

FOUNDATION

In 1143 Pope Celestine II ordered the Knights Hospitaller to take over management of a German hospital in Jerusalem, which, according to the chronicler Jean d'Ypres, accommodated the countless German pilgrims and crusaders who could neither speak the local language nor Latin (*patriæ linguam ignorantibus atque Latinam*).^[9] Although formally an institution of the Hospitallers, the pope commanded that the prior and the brothers of the *domus Theutonicorum* (house of the Germans) should always be Germans themselves, so a tradition of a German-led religious institution could develop during the 12th century in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.^[10]

After the loss of Jerusalem in 1187, some merchants from Lübeck and Bremen took up the idea and founded a field hospital for the duration of the siege of Acre in 1190, which became the nucleus of the order; Celestine III recognized it in 1192 by granting the monks Augustinian Rule. However, based on the model of the Knights Templar, it was transformed into a military order in 1198 and the head of the order became known as the Grand Master (*magister hospitalis*). It received papal orders for crusades to take and hold Jerusalem for Christianity and defend the Holy Land against the Muslim Saracens. During the rule of Grand Master Hermann von Salza (1209–1239) the Order changed from being a hospice brotherhood for pilgrims to primarily a military order.

Originally based in Acre, the Knights purchased Montfort (Starkenbergr), northeast of Acre, in 1220. This castle, which defended the route between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea, was made the seat of the Grand Masters in 1229, although they returned to Acre after losing Montfort to Muslim control in 1271. The Order also had a castle at Amouda in Armenia Minor. The Order received donations of land in the Holy Roman Empire (especially in present-day Germany and Italy), Frankish Greece, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Emperor Frederick II elevated his close friend Hermann von Salza to the status of *Reichsfürst*, or "Prince of the Empire", enabling the Grand Master to negotiate with other senior princes as an equal. During Frederick's coronation as King of Jerusalem in 1225, Teutonic Knights served as his escort in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; von Salza read the emperor's proclamation in both French and German. However, the Teutonic Knights were never as influential in Outremer as the older Templars and Hospitallers

9. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, SS Bd. 25, S. 796.

10. *ump up* ^ Kurt Forstreuter. "Der Deutsche Orden am Mittelmeer". *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*, Bd II. Bonn 1967, S. 12f.