

# The Leper's Plot of 1321 – Evidence of a nation-wide leprosaria network in 14<sup>th</sup> century France

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## Abstract

The turn of the fourteenth century was to find the rural population in France ready for a general uprising with a strong desire to set out on a crusade to fight the Moorish threat in the Iberian Peninsula. This uprising was to see a transference of attention towards the Jewish and leper communities in France and Aragon giving rise to the Shepherds' Crusade and allegations of a nationwide Lepers' Plot where allegedly leper and Jewish communities together with the Sultan of Granada had plotted to poison the wells of France and thus kill the healthy communities or infect them with leprosy. The following Inquisitional Trials suggest that the care of lepers in France was based on a nationwide coherent group of interrelated leprosaria falling under one central organization that adhered to a specific chain of command structure rather than to a system of isolated establishment run by local municipal or ecclesiastical authorities. It is therefore suggested from the evidence that the Lepers' Plot was particularly attributed to the *fratres Sancti Lazari* who in 1265 had been made responsible for all leper-houses in Christian Europe by Pope Clement IV.

## Introduction

The Christian European world at the turn of the fourteenth century was to experience a series of events that rocked the religious-political and socio-economic foundations of Medieval society causing unrest among the rural population of France and the Iberian Peninsula. In 1291, the Christian world was expelled from the Outremer causing it to lose the tenuous hold it held for two hundred years in the Holy Land. Any hopes of regaining a foothold in the central city of Christian belief origins appeared to have been shattered with the eventual arrest on the charge of heresy and trial of the mainline knights of the Templar Order in 1307,

and the eventual execution by burning of its leaders in 1314.<sup>1</sup> While the Outremer was increasingly looked upon as a lost cause, the Islamic forces in the southern Iberian Peninsula represented by the Kingdom of Granada were a different matter. The Kingdom of Granada had lived in a stable relationship with the Kingdom of Castile after the former accepted to become a vassal state of the latter in 1236. However, the latter decades of the thirteenth century saw increasing tension that escalated in 1319 with an attempted invasion of Granada by the Castilian army. This invasion attempt proved useless and was soundly defeated by the Moorish general – a defeat that emphasized the potential threat of Islamic forces to European incursions up the Iberian Peninsula and further into France.

To increase tensions further, the socio-economic situation of the European rural population took a turn for the worse with the end of the Medieval Warm Epoch (900-1300) during which relatively warm conditions are said to have prevailed in various parts of the world encouraging agricultural development. The new Little Ice Age starting at the turn of the fourteenth century brought about a series of climatic changes in southern Europe characterised by droughts and season-long periods of heavy rainfall leading to crop failures and famines over much of northern and central Europe. This brought about unrest and disgruntlement among the masses. In France, the frustrations brought about by religious fervor against the threat of Islamic incursion of Christian lands, together with the suffering brought about by the climate-induced famine looked upon as punishment for failing the religion, resulted in a redirection of attention towards the Jewish community particularly hated because of their money lending and usury endeavours. The Jewish population had been evicted from the kingdom by King Philippe le Bel in 1306 resulting in the welcome elimination of any debt owed to Jewish moneylenders. However, the subsequent successor King

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith. *Hospitallers: The history of the Order of St John*. London: Hambledon Press, 1999, pp.89-94; Malcolm Barber, Keith Bate. *The Templars: selected sources translated and annotated*. Manchester: University Press, 2002.

Louis X had allowed the Jews to return to the kingdom thus reviving the extant debts and furthermore becoming a partner in the recovery of these debts.

### **Lazar-house management**

Shunned from the healthy community, leprous individuals formed permanent communities based on a monastic pattern supported by benefices and donations given by a wide range of benefactors. According to the Canon-Penitentiary of Saint-Victor at Paris Robert de Flamborough writing in 1208-1215, lepers living in leprosaria were to be considered religious communities since they lived according to a set of *regula* based on Christian principles similar to the monks and canons, the Templars and Hospitaller Orders, and the religious brothers or sisters who cared for the sick in general hospitals or hospices.<sup>2</sup> The first known *regula* regulating life in French leprosaria were those promulgated by Raymond Bishop of Montpellier in 1149-1158.<sup>3</sup> In 1226, King Louis VIII of France further promulgated a code of laws to regulate the lazar-houses in his dominium.<sup>4</sup> Guy de Foulques, Bishop of Le Puy eventually elected Pope Clement IV, in 1256-1259 also drafted a very detailed set of leprosarium regulations written with the aim of guaranteeing the rights of the lepers in residence ensuring their self-government but ensuring segregation from the healthy members of the community to avoid spread of infection. These were very much in line with the edicts laid down by the Council of Lateran in 1179.<sup>5</sup> Other surviving regulations pertaining to French leprosaria date to the

