One of the main attractions of the military religious orders is their diversity. Religious military orders were so many things at once: Military institutions, centres of economic power, aristocratic corporations, manifestations of medieval spirituality – and, of course, military religious orders constituted social groups. This introductory sketch will focus on the military orders from the standpoint of social history, the latter being understood in a wide sense of the word, thus entailing both vertically structured groups – that is hierarchical entities in a social and an institutional sense – and horizontally structured groups – that is in a social and a geographical sense. By opening up such wide a panorama some major fields and methods of research might be outlined in order to better situate the following contributions of these proceedings.

Let us begin with a horizontal category – that of space. One could without a doubt follow the so called “spatial turn” and analyse the military orders’ relation to symbolic space, their spiritual localization or mental maps, and such a project would well be worthwhile\(^2\). Instead however, I prefer to apply the physical categories town and countryside in order to spatially categorise the diverse activities the military orders

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1 This article provides the slightly updated text of the introduction presented in February 2010 in Palmela, with only the most necessary footnotes.

deployed within the social field. The last quarter of the 20th century, a great deal of energy was invested in studying the presence of the military orders in the Latin West on a regional or local level. Many monographs or other studies were published which identified and analysed the economic background, the land holdings and the other possessions of one specific house or one administrative unit. France, Italy and Spain in particular have produced many such works. The general interest in material aspects of human life and the upsurge of economic history in the second half of the twentieth century were two bases for such studies. But one should also point at the academic tradition of regional micro-studies created or fostered by the school of the *Annales*, a tradition readily picked up in liberal circles of medievalism in neighbouring countries. This modern form of micro analysis merged with older traditions of regional studies or *Landesgeschichte*, to use the appropriate Germans term.

As major landholders, the military religious orders had a strong impact on the living conditions of the rural population under their rule. But notably, social studies on the military orders rural population do not abound. Mostly, particularly within Iberian research, investigation has centred on the economic aspects of land ownership, identifying and quantifying the respective houses’ resources. A field well worth studying might be the regulation of everyday life within the orders feudal rural estates. For example, the *cartas de franquicia* in Aragón provide interesting and hitherto not systematically fathomed source material which needs studying. Borderlands such as those handed over to military orders on the Iberian peninsular, in the Crusader States and in the Baltic were areas which needed to attract settlers with help of privileges. The orders as landholders thus not only formed new social, but also new juridical groups within their dominions.

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Equally difficult to grasp, but particularly intriguing is the relation between the military orders and non-Latin or non-Christian vassals and rural workers, a case that occurred in the Crusader States, in southern Italy, in the Baltic and on the Iberian peninsular. The longevity of autochthonous Slavic and Baltic groups in the Teutonic order state has been underlined\(^6\); more notable still are the rural Muslim communities on the Iberian Peninsula. Filomena Barros touched upon this special relation here at Palmela ten years ago, and Clara Almagro extends our view for the case of the Order of Calatrava and its Muslim vassals in this collection of essays\(^7\). Turning to the Crusader States, some glimpses can be attained despite the sources’ notorious dearth: Marie-Luise Favreau-Lilie’s close reading of the Templar statutes has brought some insights into the knights’

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treatment of Muslim slaves and labourers, and Ronnie Ellenblum’s archaeological and geographical surveys have further enhanced our tableau.

As opposed to this general interest in economic affairs, the members of the military orders in the rural houses have not been investigated all too often. Generally, studies into the social history the military orders have centred on one group within these institutions – that is the knights. But a closer look reveals that even here, truly prosopographical research on the respective orders’ brethren has been conducted relatively seldom, as many regional monographs suffice with listing the knights without really laying out their social context or elaborating common characteristics of a historical group with the help of multiple career-line analysis. Some laudable exceptions however have convincingly shown the knights’ interconnection with regional aristocratic elites. The Teutonic Order has been the main object of research in the last thirty years, one need only mention Lutz Fenske’s important study on the *Ritterbrüder in Livland* or Dieter Woytecki’s and Klaus Scholz’s pioneering studies on the *Personengeschichte des Deutschen Ordens*; more recently, Southern France has become a particularly well studied area, as Domenic Selwood, Jochen Schenck, Thomas Krämer and Damien Carraz have presented important work which has found its counterpart in Philippe Josserand’s fundamental study on

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Castile and which should be emulated in areas with similarly dense records such as Catalonia, Aragon and Valencia\textsuperscript{11}. In this volume, António Pestana de Vasconcelos provides a closer view of the social career of such a \textit{freire}\textsuperscript{12}.

