

The Monks Of War: The Military Religious Orders

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The military religious orders emerged during the Crusades as Christendom's stormtroopers in the savage conflict with Islam. Some of them still exist today, devoted to charitable works. *The Monks of War* is the first general history of these orders to have appeared since the eighteenth century.

The Templars, the Hospitallers (later Knights of Malta), the Teutonic Knights, and the Knights of the Spanish and Portuguese orders were 'noblemen vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience, living a monastic life in convents which were at the same time barracks, waging war on the enemies of the Cross'. The first properly disciplined Western troops since Roman times, they played a major role in defending the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, in the 'Baltic Crusades' which created Prussia, in the long reconquest of Spain from the Moors, and in fighting the 'Infidel' right up to Napoleonic times. This celebrated book tells the whole enthralling story, recreating such epics as the sieges of Rhodes and Malta and the destruction of the Templars by the Inquisition. Acclaimed on publication, it has now been revised and updated, with a concluding chapter to take events into the 1990s.

'Undeniably the work of someone who knows and accepts the standards of critical history, but ... who sees the past also as an epic or a colourful spectacle' - Professor David Knowles in *The Times Literary Supplement*

'His scholarship is great, his theme both interesting and largely unexplored and his judgement sound' - *Economist*

'The book is excellent and firmly based on the primary sources of which Seward has a remarkable grasp' - *New Society*

'Compulsive reading, attractively written, and retaining one's fascinated interest throughout' - *Catholic Herald*

The cover shows: Portrait of Afonso Wagnazour by Caravaggio in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence (photo: Niccolò Orsi/Retegrid)



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