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<sup>2</sup> Robert of Flamborough. *Liber Paenitentialis. A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1971, XVIII, pp.150-151.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond of Montpellier. *Statuts de la Léproserie Saint Lazare de Montpellier (1149/58)*. In: Leon Le Grand. *Statuts d'Hotel-Dieu et de Léproseries*. Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1901, pp.181-183.

<sup>4</sup> James Y. Simpson. 'Antiquarian notices of leprosy and leper hospitals in Scotland and England', *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1841, I (149), p.303.

<sup>5</sup> Le Grand, *op. cit.*, pp.206-214.

late twelfth to fourteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> These regulations suggest that these regional establishments functioned in isolation of one another being frequently managed by preceptors chosen by and from within the leper community. They were financially supported by the municipal secular or ecclesiastical authorities. While generally following similar precepts, the *regula* determining management within these regional establishments were distinct and separate from each other.

In contrast, the European-based establishments managed by the *fratres Sancti Lazari extra muros Jerusalem leprosis* were interlinked and regulated by a common *regula* primarily based on the Rule of Saint Augustin. The earliest compilation of these *regula* available was transcribed during 1314-1321 by the preceptor of the house at Seedorf in Switzerland.<sup>7</sup> According to this *regula*, the leprous sick on admission to the establishment took the three monastic vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. They thus became full brothers of the house who slept in a dedicated dormitory separate from the healthy brothers who formally joined the establishment to assist the sick. The healthy and sick members were expected to participate in all the liturgical activities of the monastery keeping the canonical hours of matins to comply. The organization of the *fratres Sancti Lazari* was thus comparable to that of a traditional monastic community following the Rule of St. Augustine with all the daughter establishments following the same rule and subservient to the mother house sited respectively in Jerusalem, Acre and Boigny in France.<sup>8</sup> Management in the mother house was originally left to a leprous master,

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.181-252

<sup>7</sup> Siegfried von Schlatt. *Dei Regein des Heiligen Orderns S. Lazari*. Ms. Seedorf Monastery, Switzerland, 1314/21. Transcribed in: G. Gall Morel. 'Die ältesten statuten für dei Lazaritenkloster Seedorf', *Der Geschichtsfreund: Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereins der fünf Orte Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden ob und nid dem Wald und Zug*, 1847, 4, pp.119-158.

<sup>8</sup> Rafael Hyacinthe. 'De Domo Sancti Lazari milites leprosi: Knighthood and leprosy in the Holy Land'. In: Barbara S. Bowers, ed. *The Medieval Hospital and Medical Practice*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007, pp.209-224.

but after 1253 pontifical permission was obtained from Innocent IV to appoint a non-leprous master.<sup>9</sup>

In 1265 with the Bull *Venerabilibus fratribus*, Clement IV confirmed the privileges of the *fratres Sancti Lazari* and placed all leper-houses in the West under their protection and government.<sup>10</sup> This was definitely enforced in the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples. Charles I of Anjou in 1268-1271 ordered that all the leprosaria in his domains were to be placed under the protection and government of the *fratres Sancti Lazari*. This arrangement was maintained after the War of the Sicilian Vespers resulted in the division of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies by letters patent from Robert of Anjou, King of Naples dated the 29 April 1315 who gave similar instructions within his realm.<sup>11</sup> However, it is not clear how many, if any, of the French establishments were managerially taken over by under the agenesic of the *fratres Sancti Lazari*. France had a significant number of lazar houses said in 1226 to number not less than 2000 in total. The number of establishments continued to increase so that there was scarcely a town or burgh in the country that was not provided with a leprosarium.<sup>12</sup>

While supported by religious and philanthropic benefices which provided care and shelter to the victims of leprosy, the leprous marginalized community was generally looked upon with suspicion and disdain by the healthy population supported by the belief that the disease symbolized sin or punishment for sin. This suspicion, coupled with the fear

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<sup>9</sup> Élie Berger. *Les registers d'Innocent IV publiés ou analyses d'après les manuscrits originaux du Vatican et de la Bibliothèque nationale*. Paris: E. Thorin, 1897, III, p.153.