Much more difficult to grasp than the knights, but undoubtedly just an important from the point of view of social history, were the sergeants within the military orders. Recently, work by Alan Forey, Jochen Schenk, Carlos de Ayala Martínez and others have reminded us that in many orders, the lesser fighting members formed the majority of the orders’ brethren, at least from the 13\textsuperscript{th} century onwards\textsuperscript{13}. In comparison to the knights, the sergeants biographies appear much less frequently in the sources; all the more needy are collections of biographical data which should ultimately lead to prosopographical studies. As these men were mostly of non-noble birth, they constituted a specific social group within the orders which deserves to be treated and investigated as such. Sergeants were recruited from labourers, farmers, craftsmen and skilled artisans and played a major role not only as sergeants at arms in the military field, but also as sergeants at service within the administration of the estates. In southern France for example, by identifying not only individual sergeants, but also their relationships and connections, Jochen Schenk could show that the sergeants formed family networks that not only enabled admission to certain members, but also promoted their rise within the houses’ hierarchy\textsuperscript{14}.

Does the same hold true for the military orders’ urban houses, a second area of research on the social history of the orders that requires attention? It is no coincidence that an entire congress has lately been dedicated to the subject of \textit{Les ordres religieux

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\textsuperscript{12} cf. The article by António Pestana de Vasconcelos in this volume.


\textsuperscript{14} Jochen \textsc{Schenk}, Aspects of non-noble family involvement in the Order of the Temple (cf. note 10).

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What was the specific relation between military orders and mediaeval towns? Traditionally, church history has distinguished two ecclesiastical institutions believed to be particularly relevant to the urban setting: parish churches and mendicant convents. Jacques Le Goff’s famous *programme-questionnaire pour une enquête* of 1968 greatly contributed to a highly questioned image of urban regular institutions. Research has since underlined that already prior to the coming of the mendicants, the 12th century urban take-off attracted novel forms of regular life to the growing urban centres. The canons for example often founded houses within urban settlements and contributed to the forming of their urban environment well before the mendicants. Changes in religious thought had their impact in this field, as the reform of canonical life that initiated in the middle of the 11th century illustrates. This movement took a twofold shape: it was either notably eremitical in character, best exemplified by the beginnings of Order of Prémontré; or Canons Regular constructed their houses in towns or close to them, taking

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15 The volume will be published in 2012, edited by Damien Carraz. The following sections (II and III) are developed in more detail in: Nikolas Jaspert, *Military Orders and Urban History – An Introductory Survey*, ibidem.


on obligations in the cure of souls and anticipating similar functions on the part of the mendicants\textsuperscript{19}. André Chédeville therefore pointedly termed the Canons Regular \textit{Proto-Mendiants} with respect to their activities in towns in Brittany\textsuperscript{20}. The return to the \textit{Vita apostolica} of the First Christian community which the Canons Regular advocated implied an active life within society. Thus, long before the emergence of the mendicant orders, the

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canons targeted the expanding towns. The same holds true for other religious institutions traditionally dissociated from the urban sphere. Studies by Cécile Caby for example have underlined, that even eremitical forms of religious life such as the Congregation of Camaldoli in Italy sometimes sought the proximity of the town in a process known as inurbamento\textsuperscript{21}. The urban side to Cistercian history, too, has rightly been brought to light by recent studies. Admittedly, Cistercian monasteries usually were physically separated from urban settlements, but they nevertheless were related to them. More importantly, the Cistercians acquired townhouses which served as relay points and communication centres between monastery and town. The German Stadthöfe and their respective counterparts in other countries have been well studied and their multiple functions have been brought to light\textsuperscript{22}. Most recently, a number of the Cahiers de Fanjeaux on « Moines et religieux dans la ville » has summarized the multiple ties between of religious of different hues and the urban setting\textsuperscript{23}. It is within this wider framework of urban religious institutions that the houses of the Military Orders must be set. An attachment to an urban environment was particularly important for institutions such as the Order of St John and the Teutonic Order

