

Statutes of the Teutonic Order. Latin and French manuscripts.

The project comprises research into the Latin and French manuscripts of the Statutes of the Teutonic Order. The Latin and French editions are (according to the state of the art), the most faithful to the original edition. This edition, as well as the Latin one, were created (it is assumed on the basis of sources) between 1244 and 1264.

The aim of the research is to establish the “history” of the Statutes, i.e. the way the original version developed over time, and in consequence to create the circumstances to recreate the history of how the Order formed at the early stage of its existence. The history of the Teutonic Order at the early stages of its existence is a subject of dispute.

The Statutes of the Teutonic Order are a typical text which regulated principles of life within a religious congregation. In their final form, the statutes comprised of a prologue (a theological one and – in some editions – a historical relation on the origins of the order), the monastic rule, laws and customs. The manuscripts of the statutes which have been preserved are available in a few languages and were drafted in different time periods. Texts translated from the original, Latin, version vary in editorial terms in different versions. The period when the whole Statutes were created, their individual parts, and different language editions are a subject of dispute.

In order to fulfil the elementary requirements for the future, modern edition of the Statutes, it is necessary to first collect, describe and systematise their manuscripts in all of their language editions, and then establish the “history” of the text.

The research on Latin manuscripts and the most faithful, French, translation should constitute the first stage of research aimed at creating conditions for future re-editions of the Statutes in all languages because the Latin version was the original text for all editions in “vernacular languages”. The next stage should include describing and establishing *stemma codicum* of the German and Dutch manuscripts, and establishing the history of these texts.

Max Perlbach is the publisher of the Statutes and the person whose findings about the time, place, and circumstances of drawing up the French version of the Statutes, their editing, and our manuscript, are still current. The Statutes appeared in print in Halle (Saale) in 1890. It is their only scientific edition. In order to establish the content of each of the language editions, Max Perlbach used the following manuscripts: twenty-three German, four Latin, four Dutch, one Low-German and one Old-French. Furthermore, he provided information about the whole group of the editions of the Statutes he knew about which he did not use. His aim was to select each version so that his final edition could be the most faithful to the original text. Hence, Perlbach’s edition includes a juxtaposition of different language editions in parallel columns.

The original findings about the time, place, and the way the Teutonic Order was being created are a good introduction to the discussion on the history of the Statutes. The phrase “was being created” is in place here since the Order was a hospital for German pilgrims, which was organised by merchants from Lübeck and Bremen during the siege of Acre.