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Unceasing Strife, Unending Fear: Jacques de Therines and the Freedom of the Church in the Age of the Last Capetians

William Chester Jordan

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This absorbing book explores the tensions within the Roman Catholic church and between the church and royal authority in France in the crucial period 1290-1321. During this time the crown tried to force churchmen to accept policies many considered inconsistent with ecclesiastical freedom and traditions--such as paying war taxes and expelling the Jews from the kingdom. William Jordan considers these issues through the eyes of one of the most important and courageous actors, the Cistercian monk, professor, abbot, and polemical writer Jacques de Thérines. The result is a fresh perspective on what Jordan terms "the story of France in a politically terrifying period of its existence, one of unceasing strife and unending fear."

Jacques de Thérines was involved in nearly every controversy of the period: the expulsion of the Jews from France, the relocation of the papacy to Avignon, the affair of the Templars, the suppression of the "heresies" of Marguerite Porete and of the Spiritual Franciscans, and the defense of the "exempt" monastic orders' freedom from all but papal control. The stands he took were often remarkable in themselves: hostility to the expulsion of Jews and spirited defense of the Templars, for example. The book also traces the emergence of King Philip the Fair's (1285-1314) almost paranoid style of rule and its impact on church-state relations, which makes the expression of Jacques de Thérines's views all the more courageous.

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