\textsuperscript{21} CABY, Cécile, \textit{De l'érémitisme rural au monachisme urbain: les Camaldules en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge} (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 305), Roma, 1999, 205-391; Cécile CABY, Les implantations urbaines des ordres religieux dans l'Italie médiévale (cf. note 16).


\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Moines et religieux dans la ville (XIIe - XVe siècle)} (Cahiers de Fanjeaux 44), Toulouse, 2009 and particularly the excellent introductory overview: BÉRIOU, Nicole, «De l'histoire des ordres à l'histoire urbaine, Moines et religieux dans la ville (XIIe - XVe siècle)», en Julien THÉRY (ed.), \textit{Moines et religieux dans la ville (XIIe - XVe siècle)} (Cahiers de Fanjeaux 44), Toulouse 2009, p. 13-30.
– that is for those orders that combined military service and charitable work. The need for hospitals was greatest in an urban setting, as the well-known cases of Jerusalem and Acre show, where the Military Orders’ houses formed pivotal centres within the local network of charitable institutions\textsuperscript{24}; but in other areas too, the brethren’s care for the needy drew them into – or close to – the towns.

In most cases, the Military Orders formed part of a group of ecclesiastical institutions situated within a single town or in the immediate surroundings, enjoying the rights and privileges of their respective order, but without holding feudal lordship. As such, they contributed to and profited from urban expansion in much the same way other urban institutions of their time did. However, the Military Orders’ contribution to urban development still remains underexposed, in spite of some important work such as several studies on Southern France\textsuperscript{25}. Admittedly, recent archaeological work conducted in Germany and Switzerland by Armand Baeriswyl has shown the importance of the Military Orders for suburban development in the so-called \textit{Gründungstädte} in South-Western regions of the German Empire\textsuperscript{26}; but these contributions are still exceptional.

As urban landholders, the knights also contributed to real estate development – for example by leasing plots of land with the obligation to erect houses. Emphyteutic grants \textit{ad construendum domos} – or \textit{ad faciendum domos} are not uncommon in the Mediterranean area, where the extant charter evidence is more abundant than in other regions. Commanderies thus became focal points of urban development and formed quarters

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oriented towards the convents, with all the social implications this conferred. Laure Verdon’s work on town planning and urbanisation in Perpignan, Damien Carraz’s work on the Provence or Laureà Pagarolas’ study on Tortosa have illustrated how this process could take place.27 A point in case is Acre, where the military orders’ quarters formed marked areas as the War of Saint Sabas showed dramatically in the 13th century.28 Thomas Krämer’s and Antonella Pelletieri’s articles in these proceedings offer further insights on the military orders as urban institutions on a comparative level.29

An as yet unwritten urban history of the military orders would also imply studying the varying relations between the different ecclesiastical institutions within medieval towns. During the orders’ initial phase, conflict frequently arose with the parish-churches over the cure of souls and other controversial issues, particularly over burial rights. Rudolf Hiestand has delineated how the Military Orders acquired papal privileges in the course of the 12th century that conferred a series of parish rights to the brethren, despite staunch resistance on the part of the bishops, and local studies have shown how long the burial tithes and other forms of income remained a controversial issue that periodically marred the relations between the orders and other ecclesiastical institutions.30 This is well known. But a


29 cf. the articles by Thomas Krämer’s and Antonella Pelletieri in this volume.

diachronic study of intra-ecclesiastical urban relations necessarily needs to focus on the changing relations between the ecclesiastical institutions. Toward the beginning of the 14th century for example, the urban houses of the military orders were of course no longer novel institutions, on the contrary: together with other established forms of religious life such as urban Benedictine monasteries, houses of Regular Canons and parish churches they formed a group united by common social and economic interests. As such, they sometimes saw the need to associate against new competitors such as the mendicant orders.