<sup>10</sup> Clement IV. *Venerabilibus Fratribus nostris...* (5.viii.1265). In: L. Cherubini & A.M. Cherubino. *Magnum bullarium romanum, a B. Leone Magno vsque as S.D.N. Innocentium X*. Lyon: P. Borde, L. Arnaud & C.I. Rigad, 1727, 1, p.140.

<sup>11</sup> L. Cibrario. *Precis historique des Ordres Regigieux et Militaires de S. Lazare et de S. Maurice avant et apres leur reunion*. Lyon: Louis Perrin, 1860, p.45.

<sup>12</sup> Velly. *Histoire de France depuis l'établissement de la monarchie jusqu'au regne de Louis XIV*. Paris: Desaint & Saillant, 1766, II, pp.63-65.

of a Muslim advance to France from the Iberian Peninsula, led to a paranoid fear that led to the Lepers' Plot hysteria of 1321 when it was alleged that lepers had, in cohesion with the Muslim Emir of Granada and the Jewish community, organized themselves to poison the wells throughout Europe in an attempt to either kill the healthy community or to transmit leprosy. The hysteria may well have been further fuelled by a desire of the monarchy and municipal authorities to appropriate the benefices of the various leprosaria and belongings of the Jewish community.



The attack at Verdun-sur-Garonne in 1320 <sup>13</sup>

### The Shepherds' Crusade

The general political climate and the deteriorated social situation of the rural population in France during the first two decades of the fourteenth century had therefore set the scene for a popular uprising and desire to set out on a new Crusade against the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula and the expulsion of hated Jewish population in the Kingdoms of France and Aragon. The spark was struck in May 1320 when a teenage shepherd

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<sup>13</sup>Croisade des Pastoreaux British Library. *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia* 2018, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherds%27\\_Crusade\\_\(1320\)#/media/File:Cr\\_oisade\\_des\\_Pastoreaux\\_British\\_Library.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherds%27_Crusade_(1320)#/media/File:Cr_oisade_des_Pastoreaux_British_Library.jpg)

claimed to have been instructed by the Holy Spirit to fight the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula. This “vision” quickly sparked a movement that gathered rural men and women who marched towards Paris to request King Philip V to lead them in this Crusade. The king refused to meet with them and instead the mob changed direction and marched south to Aquitaine attacking the Jewish communities on the way at Saintes, Verdun-sur-Garonne, Cahors, Albi, and Toulouse. Despite being ordered to stop by Pope John XXII in Avignon, King Philip V of France and King James II of Aragon, the mob reached the Spanish border by July.

### **The Lepers’ Plot**

In France, the Bishop of Bazas Raymond-Bernard de La Mote reported that some of the apprehended mobsters of the Shepherds’ Crusade had claimed to have found barrels filled with rotten bread while pillaging the leprosarium (possibly near Le Mas-d’Agenais) and further alleging that the lepers had intended to use the bread to prepare poisons for contaminating well water. Following these allegations of a Lepers’ Plot, the mob’s attention turned towards the lepers. Leprosaria were attacked and torched. The municipal authorities, on their part, undertook measures to attempt appropriate the benefices accruing to the leprosaria in their region and to thus attempt protect the properties. In July 1320, the lieutenant of the *porévot* of Sauveterre-de-Guyenne forbade and prevented the torching of the leprosarium in the town.

News of the so-called Lepers’ Plot spread rapidly to Aragon. On 27 June, James King James of Aragon ordered the arrest of lepers, destruction of their powders, and questioning under torture. He further ordered the arrest and expulsion of non-leprous foreigners, ‘since it is difficult, truly even impossible, to recognize such and identify them’. Local inquisitions were set up. Those lepers who confessed their crime were burnt. Reaching Aragon, the mob continued its attacks on the Jewish communities, especially at the fortress of Montclus, where over 300 Jews were killed. In response, James II sent his son Alfonso to bring the mob under control, and arrest and execute those responsible for the massacre at Montclus. There were no further incidents and the mob dispersed.

