

two churches. The friars' perceived "spiritual advantage" (138) vis-à-vis these clerics seems to have consisted in the supposed merits connected with almsgiving, the importance attributed by the laity to the daily ceremonies and votive masses celebrated in the friary, and the mendicants' role in funeral and postmortal ceremonies.

The book succeeds well in its aim to provide a balanced account of the ways in which church authorities and the local community (and the landlord) participated in the reformatory transformations affecting a monastic institution. The integrated, multi-level methodological approach chosen by Erdélyi yields valuable insights into the complex sociocultural and political processes at work in Kőrmend, including pertinent observations on and discussions of a wide range of themes such as the anthropology of time perception across social strata, morality, or ritual and community. That the author's use of concepts such as "the spiritual market" or "the economy of the sacred" could have done with a somewhat broader theoretical reflection is a relatively marginal issue in the greater scheme of things and should not in the least diminish the book's considerable merits. Gabriella Erdélyi's "detective work" (8) is nothing short of impeccable, and her arguments and analyses are elegantly presented and compelling.

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*Soldiers of Christ: The Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller in Medieval Ireland.* Martin Browne and Colmán Ó Clabaigh, eds.

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This beautifully produced volume contains the major papers of a very successful conference on the two largest medieval military orders, the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar, in Ireland. This was held in the idyllic Benedictine school and community at Glenstal Abbey in County Limerick in September 2014. The overwhelming impression given by this book is of the central importance of these two orders to so many aspects of the life of medieval Ireland. This point cannot be emphasized enough as many people in the twenty-first century are still largely unaware of this.

These orders appeared in the early twelfth century soon after the First Crusade (1095–1199) when Western Christendom came into conflict with a resurgent Muslim power as well as other peoples in the East. The men who joined these orders sought to combine a military service with monastic observance, two of the major planks that defined medieval feudal society. In Ireland they appeared with the Anglo-Norman settlers at the end of the twelfth century, and they were granted extensive privileges as well as large land grants to support their work in the Middle East. As they were closely tied in with the royal administration of the Anglo-Irish lordship, the prior of Kilmainham in Dublin, who was the superior of the Irish Hospitallers, regularly played an influential role in the governance of Ireland by the English Crown.

There are twelve contributors, all of whom successfully illuminate the main aspects of these two orders. Obviously, this reviewer cannot cover each one in the same detail in this short review, but will still attempt to give a general flavor of the overall volume. It commences with a truly impressive overview of the two orders in Ireland by Helen Nicholson that gives the reader a very useful framework with which to understand the succeeding contributions. She not only explains their expansion westward on the coat-tails of the initial Anglo-Norman advances, but also helps to contextualize the trial and the suppression of the Templar order in 1308, which was to have such an impact on religious life generally in the Western church. Her paper concludes in 1348 when the Black Death adversely affected so much of the medieval world. The succeeding three excellent papers then continue the story of the Hospitallers through all the difficulties of the later Middle Ages, up to the early eighteenth century.

The next four chapters cover the architectural and archaeological remains of the orders on the Irish landscape, with Tadhg O'Keeffe and Pat Grogan's chapter giving the reader an impressive overview of this. It is followed by two case studies of particular houses, the first by Eamonn Cotter, and the second by Kieran O'Connor and Paul Naessans. These are followed by Margaret Murphy's chapter on the agricultural background to the Irish Templars contained in the inventory of the lands of the order on their suppression in 1308. Her expert analysis of this highlights, for instance, the innovative nature of much of the Templars' agricultural practices, such as the mixed plough teams of horses and oxen, which was already being used in other parts of Europe to achieve much greater ploughing speeds. Colmán Ó Clabaigh's final chapter expertly surveys a fourteenth-century manuscript (MS 405) in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, that contains a treasure of material about the Hospitallers. It is right that Colmán, one of the monks at Glenstal, has the last word in this outstanding book, as he was one of the main organizers of this most worthy academic enterprise.

This book has been stylishly produced by Four Courts Press, which makes it a real pleasure to read. In all, there are forty-nine black-and-white illustrations, as well as ten full-color illustrations, including the exquisite cross of the Order of Saint John found on the *Girona*, one of the vessels shipwrecked off the coast of Ireland after the failure of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Without a doubt this is another successful volume by Four Courts Press.

Terry Barry, *Trinity College Dublin*