

the corporation. The work includes digressions connected with the subject matter, but isolated from the main topics.

The author has demonstrated the lack of a general cultural perspective on the military activity of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and its inhabitants, also pointing out the absence of analysis of how military activity was organised. His discussion is based on the assumption that monastic life created the framework for authoritative action, stressing that the Teutonic Order should be perceived as a community functioning in a certain historical-cultural context. Searching for the cultural determinants of the military activity of the Order through the communicative model allows us to understand many problems concerning those who functioned in the corporation, which can be viewed through perspectives from social and cultural anthropology, sociology and social communication.

Addressing the problem of the cultural factors of the Teutonic Order's military activity, the monograph presented here not only fills a gap in current historiography, but also combines various branches of the humanities. The abundance of sources, an impressive bibliography and reliable indexes reflect its very high quality.

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*The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, vol. 1: *The Latin Edition*; vol. 2: *The Translation*, ed. and transl. by Helen J. Nicholson, Ashgate, Burlington 2011, vol. 1: xl + 432 pp., ISBN 978-1-40943-650-8; vol. 2: lx + 653 pp., ISBN 978-1-40943-652-2.

The military religious Order of the Temple was founded in the early twelfth century in the aftermath of the First Crusade. The Temple enjoyed much wealth and prestige until the arrest of most of its members in France on charges of blasphemy, idolatry and heresy in 1307, when the Order subsequently became a subject of many popular myths and legend.

In the last thirty years the scholarship on the Templars sought to redefine the understanding of the Order. It is now seen as an institution which emerged as a natural combination of the religious and military culture of its day. The brothers were religious men following a spiritual vocation who took monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; they formed a tactical military force ready to be employed in pursuit of its strategic aims and objectives – to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land.

The two volumes of 'The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles' edited and translated by the leading historian of the Templars, Helen Nicholson, provide the transcription and the first full translation of the four surviving texts of the trial proceedings in England, Ireland, and Scotland.

The Templars were arrested in Britain after the French arrests in November 1307 on the orders of King Edward II of England. Their trial, which commenced in October 1309, was the first major heresy trial in the British Isles. The charges faced by the British Templars were derived from the interrogation of the French brothers, many of whom had been subjected to torture. The British Templars would have been aware of the bloody treatment their French brothers had been subjected to. What is remarkable about the British Isles trials is that even with this threat hanging over them a very limited number of the Templars confessed (2, il), then to only some charges, and most likely under duress. Nicholson discusses the use of evidence obtained by torture in her introduction and she warns about the value of evidence distorted by the threat or use of torture (2, xi). Almost all of the brothers refused to accept the charges of heresy, blasphemy, idolatry, and sexual perversion. The brothers rejected suggestions of misconduct, and if they confessed to some charges they did so because of a confusion of Catholic theology. It seems that the text of the trial proceedings reveal that the brothers in the British Isles could not be considered guilty of all the charges against them.

The proceedings of the trial are extant in five versions. The Bodleian Library's manuscript is the most extensive (MS Bodley 454). There are three manuscripts held by the British Library (partially incomplete or damaged) and another manuscript in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Armarium XXXV.147). The Vatican manuscript contains a summary of the proceedings in Britain, which was used at the Council of Vienne in 1312 at which Clement V formally disbanded the Order.

The Nicholson's edition is published in two volumes. In the introduction of Volume 1 she outlines the provenance of the manuscripts (1, xi–xxix) and discusses previous editions (1, xxix–xxx), as well as the editorial conventions adopted by her (1, xxxi–xl). The volume then contains the Latin transcript of: MS A – the manuscript from the Bodleian Library (MS Bodley 454), collated with the British Library's manuscript from the Cotton collection (MS Julius B xii) (1, 1–371); MS B – the documents from the Cotton collection not included in the Bodleian Library's manuscript (1, 373–378); MS C – the manuscript from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Armarium XXXV.147) (1, 379–409); MS D – the British Library's another manuscript (MS 5444) collated with the fragments of another manuscript from the Cotton collection (MS Otho iii) (1, 411–432). In Volume 2 Nicholson's introduction presents the Trial of the Templars in the British Isles (2, x–xxxix) and considers the potential use of the trial testimonies as historical

evidence (2, xl–lx). She concludes the introduction with consideration of some of the issues encountered in producing the translation (lx). The translation of the transcribed Latin material from Volume 1 then follows. Volume 2 also contains three appendices listing 1) Templar brothers mentioned in the records of the trial proceedings in the British Isles (495–581); 2) Templar properties in the British Isles mentioned in the trial proceedings (583–600); 3) Locations of the trial proceedings and the Templars' prisons in London (601–626). The Index (627–653) at the end of Volume 2 covers the Introductions to Volume 1 and 2, the Latin text and translation.

Whilst it seems unnecessary to highlight the importance of scholarly editions of original sources, Nicholson's monumental work is of enormous value to scholars working on the Templar trial, medieval Latin texts, and medieval society in general. This work is a welcome addition to the corpus of medieval texts available in transcription and translation. What remains now for Templar scholars is to use this material to 'tell the truth from the lies'.

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