However, the movement against the Jewish and leper communities persisted.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Inquisitional trials**

In December 1320, the Bishop of Dax had all lepers in his diocese arrested, an act that may have helped precipitate the subsequent violence and contribute to the charges brought against the lepers in the spring of 1321. By February 1321, the communities of Toulouse, Albi and Carcassonne had petitioned the French monarchy to segregate the lepers and expel the Jews from France. The consuls further attempted to gain jurisdiction over the autonomous properties belonging to the leprosaria offering their services to administer the revenues and pious donation accruing to the lepers and provide for the maintenance of the Lazar-houses. These petitions were not favourably received by the king and the petitioners took matters into their hands. The Mayor of Pérignieux ordered lepers to be arrested and tortured by judicial officers. Many who confessed under torture were burned at the stake. These arrests by the municipal authorities were considered a clear usurpation of royal prerogatives.<sup>15</sup>



**Burning at the stake**

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<sup>14</sup> David Nirenberg. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp.52-54.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.52-54.

While the actions against lepers and leprosaria were being taken by the various municipal authorities, King Philippe V was in Poitiers presiding over an assembly of the towns in the south of France. On the 21 June 1321, he issued an order declaring that this plot of poisoning the water supplies by the lepers constituted an attack on the king's majesty and therefore subject to the authority of the king's courts. In this way, all the seized leper belongings reverted to the Crown. Lepers who confessed their involvement in the plot were to be burned at the stake; those found innocent or who were aged under fourteen years were to be imprisoned in the leprosaria. Many municipal secular and ecclesiastical authorities, including Albi, Narbonne, Carcassonne and Toulouse, contested the royal claims to ownership of the seized lepers' property forcing the king to release these to rival claimants.<sup>16</sup> Individuals accused of perpetuating the Lepers' Plot were brought before the Inquisitional Tribunal presided by Bishop Fournier (later elected Pope Benedict XII) at Palmiers in southern France. On the 16 August, the king relinquished the seizure of the French leprosaria and a few days later pardoned all lepers who had been arrested and found guilty during the turmoil – in essence accepting these to be innocent and the Lepers' Plot to have been a hoax.<sup>17</sup>

### **Inquisitional testimonies**

There is no definite mention of the *fratres Sancti Lazari* in any of the surviving testimonies. However, the testimony given by Guillaume Agasse to the inquisitional court presided by Bishop Fournier suggests the involvement of a nationwide coherent group of interrelated leprosaria falling under one central organization that adhered to a specific chain of command structure involving superiors, commanders and preceptors – a structure very similar to that extant within the *fratres Sancti Lazari* in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and distinct from the structure regulating leprosaria

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<sup>16</sup> François Bériac. 'La persecution des lépreux dans la France Méridionale en 1321', *Le Moyen Age*, 1987, 93(2), pp.210-217.

<sup>17</sup> H. Geraud. *Chronique Latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 a 1300 avec les continuations de cette chronique de 1300 a 1368*. Paris: Jules Renouard, 1843, pp.31-35; M. Guizot. *Collection des Memoires relative a l'Histoire de France*. Paris: J.L.J. Briere, 1825, pp.248-352.

associated with municipal or ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>18</sup> The twelfth to thirteenth century regulations drawn up for the latter institutions suggest that these establishments were generally localised affairs that functioned independently from each other. They were managed by an internal management structure responsible only to the relevant municipal or ecclesiastical authority.



**Bishop Fournier (later elected Pope Benedict XII)<sup>19</sup>**

The case in question involved the leper Guillaume Agasse who served as a '*clerc lépreux commandeur de la léproserie de Lestang*'. Agasse was brought before the inquisitional court on the 4 June 1321 in Palmiers. He was charged with allegedly having been involved in the plot to poison the wells throughout France with a mixture that would either kill the healthy communities or infect them with leprosy.<sup>20</sup> A similar charge was brought earlier in May 1321 against the leper Johan de Bosco from Alterque who

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<sup>18</sup> Timothy S. Miller & John W. Nesbitt. *Walking Corpses: Leprosy in Byzantium and the Medieval West*. New York: Cornell University, 2014, pp.151-154.