To put an Iberian example: In Barcelona, the beginning of the 14th century saw embittered legal fighting between the town council and leading families on the one side and urban convents on the other over specific modalities of the urban rental system for emphyteutic grants, fighting that led to the expulsion of clerics and the interdict being laid on the town. The specificities might not be of too much interest here – the problem derived from the separation between dominium utile and dominium directum over landed estate and the height of the payments due to the owner or the possessor of a plot of land when this was sold or sublet. What is of interest in our context though is the fact that the divide did not run neatly between the lay urban population on the one side and the ecclesiastical institutions on the other. Rather, the ecclesiastics opposed to the municipal council formed a group that comprised the parish clergy, Benedictine monasteries, houses of Canons Regular and the convents of the Hospitallers and Templars – institutions which at the turn of the 14th century could well be considered well established and even traditional. Younger forms of religious life on the contrary such as the mendicants took the side of the town council, to which they were united by both common interests and parental ties. As other historians – such as José Marques in a contribution on Setúbal in Portugal –


32 Nikolas Jaspert, Stift und Stadt (cf. note 19), 196-211.

33 Carreras Candi, Francesc, Notes sobre los orígens de la enfiteusis en lo territori de Barcelona, Barcelona, 1910.
have shown, such conflicts between councils and Military Orders were in no way limited to the Medieval Crown of Aragon\(^{34}\).

In the twelfth century, the situation had been very different, as urban elites fostered the military orders. In certain cases, entire towns and town councils even came into being thanks to the military orders, as urban settlements prospered within the orders’ seigneurial estates thanks to privileges issued by the knights\(^ {35}\). Military Orders in Spain, Portugal, and particularly in the Baltic acted as founders of settlements and towns. The famous *Kulmer Handfeste* is only the best known text issued in favour of a nascent urban centre by a military order\(^ {36}\): On the Iberian Peninsula, we can encounter a similar situation, as the famous *cartas de población, cartas de franquicia* and *fueros* in Castile and Aragón illustrate\(^ {37}\): Here too, privileges conveyed by the military religious orders’ led to the creation of communal institutions and town councils, a very particular case for the relation between Military Orders and urban history that might also have been relevant to the Crusader States, even though the scarcity of extant sources prevents us from elaborating this point. Thus, though the role of the military orders for the creation of urban centres cannot compare with that of certain major Benedictine monasteries, it is far more important than that of later orders and was indeed considerable in certain border areas of Latin Christendom. A related case is the town of Rhodes under Hospitaller rule, or the *capitula Rhodi* issued by the order, as Anthony Luttrell has shown in his magisterial study\(^ {38}\). The Teutonic Order State however also provides an excellent example as to how


\(^{36}\) Apart from the Baltic cases mentioned in continuation, see: GONZÁLEZ JIMÉNEZ, Manuel, «Privilegios de los Maestres de Alcántara a Morón de la Frontera», *Archivo hispalense*, 70, 1987, p. 3-46.

\(^{37}\) LACARRA, José M., *Documentos para el estudio de la reconquista y repoblación del Valle del Ebro*, 2 vols. (Textos medievales 62/63), Zaragoza, 1982; María Luisa LEDESMA RUBIO, Cartas de población del reino de Aragón (cf. note 4); BARQUERO GONI, Carlos, «Aportación al estudio de la repoblación santiaguista en La Mancha: cartas de población de Villacañas de Algodor y de Villaverde (año 1248), y capítulos de población de Argamasilla de Alba (años 1545 y 1563)», in *Repoblación y Reconquista: actas del III Curso de Cultura Medieval*, Aguilar de Campóo, Palencia, España 1995, p. 169-178; RUIZ GÓMEZ, Francisco, *Los orígenes de las órdenes militares y la repoblación de los territorios de La Mancha (1150 - 1250)* (Biblioteca de historia 54), Madrid, 2003; Pascual MARTÍNEZ SOPENA, La doble frontera (cf. note 4); Enrique RODRÍGUEZ PICAVEA MATILLA, Monjes guerreros en los reinos hispánicos (cf. note 30), 345-355.

