The patronage of the Templars and of the Order of St. Lazarus in England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

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Abstract
The main focus of this study is the patronage of the Templars and of the Order of St. Lazarus, two of the Holy Land orders who came to England in the twelfth century. They were thought to be connected, and afford interesting comparisons in terms of their size, function, importance and geographical distribution. Although this thesis considers the nature of the patronage and the patrons of both orders, the main aim is to assess the motivations behind the benefactions that they received during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is generally accepted that there was a basic spiritual motive behind the patronage of religious orders in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the motivations behind donations made to specific orders are not always clear. It is true that changing fashions in patronage towards particular types of order are of some importance. However, in order to explain the reasons why the Templars and Order of St. Lazarus specifically benefitted, it is necessary to consider factors relating to their own particular nature, as well as factors relating to the backgrounds of their patrons.

The introductory part of the thesis considers the background of the two orders, their origins and development in the Holy Land, and their establishment in Europe and England. The rest of the thesis examines in detail the specific motivations of patrons. In this respect, the crusading background of the two orders is evaluated, and attention is paid to the numbers of patrons who went on crusade or who referred to the Holy Land in their charters of donation. In addition, the membership of both orders is considered in relation to the patronage of such members and their families. In particular, an assessment is made of the role of leper members of the Order of St. Lazarus, and lay associates of the Templars. In the final three chapters, the main concern is with the backgrounds of the orders’ patrons. In this section a study is made of the patronage of large family groupings for both orders. In addition, an examination of the significance of royal and baronial lordship on their patronage is carried out. Finally, the social and geographical associations of the patrons of both orders are considered, and particular note is made of the value of such ties for the Order of St. Lazarus in eastern Leicestershire. In conclusion, the various motivations to patronage for both the Templars and the Order of St. Lazarus are contrasted and evaluated.

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One of the most unusual contributions to the crusading era was the idea of the leper knight - a response to the scourge of leprosy and the shortage of fighting men which beset the Latin kingdom in the twelfth century. The Order of St Lazarus, which saw the idea become a reality, founded establishments across Western Europe to provide essential support for its hospitaller and military vocations. This book explores the important contribution of the English branch of the order, which by 1300 managed a considerable estate from its chief preceptory at Burton Lazars in Leicestershire. Time proved th