



***The Templars. The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of a Military Religious Order.* Edited by Jochen Burgtorf, Shlomo Lotan, and Enric Mallorquí-Ruscalleda. *The Military Religious Orders: History, Sources, and Memory.* London–New York: Routledge, 2021. 344 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-65062-6.**

Exactly a decade ago, 700 years passed since the liquidation of the Templar Order was announced by Pope Clement V (1305–1314) at the Council of Vienne in 1312. This anniversary was accompanied by numerous research initiatives which resulted in publications and new research projects conducted over the course of the following years. Despite such great interest in the Templars among historians, many important questions about the functioning of the Order and its dramatic decline have still not been clearly answered. This is evidenced by the volume of studies devoted to the history of the Templars, published by Jochen Burgtorf, Shlomo Lotan and Enric Mallorquí-Ruscalleda, in which fifteen texts are collected that deal with issues which have either been previously discussed in literature or have not aroused wider interest of historians yet.

The volume is divided into three parts, chronologically reflecting the history of the Order: I. “Rise”, II. “Fall” and III. “Legacy”. The first of them, devoted to the history of the Templars from the time of the foundation of the Order to the end of the thirteenth century, starts with an article by Karol Polejowski who investigates the issues related to the beginnings of the Templar Order in Champagne. Even though this issue has already been described quite extensively in academic literature, he decided to bring to the fore a lesser-known issue regarding the participation in the development of the Order of one of the Champagne nobles, the seneschal of the local counts, Andrew de Baudement. The analysis of the actions taken by the main character and his family allowed to indicate the importance of family and feudal connections for the involvement in the crusade movement and support for the new military order. The subsequent chapter, by Michael Ehrlich, discusses the politics of the Templars aimed at the development of their territorial estates in the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth century. Since there are no direct sources that would allow for the analysis of this issue, the researcher assumed that the strategy of the Templars was analogous to the decisions made by the Hospitaller Order, which is why he explained in detail the activities of the latter order. Due to the same source limitations, the present considerations focus

mainly on the territory of Caesarea. All this leaves the content of the article somewhat unsatisfactory in relation to its title. Marie-Anne Chevalier, the author of the third text, considers the role played by the Templars in the politics of Christian states in the East. Referring primarily to numerous narrative sources, the researcher presented important events illustrating the relations of the Order with the rulers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Little Armenia, the County of Tripoli and the Principality of Antioch, and showed the changes that took place in them over the course of almost two centuries of the Templar presence in those areas. She also indicates the main motives for the political involvement of the Order, often unrelated to its original vocation, such as the desire to protect its own interests or the implementation of the ambitions of its dignitaries. The next two articles are the result of studies on the reflection of the elements of Templar spirituality in their architecture. Sonia Kirch analyzes wall paintings from three churches of the Order in southern France (Cressac, Montsaunès, Paulhac), finding on them important factors of the ideology of the Templars and presenting the sources of their origins. The author points to clear references to the Gregorian idea of *milites Christi* and references to Byzantine patterns of representations of saints, considering the combination of these two issues as a characteristic feature of the message propagated by the Order. Shlomo Lotan and Joachim Rother bring the elements of the spirituality of the Templars into focus in their essay, which were to be represented by one of their most important castles in the Holy Land: Château Pèlerin (today 'Atlit). The authors pointed to a number of religious functions that this fortress performed for the members of the Order, for its associates, and numerous pilgrims visiting it. The researchers showed how the castle church, the cemetery and the relics stored in it (especially St. Euphemia's) allowed the Templars to build their positive image among secular people. In the final chapter of this section, Joan Fuguet Sans presents the current state of knowledge about the changes that have occurred over the centuries in the architecture of the three Templar castles in Catalonia: Barberà, Gardeny and Miravet. On the basis of these examples, the researcher highlights conclusions regarding the customs in force in the Order with respect to the reconstruction of the castles that came into its possession, regardless of their origin (i.e., whether they were built by Christians or according to Muslim models) and earlier form. What is more, the author also stated that the Templar practices in this field were in line with the general trends of Western European defense construction of the discussed period.