this initially symbiotic relation could deteriorate over time, as the councils acquired growing independence up to the point of allying against their lords. Initially, the far-reaching privileges conferred by the Teutonic Order were attractive to new settlers and guaranteed a certain degree of social tranquillity. But as time went by, the economic interests of the citizens tended to clash more and more often with the political and economic interests of the brethren. The merchants naturally saw regional powers such as the Hanseatic League or the Scandinavian monarchies as political and economic interlocutors, while the Teutonic order strove to maintain its position as an economic power of its own right. Juhan Kreen’s study on Reval, a volume edited by Udo Arnold in 1994 and recent research conducted by Roma Czaja have enhanced our knowledge on the gradual loss of the order’s grip over its towns in Prussia and Livonia, and Riga is an even more prominent case in point for this phenomenon, which might well be analysed with more detail on the Iberian Peninsula.

This leads us to the third field of research. The changing relation between the orders’ urban houses and social groups within the town also requires diachronic research, research that should not only underline the decrease of support such as illustrated in the case of Barcelona or Setubal, but also study the reasons for the houses prolonged and generally harmonious presence within the urban setting despite all societal and spiritual changes. How could it come about that the Utrecht Bailiwick of the Teutonic Order not
only lived on right into the reformation period, but also was allowed to remain catholic long after other ecclesiastical institutions had been forced to adopt the new confession? A recently concluded thesis by Daniela Grögor-Schiemann has answered this question, but the history of the military orders’ urban social setting during the late Middle Ages is still largely unwritten41.

Such a feat can only be accomplished by an in-depth examination of the multiple social ties between religious houses and social groups. Here once again prosopographical research is the base for future studies. The members of the respective orders’ urban houses need to be identified both biographically and socially, in order to uncover deeper interests and connections beneath and behind the activities of individuals. Only on this basis can the relation between benefactors and economic partners on the one hand and the brethren on the other be fully understood. Recent studies like those of Alain Demurger, Elena Bellomo or Damien Carraz have shown how rewarding it can be to reconstruct personal networks between the orders’ houses and their surroundings42. The orders’ priests in particular and their position within both social and ecclesiastical structures remain widely unknown. We are not that badly off when it comes to the Teutonic order, where some priests could acquire important positions within the secular church43. But for most of the military orders, interest has been concentrated very much on the lay element within the order, particularly on the knights. It would however be very


worth while to determine, from which social strata the priests were recruited and which career options the orders offered them as clerics. Here again, prosopographical work would be important in order to trace patterns of horizontal and vertical mobility.

The same holds true for *donates*, *confratres* and other semi-religious men and women attached to the commanderies in the West. In the meantime, we know how important this element was as a hinge between the orders’ houses on the one hand and the societies they were placed in on the other. If this holds true for the countryside, it is all the more valid for the towns. *Confratres* and *consorores*, semi-religious men and women established contacts between the convents and local elites, created networks of economic and political support, and helped transmit the respective order’s features, including its spirituality, to wider strata of society. Although they did not take the three vows and were thus not personally tied to the obligations of the *paupertas Christi*, they still visibly belonged to the order – not least by token of the habit they wore. The heyday of the military orders semi-religious appears to have been the 12th century, but one also encounters them well into the 14th century. Well researched in Southern France and Aragon, such lay brothers and sisters were nevertheless a general phenomenon within the Latin West. Mariarosaria Salerno’s and Kristian Toomaspoeg’s recent editions of the Hospitaller Enquest of 1373 for Southern Italy for example provides new and fascinating data to underscore this point, and recent archaeological excavations at the Torre Alemanna close to Foggia suggests to the existence of communities of lay *confratres* in rural areas, too. Any social history of medieval military orders is incomplete without taking the institutions’ dense semi-religious networks into account.