<sup>19</sup>Papa Benedictus Duodecimus. *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia* 2018, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Benedict\\_XII#/media/File:Papa\\_Benedictus\\_Duodecimus.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XII#/media/File:Papa_Benedictus_Duodecimus.jpg)

<sup>20</sup> *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (Évêque de Pamiers) 1318-1325*. Paris: Mouton, 1978, pp.633-643.

was arrested in Regale Ville. De Bosco had testified on oath, that he had been approached by brother Geraldus, the leper preceptor of the leprosarium of Alterque, and given two bags of *pessimam* powder to use for poisoning the water supplies of various villages. He was paid twenty sous for his involvement and given a further ten sous to cover expenses. He believed that the mixture he was given would cause anyone who drank it to become leprous or die within two months.<sup>21</sup>

The proceedings against Agasse lasted about a month with the sentence being delivered on the 5 July 1321. Torture was resorted to by the prosecutor during the first testimony but the subsequent two depositions were made without resorting to torture. Agasse testified that, in the previous year, he had been delivered a missive from the 'preceptor of the leprosarium at the Arnaud-Bernard gate of Toulouse' summoning him to immediately proceed to Toulouse 'to address and decide on matters that would be to my advantage and honor'. On his way to Toulouse, Agasse learned that Raimond, 'minister of the house [leprosarium] at Saverdun', had also received a similar missive from the preceptor of the Toulouse leprosarium. They therefore made their way to Toulouse together and on the 11 May 1320, attended a meeting of about forty to fifty lepers, many of whom were 'ministers and preceptors' from various regions of southern France, including 'Raimond minister of the leprosarium at Saverdun, Pierre de Mazères minister of the leprosarium at the said place, and the minister of the leprosarium at Unzent and at Pujols'. Agasse could not confirm the attendance of 'the ministers of the leprosarua at Foix, Varilhes and other places in the county of Foix'.

This meeting was supposedly addressed by the preceptor of the Toulouse leprosarium with the following statement: 'You see and hear how the Christians in good health hold us, the sickened, in reproach and abjection, how they reject us from their company and concourse, and how we are held in derision, blasphemy, and contempt. That is why it was discussed, deliberated and ordered by our superiors that by throughout

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<sup>21</sup> Nirenberg, *op. cit.*, pp.52-54.

the Christian world, the healthy Christians will be given and administered poisons, charms and philtres by means of which they all die or become lepers or sick. And thus, the sick and the present ministers will assume the administration and the power they hold, receive their lands and govern them, and even appropriate them. And to achieve this goal, it was deliberated and decided by the superiors to take the king of Granada as an ally and defender. This king has already announced to some of our superiors that he was disposed to furnish us on this point of advice, aid, and assistance. In order to realize and bring this to a successful conclusion, it has been decided that in every place of Christendom, the sick should place powders, charms, or philtres in the springs, wells and running waters, so that these waters would be infected and corrupted, and those who drink of them would become lepers or die at short notice. To achieve this, on the advice of doctors, many powders have been prepared which every person here present shall receive in leather or cloth bags to carry with him to put in the waters, each in the place where he lives'.

The testimony further revealed that 'The superior commanders have sent the commander of the leprosarium of Bordeaux to deal with the king of Granada and the Sultan [of Babylon], and it is he who has reported this to us.' The Muslim potentates had required the lepers to renounce Christ and to spit on the cross as a sign of their commitment.<sup>22</sup> Towards the end of his testimony, Agasse retracted the evidence he had given against the lepers Guillaume Normand and Fertand Espanol, and against Raimond de Saverdun (who has already been executed) and Pierre de Mazères. He assumed full responsibility and stated that he had for three months believed that the Christian faith was of no value. The involvement of Muslim support for the leper conspiracy was false – there was no Sultan of Baghdad at the time. He was found guilty only on the charge of heresy

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<sup>22</sup> *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fornier, op. cit., pp.633-643.*

and blasphemy and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. He was not found guilty of poisoning the water supply.<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

The testimony by Agasse therefore confirms the existence of a nationwide French organization involving leprosaria. The management of this organization involved a chain of command linking a number of subsidiary village-based leprosaria managed by *commandeurs* and *ministers* to a larger regional one in Toulouse managed by a *précepteur* who in turn was responsible to a central government of *supérieurs*. These occasionally were summoned to meet and discuss important national issues. The village-based leprosaria appear to have been managed by leprous commanders. This management structure would correspond to the structure of the European-based establishments managed by the *fratres Sancti Lazari extra muros Jerusalem leprosis* or Order of Saint Lazarus which were interlinked and regulated by a common *regula* primarily based on the Rule of Saint Augustin.

