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Jürgen Sarnowsky, *Die Templer* (Beck'sche Reihe 2471), Verlag C.H.Beck, München 2011, pp. 128, 6 illustrations, ISBN 978-3-406-56272-3.

Interest in the history of the Knights Templar in the media and among amateur historians is still thriving. However, it is often swayed and distorted by sensational subtexts and often devoid of a reliable scholarly basis. That is why we should be glad that a new brief synthesis of the history of the order has appeared, which accurately presents the current state of knowledge on the subject even to readers who are not professional historians. The author of the work – an expert in the history of military orders – has attempted to explain meteoric career of the originally small community as well as its dramatic collapse after almost 200 years having achieved a significant standing in the Near East and Europe. Within his fairly narrow publication, he addresses a wide range of issues connected with the activity of the Knights Templar, taking into consideration the most recent literature on the subject, including volumes from the series *Ordines Militares* published in Toruń.

The book is extremely well constructed, being divided into three parts which discuss the creation and growth of the order up to the battle of Hattin, its functioning in the 12th and 13th centuries, and finally the twilight years and the collapse of the order. Circumstances connected with both the creation of the order and its trial are presented within the wider context of the beginning and end of the crusade movement. The work lacks a description of the sources upon which it was based, which would otherwise allow the reader, particularly the non-professional historian, to become familiar with the methodology employed by the researcher specialising in the history of the Knights Templar. However, this omission may be the decision of the publisher.

The creation of the order is described against the background of the enthusiasm for crusades at the turn of the 11th and the 12th centuries and the changes caused by the victory of the First Crusade. The attempts to tackle problems that the Latins had to face in the East, for example the necessity to provide protection for pilgrims and create a well-organised army, revolved around establishing new forms of church life, such as the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre (which was both an order of canons and a hospitaller order) and the Hospitallers (originally a hospitaller order which later developed into a military order). The evolution of the views of the Church's representatives concerning war, the fight with the infidels, the peace of God and the role of the knighthood in Christian society all played an important role in the origin of the order. This evolution enabled the creation of military order as a specific institution, which transformed the way society had previously been divided into those who prayed and those who fought. The author presents Christian thought on the subject of war and peace, starting with

the philosophy of St Augustine and going on to show the history of the Christianisation of the knighthood by associating them with the protection of the faith, which was achieved first with the creation of the institution of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre *ad terminum*, and then with the establishment of the Order of the Knights Templar, whose way of life was approved by St Bernard of Clairvaux. One important factor is omitted: the untrammelled growth of lay fraternities at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, which realised the ideal of Christian perfection by working for the whole community and living in a group similar to an order, but with less strict discipline.

The rapid growth in the network of outposts established by the order in the Holy Land, the Iberian Peninsula and many European countries in the third and fourth decades of the 12th century and the incorporation Templar castles into the defence system of the kingdom of Jerusalem prove that Hugo de Payens and his patrons, including St Bernard, understood the needs of the time. The author rightly stresses that the territorial structure of the order was divided into two zones: the area of its main activity (the Near East and Spain) and the remaining European territories. He succeeds in describing the participation of the Knights Templar in the defence system of the Crusader States, consisting in the maintenance of castles which, together with the castles of the Hospitallers, formed a network of fortifications. The Knights Templar also played an important role in war as a specialised military force organising the activities of the rest of the army composed of the vassals of various lords from the Levant and Europe. This method of organising military campaigns in the East by the Knights Templar in some ways resembles the organisation of crusades of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, where knights also acted as organisers and instructors for lay crusaders. However, the Order of the Temple was not part of the administrative structure of the state, but constituted an institution within the state, which competed with a similar community – the Hospitallers. Considerations about the role of the Knights Templar in the defence of the Latins in the Levant are illustrated in the map of castles with borders from about 1180. However, it fails to distinguish the castles of the Hospitallers with a different colour, apart from Crac des Chevaliers.

The second part of the book is devoted to the synthetic description of the activity and organisation of the order in the 12th and 13th centuries, considering both the Levantine network of houses and estates in Europe. The author distinguishes their main area of activity – the Holy Land and the Iberian Peninsula – and the infrastructure set up by the remaining European estates of the order in support of its fight with the Muslims. He discusses the organisation of the European outposts of the Knights Templar, which brings out some similarities between the few houses of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre in Poland and their outposts in other

European countries, which played the same role in terms of economic protection for the headquarters of the order. The few commanderies run by brothers in Chwarszczany and Lesnica did not differ from other outposts of the order. The economic role of such centres is outlined in the book, including the necessity to provide horses for the brothers in the Levant. In this part, more attention could have been paid to issues of the national and social composition of the order.

The dramatic collapse of the order is shown in the wider context of the situation which ensued following the fall of Acre in 1291, which brought into question the existence of institutions involved in the crusade movement. The author extensively discusses various proposals concerning the reorganisation of the movement put forward by theologians and writers at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, i.e. the fusion of the Hospitallers and the Knights Templar. The author rightfully states that no response to such proposals by the order was a direct reason for its fall; after all, the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre could be regarded as no longer useful. However, the author fails to stress the fact that the Hospitallers survived because they participated in actions not connected with the crusades, unlike the Knights Templar. Political reasons, particularly the policy of Philip IV the Fair, are accorded minor importance, which seems correct as inquisition proceedings were severe only in Cyprus, where the Knights Templar were involved in a dynastic crisis. Despite this, the order was dissolved, which gave the opportunity for many monarchs and later the Knights Hospitaller to take over the order's property. The community of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre proved to be closely connected with the crusade movement – it was created to solve the problems arising in the movement, and it was unable to perform any other actions not connected with crusades, which would have enabled the order to survive.

The book is somewhat concise, but it does emphasise the most important issues concerning the history of the Knights Templar and inspires further reflections on the subject.

Maria Starnawska (Częstochowa)

Jürgen Sarnowsky, *Die Johanniter. Ein geistlicher Ritterorden in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Beck'sche Reihe 2737), Verlag C.H.Beck, München 2011, 128 pp., 6 illustrations, 3 maps, ISBN 973-3-406-62239-7.

The book is the third work of this Hamburg-based scholar published in the series "C.H.Beck Wissen", devoted to the military orders. Like the first two books,