Investigation into this hazy sphere between the secular world and the convents has profited from the revival of interest in the diversity of medieval forms of religious life, of which the military religious orders were only one among many. A comparative approach to monastic history in general has been particularly fruitful in Italy and Germany, where

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Vergleichende Ordensgeschichte became very much of a catchword towards the end of the 20th century. Giles Constable, Kaspar Elm and others have successfully attempted to situate the members of military orders in the wider framework of regular life in the middle ages. Thanks to such comparative research, one can not only assess the great importance of the lay element within the military orders, but also understand why this was the case. Many members of the military orders were technically speaking laymen and themselves lead a form of religious life which was closer to the via tertia of the semireligious than to that of most other orthodox modes of the Medieval vita religiosa. It is no coincidence that charitable work – the element of the vita activa most closely associated with lay confraternities – acquired and maintained such an important position for so many military orders. Furthermore, the brethren in their beginnings formed part of the poverty movement that lay at the heart of several novel forms of religious life in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Thanks to much innovative work on the part of historians of medieval medicine and medical archaeologists, we now know much more about the social and scientific dimension the orders’ charitable work had both in the Latin East and West.

The dire and difficult task of reconstructing social networks is also indispensable in order to complete our picture of the role women had for the military orders, lately rehabilitated through a fundamental anthology on the Hospitaller women edited by


Anthony Luttrell and Helen Nicholson\textsuperscript{49}. In Spain in particular, the pioneering work by Maria Echániz Sans on the Order of Santiago has not been followed up as one might have expected; Portugal in contrast can boast the recent contribution by Joel Mata\textsuperscript{50}. It is well known that women were relevant to the orders in a number of ways, as Helen Nicholson summarized not too long ago – as benefactors and founders of houses, as economic partners, as wives or other relatives of the brethren, as fully fledged religious, as semi-religious, and even as saints\textsuperscript{51}. Most of these fields belong to the context of social history, although evidently other disciplines might be touched upon, too.

The brethrens’ proximity to the lay world also had its effect on the orders’ self-image and culture. Lately, Alan Forey and José Marques had once again underlined how often the fighting members of the military orders were in fact illiterate\textsuperscript{52}. Of course one can point out illustrious examples in order to prove the contrary: Juan Fernández de Heredia for the Hospitallers, Luís González de Guzmán for the Order of Calatrava, Juan de Zúñiga for the Order of Alcántara or Jorge Manrique for the Order of Santiago, to name only the

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most important Iberian names. But a close reading of booklists from convents in many European countries shows that on a general level, the brethrens’ learning and interests were rather limited. Their liking for narrative texts in general and for tales of chivalry in particular are telling of their social background, as recent research into the libraries of the Teutonic Order has convincingly demonstrated53.

The military orders’ own historiography in turn is an important case study for medieval religious institutions’ treatments of their own past and for the construction of a collective memory, as Jaroslaw Wenta and Philippe Josserand have recently shown for the Teutonic Order and the Spanish Orders in Castile respectively54. The Iberian Orders in the Crown of Aragon still hold potential in this line of research to my way of thinking. Such narrative texts may also reflect social tensions within the military orders and their need to reaffirm their own position. An unedited work that Hubert Houben has recently called our attention to – Codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus Latinus 528, written around 1335 by a member of the Teutonic order named Ulrich – is a good example for an attempt to underline a military order’s supposedly purely religious raison d’etre at times when reality showed was rather different; and Pierre Bonneaud has lately demonstrated the social upheavals that Hospitaller regulations barring non-nobles from admission as milites had within and without the Order of Saint John55.

Artistic patronage would not target the priests and associated semireligious as much as the orders’ knightly brethren. Consequently, it laid particular emphasis on aristocratic modes of behaviour and representation. A social perspective on cultural activities and cultural patronage situates the knightly members of the military religious orders in the wider social context of the chivalric and aristocratic culture of the late Middle Ages. Recent research on the chivalric orders of knighthood have underlined these institutions’ cultural significance and their network-character, and Werner Paravicini’s important


study on the Preußenreisen to the Teutonic Order State has shown how important such phenomena as knightly mobility and ritual were to some military orders. Similar research has been conducted on the Hospitallers on Rhodes and on the Iberian military orders, but the cultural and social interface between military religious orders and chivalric orders of knighthood in the late middle ages still requires research.