The general climate throughout Europe, but particularly in France, regarding the perception towards the Military Hospitaller Orders was to have a significant effect on the general outlook towards the *fratres Sancti Lazari* with their central house stationed at Boigny in France. Royal letters patents confirming the protection and support of Philippe le Bel had been given to the *fratres* in July 1308.<sup>24</sup> In spite of the reconfirmed Royal protection, attempts had been made by local and ecclesiastical bodies in France to appropriate the land holdings of the *fratres* or introduce taxation on previously exempted holdings. For example, the provost of Caen demanded taxes on the property belonging to the *fratres* within his region ignoring the tax exemptions previously given by Philippe Augustus

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<sup>23</sup> E.L.B. de la Mothe-Langon. *Historire de l'Inquisition en France*. Paris: J.G. Dentu, 1829, III, pp.153-154; Jean Marie Vidal, *Le tribunal d'inquisition de Pamiers*. Toulouse, 1901, pp.34-35.

<sup>24</sup> 'Pièces Justificatives doc. 12', in Pierre Edme Gautier de Sibert. *Histoire des Ordres Royaux, Hospitaliers-Militaires de Notre-Dame du Mont Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*. Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1772, pp. xvii-xviii.

II in 1200 and confirmed by Philippe le Bel in 1304. Legal proceedings were initiated with a decision being given in favour of the *fratres* in 1313. A similar attempt was made by the officers of the crown to appropriate the *fratres'* property at Boigny. This too was contested in court with a favourable decision being given to the *fratres* in 1317.<sup>25</sup> This action led to a reconfirmation in 1317 by Philippe V of the *fratres'* ownership of Château de Boigny<sup>26</sup>; while John XXII promulgated a pontifical decree in 1318 granting the *fratres* exemption from local ecclesiastical authority and making the *fratres Sancti Lazari* dependent only to the Holy See.<sup>27</sup> The general environment was therefore ripe for a suspicious mob to be directed by the municipal authorities to attack the leprosaria managed by the *fratres Sancti Lazari* and thus appropriate the management of the associated benefices. In 1358, Regent Charles dauphin de France through Royal Letters Patent again felt the need to order the judicial officers in the realm to protect the Order from violence and oppression, and to allow them peaceful enjoyment of their possessions and privileges.<sup>28</sup>

The support of the various rulers to the individual regional houses was insufficient in creating a common targeted *raison d'être* for the *fratres Sancti Lazari* especially with the fall in the prevalence of leprosy in Europe following the Black Death epidemics and the effect these had on the socio-economic conditions in late fourteenth century Europe.<sup>29</sup> This in effect changed the *fratres Sancti Lazari* into a land-owning organization using the resources to maintain itself and give solstice to those in need. This change in ethos failed to provide the driving force necessary to maintain the cohesion of the international organization and regional houses often functioned in isolation from the central mother house in Boigny, France. The breakdown in administrative cohesion appears to have occurred in the mid-fourteenth century. In 1370, in a petition

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<sup>25</sup> de Sibert, *op. cit.*, pp.154-156.

<sup>26</sup> 'Pièces Justificatives doc.14' (1317), in de Sibert, *op. cit.*, pp.xix-xx.

<sup>27</sup> Ioannes XXII, '*Cum nullum habeant Episcopum....*' (1318), in: de Sibert, *op. cit.*, pp.159-160, ftnote b.

<sup>28</sup> de Sibert, *op. cit.*, pp.172-173.

<sup>29</sup> Donoghue, *op. cit.*, pp.250-256.

addressed to the Holy See, the master general in the central house at Boigny Jacobi de Besnes was lamenting that over the previous twenty years, no oblations had been received from some of the houses in England, Apulia, Hungary, and France. The same brothers had failed to attend the Chapter General meetings of the Order; while some had actually reverted to a secular life. In response, Pope Urbane V sent a missive to the Bishop of Paris requiring him to ensure that the absent brothers regulated their obligations under the threat of ecclesiastical censure.<sup>30</sup> While administrative cohesion was eventually achieved in France, Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire; the *fratres Sancti Lazari* in England, the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, and Kingdom of Castile continued to follow separate management directions.

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<sup>30</sup> Urbanus V, '*Exhibita nobis pro parte*' (1370). In: Rafael Hyacinthe. *L'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem au Moyen Age*. Bez-et-Esparon: Études & Communication Édition, 2003, doc. vi, pp.206-207. See also: Non. April. St. Peter's, Rome. (f. 60d.) In W H Bliss & J A Twemlow, eds. 'Regesta 260: 1369-1370'. *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating To Great Britain and Ireland: Volume 4, 1362-1404*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1902, pp.82-87.