

Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno XCIV, Gennaio-Aprile 2010, Fascicolo I

Abstracts

GIOVANNI AMATUCCIO, Dal *castrum* al *claustrum* e viceversa: disciplina monastica e disciplina militare nell'esperienza templare

The Templar experience, with his both monastic and military nature, represents an exclusive reality in the Middle Ages history. This essay investigates the relationship between military and monastic discipline, and models that are both inspired. Starting from metaphors drawn from military language adopted by Patristic and after by the Benedictine monasticism of origins, it demonstrates how, in this last case – apart from metaphors – it was more or less conscious inspiration to military models of the late Roman empire. So, the *castrum spiritualis* of the metaphor building itself upon organizational and disciplinary schemes closely linked to the practice of real *castrum*.

The permanent life of male individuals inside a restricted place is the data that links the two experiences. The first conceived as a place of the fight against an abstract spiritual enemy, the evil; the other on the real war against a real enemy. In both cases a rigid code of rules was needed that controls this life and ensures the continuation of the structure, was them monastic or military.

When, centuries later, the Templars founded their Order, and especially when it became a standing army to defend the Holy Land, the monastic model was assumed not just for spiritual reasons but also for practical ones. In this model, they found the typical characteristics of the late imperial and Byzantine armies. These characteristics are well suited to the management of a permanent army in a time when, in the Christian West, there were no such armies. Briefly, at the first, cenobitic *claustrum* models itself on Roman *castrum*; after the reverse path occurs, with the Templar *castrum* that are modelling itself on Benedictine *claustrum*, in particular in its latest Cistercian form.

The survey is developed through an analysis, part of patristic and monastic sources, part of law sources, such military Roman and Byzantine laws, compared with the Rule and Statutes of the Order. In the later case one can reads a rigid discipline's codification derived from model of Benedictine Rule and applied, not just to the monastery life, but also to the military one. The monastic discipline is so a substitute to the lack of disciplinary codes of actual secular armies, which did not have laws and codes written on the subject, but whose cohesion and discipline was ensured only through the principles of honour and personal loyalty to the lord. By adopting this model, the Templars managed to transform the prideful secular knights who enter their Order, in disciplined and obedient fighters. This factor will marks, to their advantage, the difference with the secular crusaders armies, and this will put them in position to represent the élite of Crusaders States fighters, which will does grow the fame and power of the Order.