A major task for the future remains the editing of sources. This is of course relevant to all disciplines of historical research, but also for social history. All in all, the Iberian military orders, the Teutonic Order and the Order of St John’s late medieval history undoubtedly offer the greatest potential as far as this question is concerned. Here one should single out the great work done in recent years by our Portuguese colleagues under the auspices of Luis Adão da Fonseca, who have published an important amount of records in the Militarium Ordinum Analecta. The bulk of future work will of course still be the editing of charter material, which might arguably be the type of documentation most promising to the social historian. The Iberian Peninsula in particular still holds important amounts of unedited private charters. But then, there are other, less abundant records of great relevance. Anne-Marie Legras’ project of editing the enquête of 1373 for example has not yet been terminated, in spite of work by Raffaele Iorio and Giuseppe Avarucci and the edition by Mariarosaria Salerno and Kristian Toomaspoeg just mentioned. The conclusion of such older projects is only one open task. One might also

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58 To date 12 volumes.
consider intensifying our efforts to edit hitherto neglected types of documentation. In what follows, three such genera will be singled out which appear to be both promising and still underestimated.

First the orders’ statutory sources. Anthony Luttrell recently and quite rightly called our attention to the necessity of publishing these texts for the Order of Saint John\(^\text{60}\). Jürgen Sarnowsky has lately undertaken this work for both the Latin and the French version from 1493, and a recent Franco-Spanish edition of a group of Provençal statutes shows a path research might and should take.\(^\text{61}\) However, many of the early texts – to be exact: far over 39 prior to 1495 – still remain unpublished. The same holds true for the estatutos and definiciones on the Iberian Peninsula, despite Joseph O’Callaghan’s pioneering articles and Philippe Josserand’s work on the Order of Alcántara and his edition of Pelayo Pérez Correa’s establecimientos for the Order of Santiago\(^\text{62}\). Finally, our Portuguese colleagues have furthered our knowledge by their editions of the Portuguese Order of Santiago’s normative texts\(^\text{63}\). Such editions present a necessary backdrop for comparative studies which juxtapose the norms represented by statutory texts with the more concrete rulings of provincial chapters.

Second visitations. Marian Biskup’s recently presented source collection for the Teutonic Order, Dominique Moullot’s edition of the Hospitaller’s Liber prioratus Urbi, or the visitations of the Portuguese Order of Santiago of the 16th century edited a decade ago show the path to be followed and extended\(^\text{64}\). Visitations conducted by local bishops

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\(^{64}\) CASTELO-BRANCO, Manuel da Silva, «Visitações na ordem de Cristo até finais do século XVI», in Isabel Cristina Ferreira FERNANDES (ed.), As ordens militares em Portugal e no sul da Europa: actas do II Encontro sobre Ordens Militares, Palmela, 2, 3 e 4 de Outubro de 1992 (Colecção Actas colóquios 10), Lisboa 1997, p. 407-430;
within their dioceses can furnish further findings despite the orders’ exemptions and privileges. The visitations are typologically comparable to the records of the Templar trial. There is no need to underline the great worth these proceedings conferred to the social historian of the Military Orders. Sad as the fate of the Templars might be, from the standpoint of a social historian and mediaevalist one can only be grateful for their fall – and for the eminently juridical manner it was brought about –, as the interrogations and inventories generated source material unknown for other orders.

Third, administrative and financial sources. Jürgen Sarnowsky has shown how much can be gained by investigating this type of documentation also on the level of social history, but his exemplar has not been followed to a great extent on an international level. Research could greatly profit from methodological questions raised in several projects dedicated to what the Germans call “pragmatic literacy” – *pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*, a term that comprises registers, inventories and similar types of records; the last meeting at Toruń has shown the potential of this approach for the orders’ social history. A project on the Teutonic Order’s *Schäfereirechnungen* of the Marienburg is already underway, and future studies might finally succeed in setting the vexed question of the *responsiones* on more solid ground.

