Ulrich's treatise and its milieu, in fact singularly echo Ulrich's apologetic and Biblical language in order to persuade the pope of the Teutonic Knights' good deeds in Prussia and Livonia, where the Order is praised for promoting the faith, offering hospitality, collecting alms, building new churches, and maintaining peace. Most importantly, these petitions further witness the Teutonic Order's religious observance and its hierarchy's prompt punishment of any sort of deviance and misbehaviour, as sanctioned in the Order's rule and statutes, which constitute such a prominent part in Ulrich's narrative.⁸⁵

4. Conclusions.

The similarities of language and arguments used in petitions supporting the Teutonic Knights, sent from Prussia to Benedict XII in 1335-1338, and Ulrich's treatise allow me to draw some conclusions. During the three first decades of the fourteenth century, facing political and legal challenges before the papal curia with regards to its rights and possessions in Livonia and Prussia, the Teutonic Order effectively organized its defence on different levels. The Knights in fact not only exploited the political weight of its illustrious political supporters and the personal skills of its Grand Master Charles of Treviri, but also managed to negotiate the papal curia's administrative and bureaucratic procedures through the expertise of its general proctors, ultimately setting up a self-defence through Ulrich's apologetic treatise, which justified the Order's *raison d'être* through the eschatological reading of its normative texts and privileges.

While we can therefore concur with Housley that "the Knights could yield to pressure, but also they were not afraid of defying the Curia", it was not just "their active, bloody, and costly engagement in holy war on Christendom's frontier" that gave them "a powerful advantage which they used adroitly".⁸⁶ On the contrary, as argued in this essay, anybody who wished to be successful in petitioning and facing legal challenges at the fourteenth-century papal curia had to negotiate the curia's

⁸⁴ *Codex diplomaticus Prussicus*, ed. Johannes Voigt (Königsberg, 1836), II, no. 151, pp. 196-198; no. 152, pp. 198-199; III, no. 14, p. 23.

⁸⁵ Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, pp. 274-275.

⁸⁶ Housley, *The Avignon papacy*, p. 280.

bureaucratic procedures as well as its intricate patriarchal structure, conducting their business through official and unofficial channels. This essay demonstrated how the Teutonic Order mastered these tricks better than its opponents, most notably the archbishop of Riga, in particular throughout the hearings before Pope John XXII in Avignon in 1317-1318. In doing so, the Order survived the widespread criticism against the military religious orders at the time of the trial of the Templars, its internal divisions, especially at the time of Charles of Treviri's resignation in 1324, the misfortunes of its political supporters, such as the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, and the military challenges in Livonia and Prussia in the 1330s.