The second part of the volume contains texts on the last decades of the Order's existence, its trial, and ultimately its liquidation. The first chapter, by Christian

Vogel, focuses on selected fragments of the life and activities of the famous corsair and Templar Roger de Flor. His relations with the Order and the circumstances of his later escape became a pretext for discussing various aspects of the functioning of the Templars in the last decades of the thirteenth century. Vogel's chapter raises, among other things, problems related to the unique position occupied by brothers spending most of their time on ships and not in religious houses, which meant that they enjoyed much more freedom in everyday life than other members of the Order. The text also contains comments on the relations of the Templars with various political forces in the Mediterranean region at that time. In his article, Ignacio de la Torre focuses on the financial aspects of the activities of the Templars, which in his opinion could have contributed to the fall of the Order. The researcher summarizes his theses presented in previous publications, pointing to the role of the treasurers and lenders of the King of France as a possible cause of the monarch's attack, who struggled with constant financial problems. He referred to the source information which, although they were already extensively analyzed by researchers in the first half of the twentieth century (mainly by Léon-Louis Borrelli de Serres and Jules Piquet), lead to completely different conclusions. However, there is no reference to these findings in the text, which makes the conclusions not entirely convincing. The other three articles in this part of the volume concern various aspects of the Knights Templar trial taking place in various countries of Western Europe. Alan Forey raises the problem of the brothers who managed to escape either arrest or during the course of the proceedings against the Order. This issue has already been partially discussed by other researchers, but so far it has not been thoroughly analyzed. Forey thus draws conclusions, on the one hand, about the involvement of the rulers of individual countries in the conducted proceedings, and on the other hand, about the motives of the members of the Order which led them to flee. Helen J. Nicholson's chapter summarizes the most important findings of her research so far on the Knights Templar process in the British Isles. Nicholson's work indicates the key elements of the actions taken by King Edward II (1307–1327) both in matters related to the arrest of brothers and the conducted proceedings, as well as the seizure, administration, and subsequent distribution of the Order's assets. Jochen Burgtorf's article is devoted to the course of proceedings against the Templars in Germany, which has not attracted much interest of historians so far. Burgtorf presents the actions taken on the Templars by German secular princes and archbishops, discusses the state of preservation of the sources from the process, as well as the manner of reporting it in German chronicles. At the same time, his article points to

several questions concerning all these issues which still remain unanswered and require further research.

In the last part of the volume, the collected texts are mainly devoted to the image of the Order and various approaches to its history present in the literature created from the fourteenth century to modern times. Only the first article, by Klaus Militzer, concerns the events that took place in the first years of the Templar trial when the fate of the Order was not yet decided, which corresponds rather to the subject of the second part of the volume. In it, Militzer presents a discussion on the possible reasons for moving the seat of the Teutonic Knights from Venice to Marienburg (today Malbork) in 1309, i.e., at the time when the proceedings against the Templars were conducted. The researcher defends the thesis that it was the Templar trial that was the main reason for the decision to change the seat. However, he emphasizes that due to the lack of direct sources, all discussions conducted by historians remain in the realm of conjecture. The following text by José Antonio Guillén Berrendero is devoted to the image of the Templar Order in modern Castilian noble literature. The author emphasizes that although military orders are an inseparable element of treatises devoted to the nobility created in the modern period in the whole Europe, in Castilian literature we will not find too many mentions of the Templars, which is most likely associated with their infamous collapse. Among the surviving works in which the Order was mentioned, the author distinguished the treaty of Juan Benito Guardiola from the late sixteenth century in which the image of the Templars was outlined in a way that best reflected the patterns and ideals of the nobility at that time. Elena Bellomo presents a review of commentaries on the Templar trial from Italian chronicles and elaborations written in the period from the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Her chapter reflects the diversity of opinions presented by contemporary chroniclers of the described events and allows us to trace their influence on the way modern authors present the case of the Order. She also presents possible motives for writers expressing different views on the issue of the guilt of the Templars and the role of the pope in proceedings against the Order. The latest text by Kristjan Toomaspoeg is a review of the literature on the Order, published over the last two decades, with particular emphasis on the years 2009–2015 when the activity of historians increased significantly in connection with the already mentioned 700th anniversary of the Templar trial. He goes over the most important trends in contemporary historiography devoted to the history of the Order (source publications, regional issues, prosopography, etc.) and put forward several research postulates for future work. These include further publication of sources,

extensive analysis of Templar spirituality, and further research on the military nature of the Order, among other *desiderata*. Toomaspoeg's article is a great summary of the whole volume, which serves as a kind of a guide to the current state of research on various aspects of the existence and activity of the Templars. The volume brings together several experts in the history of the Order of the Temple and proposes various methodological approaches and issues that require further in-depth analysis and research.

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