In order to conduct such research, specific archival and bibliographic aids would be extremely useful. Sadly, handbooks to the sources and documents pertinent to each military order are still a desideratum. This could well be a major project for the future after the conclusion of the *Dictionnaire européen des orders militaries au moyen age*: a series of resource handbooks for the military religious orders, an “Inventory of the Archival Sources of the Military Orders”. Each volume could cover one European country and contain references to all archival holdings of documents concerning the history of the

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military orders. Such an inventory would indeed enormously facilitate tracking down documentation and initialising specific research projects. The congress hosted on Gli archivi per la storia del Sovrano militare Ordine di Malta heads in this direction. Zsolt Hunyadi and Libor Jan in turn are working on a project dedicated to collecting references to all extant seals of the Hospitaller houses in the Roman-German Empire. The time is ripe for such disperse information to be brought together.

Such work is best accomplished in cooperation with colleagues. The same might also be said of future source editions. In this field, the use of new technologies could well enhance and facilitate international research, as some recent projects demonstrate. Jürgen Sarnowsky’s Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch and particularly his “Hospitaller Sources” are a case in point – growing online editions of invaluable source material for the history of the Baltic and the Hospitallers on Rhodes respectively. The new media offers the scientific community the opportunity to improve an edition by comments and corrections while it is in the making, academic criticism can be included in time and thus becomes truly effective and helpful. Why not indulge in further utopian thoughts? So many local and regional studies on the religious military orders contain references to the latter’s individual members. There is a multitude of obscure lives that can never be pieced together into individual biographies but might very well serve to discern patterns of relations. A main prerequisite for conducting social studies into the history of the military orders – a point this paper has repeatedly underlined – is sound prosopographical information. But how can such prosopographical data be acquired?

Jochen Burgtorf’s monumental study on the Templars’ and Hospitallers’ officials shows how far an individual can get by painstakingly putting together disperse informational titbits: The impressive biographical lists at the end of his monograph are the base for his fundamental prosopographical chapter on social and spatial mobility, career patterns and career opportunities. But of course, the leading Templar and Hospitaller officials within the respective Central Convents are only a small portion of the general picture, and limited

67 FONSECA, Cosimo Damiano / D'ANGELA, Cosimo (ed.), Gli archivi per la storia del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta: atti del III Convegno Internazionale di Studi Melitensi, Taranto, 18 - 21 ottobre 2001 (Melitensia 13), Taranto, 2005
68 For the time being see: HUNYADI, Zsolt, The Hospitallers in the medieval kingdom of Hungary, c. 1150 - 1387 (METEM könyvek 13), Budapest, 2010, p. 203-216.
69 Barbara Frale’s Archivium audientiarum processus contra Ordinem Militiae Templi, an electronic archive of the Templar Trial, does not appear to be online yet.
70 http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/Landesforschung/orden.html – http://www.hospitallers.uni-hamburg.de/
to these two orders at that. A similarly exhaustive compilations has recently been presented by Luís Felipe Oliveira for The Orders of Avís and Santiago. Why not unite efforts and use the work which has already been published? There is a treasure of potentially prosopographical material completely dispersed in a myriad of publications or hidden away in private files – mosaic stones which hitherto cannot be connected to form a complete picture. This appears a rewarding project for a collaborative, synoptic effort. An international online database of the military orders’ brethren could solve many a problem – an open site, in which historians or other specialists, after duly identifying themselves, would be able to enter names and references to members of the military orders. This would truly be an initiative worthy of European funding, and it would not even be too expensive to upkeep. The result would be an invaluable tool that would facilitate prosopographical studies and research into recruitment and career structures. Such a prosopographical database of the military orders would be most helpful in order to reconstruct the various networks this short introduction has dealt with: on a horizontal level the fluid, international networks of mobile knights moving between single houses and headquarters; the social networks between the houses individual members – knights, sergeants, female religious, priests, semi-religious – and the societies from which they stemmed; the vertical networks between the orders members and officials; and many networks more. Ultimately, superimposing such networks might enable us to discern nodes of communication and hubs of institutional dynamics – thus advancing from a description of social ties to a true network analysis of the military orders. Such an aim might still be far off, but not impossible to achieve.

72 Luís Filipe OLIVEIRA, A coroa, os mestres e os comendadores: as ordens militares de Avis e de Santiago (cf. note 42).