

Jürgen Sarnowsky, *On the Military Orders in Medieval Europe. Structures and Perceptions* (Variorum Collected Studies Series, vol. 992), Ashgate, Farnham–Burlington 2011, 360 + xii pp., ISBN 978-1-4094-2326-3.

The discussed publication is a collection of papers studying the military orders written by Jürgen Sarnowsky. It is published as part of the British Variorum Collected Studies which include the works of such illustrious researchers of the military orders as Alan Forey, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Anthony Luttrell or David Nicolle.

The volume consists of 21 articles selected from the works written by Sarnowsky that address various questions referring to the functioning of the military orders. Ten texts are original works published in English; five articles are in German while four are translated from German into English. Three studies are reprinted together with the appendices and the publication also includes two articles which have not been published before. The collection of papers is divided into four sections.

The first section (General Aspects of the History of Military Orders) compiles the studies dealing with general aspects of the existence of the military orders in the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Early Modern period. The list of articles reflects the research profile of J. Sarnowsky, who has focused on the problems of collective identity, the manner in which members of the orders perceived themselves, the way in which they presented their communities and the ideology which influenced the foundation of the military orders. The first text discusses the problem of the identity and self-perception of the military orders (“Identity and self-perception of the military orders”) and was translated from German into English (the original German version comes from 1998). The same happened with the second article (“The statutes of the military orders”), from 2010, in which the author compares the monastic statutes of different military orders and analyses their significance as written records of norms shaping their communities. The third study, from 2009, is also comparative in nature and concerns historical literature created in the military orders, analysing its content, function, circumstances in which it was written and its reception over four centuries (“Historical writing in military orders – 12th–16th centuries”). The remaining two articles in the first part of the volume discuss the problems of the military orders and war. The first one, from 1999, focuses on the Order of St. John (“Der Johanniterorden und die Kreuzzüge”), while the other, published for the first time, analyses the transformation of the concept of the “holy war” within the military orders from the 14th to 16th centuries (“The late medieval military orders and the transformations of the

idea of holy wars"). The study provides a comparison in a manner similar to the three texts discussed earlier.

The second section (Administration, Internal Government) consist of four studies investigating the themes of internal management, administration and control in the Order of St. John in the Late Middle Ages along with its relations with secular monarchy. In the first article ("The oligarchy at work: the chapters general of the Hospitallers in the 15th century (1421–1522)") (1996) Sarnowsky analyses the process of the organisation of general chapters of the Order of St. John in Rhodes, identifying the increasing oligarchisation of power within the order at the cost of the principle of communal consiliarism. The second text, from 1999, addresses the question of the functioning of the financial authority in the Order of St. John in Rhodes in the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century ("The rights of the treasury: the financial administration of the Hospitallers in fifteenth-century Rhodes (1421–1522)"). The themes discussed in the text were later developed by the author in the monograph published in 2001. The question of the relationship between the priory of the Order of St. John and local monarchs in the 15th century is discussed in the context of England in the third article which was published for the first time in 1999 ("Kings and priors: the Hospitaller priory of England in the later fifteenth century"). Sarnowsky focuses not only on the institution of general chapters and monastic offices in the Order of St. John, but also discusses monastic inspections as a significant tool used to control the Order by its authorities ("The convent and the West: visitation in the Order of the Hospital of St. John in the fifteenth century") (2007).

The following part of the collected volume ("Order States", Foreign policies) includes texts studying the administrative role of the military orders, including both political and military aspects of their work. The article "Military orders and power – Teutonic Knights, Hospitallers, and their 'order state'", attempts to compare the realms controlled by the Teutonic Order and the Order of St. John in Prussia, Livonia and Rhodes. It has never been published before. The study refers to the earlier texts from 2006–2008 in German, and identifies numerous similarities between the political and social structures formed by both military orders at the two principal frontiers of the Latin Christendom. The analysis is significant as it contributes to the discussion about the nature of the Baltic dominion of the Teutonic Order and convincingly demonstrates that contrary to common opinion, it was not an exceptional institution with extraordinarily advanced administrative and bureaucratic structures. The second text focuses on coins and stamps as means of representation of the authority of the military orders in the areas discussed above ("Ritterorden als Landesherren: Münzen und Siegel als Selbstzeugnisse") (2005). It constitutes a significant contribution to the research on the mechanisms

of executing secular power by monastic corporations and the way it was perceived by them. The next two articles refer solely to the Order of St. John in Rhodes. The first, translated from German, focuses on the territorial legislation for the inhabitants living under order's rule ("Pragmaticae Rhodiae. The territorial legislation of the Hospitallers on Rhodes") while the second discusses the organisation of the Latin and Greek churches on the island with additional focus on the clergy in the Order of St. John ("Die Kirche auf Rhodos im 15. Jahrhundert") (1997). The third section of the volume also includes two articles focusing on the military aspects of the military orders' activities. In the first, ("The military orders and their navies"), Sarnowsky compares the use and management of ships by the military orders during their campaigns in both Baltic and Mediterranean seas from the 13th to the 16th century. The second text focuses on the struggle of the Teutonic Order (particularly its Prussian branch) with the Mongols in the 13th century and the Turks in the 14th to 16th centuries ("The Teutonic Order confronts Mongols and Turks") (1994). In the text "Ein Streit der Marienburger Großschäfferei mit den Grafen von Northumberland am Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts" the author addresses the question of the commercial activity of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and its conflicts with secular authorities in various Western European realms. Surprisingly, this text has not been translated into English despite its great relevance to the English speaking readers.

The final, fourth thematic section includes five articles and focuses around the theme everyday life ("Life within the Orders"). It is similar to the previous sections in that some of the studies compare different military orders while others deal with individual orders. The first and third articles for example focus solely on the Hospitallers. In one of the studies Sarnowsky attempts to make a prosopographical description of members of the Order of St. John in Rhodes in the 15th century ("Hospitaller brothers in 15th-century Rhodes") (2006) while in the second article he thoroughly discusses the customs and liturgical rites connected with the death and burials of the grand masters of the Order ("Der Tod des Großmeisters der Johanniter") (1993).

The section also includes a comparative study concerning the position and role of priest brethren in the three major military orders from the 12th to the 15th centuries ("The priests in the military orders – a comparative approach on their standing and role"). The work deserves particular attention due to its focus on regional characteristics of the investigated phenomenon and its chronological dynamics. The text is based on the conference paper from 2009 which was published with minor amendments to the original version that was not published only in 2015. The penultimate text in the volume, entitled "The legacies and the bequests of the masters in the military orders" and translated from German (2008), address-

es the question of legacies and bequests of the masters of the three major military orders; both in the context of statute norms concerning properties of the members of the orders and their religious life. The author also discusses the political role of legacy in the political life associated with the monastic authorities after the death of the orders' grand masters. The last article in the volume focuses on the role of women in the three major military orders ("Gender-Aspekte in der Geschichte der geistlichen Ritterorden") (2003). The study is significant as it complements recent trends in the military orders' studies spearheaded by scholars such as Helen Nicholson and Anthony Luttrell¹ investigate the importance of nuns and women associated with the Templar, Hospitaller and Teutonic Orders both in the frontiers of Latin Christendom and in the core of western Europe. The twelve-page index included at the back of the volume allows the reader to navigate through the book easily.

Overall, one should congratulate the publishers of the volume for their successful initiative. Readers may look forward to further publications within the series collecting the studies of other experienced researchers of the military orders. It is time for the texts written by Helen Nicholson, Karl Borchart and meritorious researchers from Central Europe to be published within this valuable series.

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¹ *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Luttrell, H. Nicholson, Aldershot 2006.