Introduction

Johannes A. Moll

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THE ADMISSION POLICY OF THE TOLUNIC KNIGHTS

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Reconstruction

In the aftermath of the Tolunic War, the Tolunic Knights of America, under the leadership of Commander John T. Tolunic, began to reassess their admission policy. The previous policy, which had been in place since the founding of the Order in 1982, had been based on a rigorous examination process that included academic merit, political alignment, and financial stability. However, with the changing geopolitical landscape and the increasing diversity of the nation, the Order felt it was necessary to reevaluate and adapt its approach to attract a wider range of candidates.

The new admission policy, which was introduced in 1992, aimed to create a more inclusive environment while still maintaining the high standards set by the Order. The changes included a more flexible approach to evaluating applicants' backgrounds, recognizing the contributions of individuals from various walks of life, and ensuring that the Order's membership was reflective of the broader community.

The revised policy also placed a greater emphasis on community service and volunteer work as indicators of character and commitment. This shift was intended to foster a culture of service and civic engagement among the members, aligning with the Order's historic tradition of public service.

In conclusion, the Tolunic Knights' admission policy underwent a significant transformation in 1992, reflecting a broader understanding of the needs and aspirations of the nation. The new approach was designed to attract a diverse and committed membership, ensuring that the Order remained a vital force in American society.

For further details on the Order's history and current activities, please refer to the official publications and resources available on the Order's website.
recorded for 1453, when the herald of the grand master personally turned up in the Teutonic house of Utrecht to get all hands to go to Prussia. It was in fact the last time such an expedition was organized. It was also the last time personnel were sent to the Baltic from the bailiwick of Utrecht. After 1466 there is no mention of recruitment for Prussia or Livonia in the Utrecht records. By then the bailiwick seems to have been leading its own life, more or less independently of the needs of the Prussian and Livonian branches, independently too from the German master. Only when a knight-brother had to be punished, was a transfer to the Baltic considered in Utrecht.

Conditions

The conditions for entry into the Teutonic Order are not found in the original statutes. Some requirements are formulated in the Gesetze, the laws that were added to the statutes and early laws under Grand Master Dietrich von Altenburg (1335-1341). Klaus Militzer supposes that they already date from the end of the thirteenth century. These requirements are very clear, and seem very similar to what was asked by the Templars. Recruits of the Teutonic Order had to be young (over fourteen years old), healthy, without physical imperfections, not hindered by debts or other worldly obligations. And they had to be of knightly descent. These principles were still in force by 1400, suited as they were to the military practice of the order at that time. On its expeditions in Prussia and Livonia, in its battles and skirmishes, only healthy and hardened young men could be used. As long as knight-brothers were effectively sent into the field — and in Livonia this was the case during the whole of the fifteenth century, whilst in Prussia after Tannenberg the military undertakings were more and more put out to mercenaries — these conditions continued to remain important. The requirement of knightly birth, rittermässig und geboren zu iren wappen, guaranteed that candidate brothers were familiar with, and from their early years on well trained in, the handling of horses, swords, and armour. The grand master could, by the way, revoke this condition. As we know that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries many sons of patricians were admitted, the condition cannot have had its decisive class-discriminating character by then.

In the fifteenth century this was to change. Both in the bailiwicks and the Baltic the importance of noble birth came to be stressed. And ‘noble’ in this context did not mean of high noble descent (edelfrei), but of knightly birth. Although high-born noblemen, counts’ and dynasts’ sons are known to have joined the order, from the beginning most of its brethren had been recruited among what the later Middle Ages called the lesser nobility or gentry. In the German empire this lower nobility originated from an amalgamation of the class of the free knights and that of the ministeriales, that is, of men originally not free who were servants of important lords. This orientation on the class of the ministeriales is demonstrated by the fact that most grand masters and also most masters of Livonia and Germany had this background.

What then strikes the eye is that, in both the bailiwicks and the Baltic in the fifteenth century, a call resounds for full noble birth to be required of new brothers — at first only for the two halves (that is from both parents) and later for the four parts (grandparents). This requirement had to be met, it seems, whenever a knight-brother wanted to exact a lordship in the name of the order. When, for example, a new land-commander had to be appointed in Utrecht in 1442, the main objection that was raised against the candidate Dirk van Enghuizen was that he was noble only for the eighth part, and even that only by bastardy. Thus, complete knightly descent from both father and mother was already required at that time for the simple membership of the order. In 1440 some discontented brethren in Prussia formulated as one of their demands that every newcomer had to prove his nobility by this criterion before being admitted. Sons of patricians, bastards, and half nobles — however experienced and trained in administration and the use of arms they might be — were not welcome any more. About 1450, noble birth from two parts was explicitly

23 J. J. de Geer tot Oudegein, Excerpten uit de oude rekeningen der Ridderlijke Duitse Orde, bataaf van Utrecht, voor de kerkhervorming (Utrecht, 1895), p. 42.
25 Peribach, p. 149.
28 Cf. n. 15.
29 Maschke, p. 258.
31 Want he een achttiendaal noch geen deel en hadde dat der ritterscap te behoort, dan van verre basterlik, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, XX. Hauptabteilung, Historisches Staatsarchiv Königsgberg, Ordnungsbriefarchiv (OBA), no. 8306. The complaint was uttered towards the grand master by the old Land-Commander of Westphalia, Sweder Cobbing, who came from the same region as Enghuizen.
32 Maschke, p. 274.
The Admission Policy of the Teutonic Knights

The admission policy of the Teutonic Knights was strictly controlled and highly selective. Candidates were expected to meet rigorous standards of military prowess, religious devotion, and financial means. The process was both formal and clandestine, involving secret oaths and secret rituals.

The candidate would first undergo a rigorous examination, including a test of physical fitness and a demonstration of military skills. Only those deemed suitable were then invited to a formal meeting with the Grand Master, where a final selection was made.

Once admitted, the candidate would be initiated into the order and undergo a period of training. This included the study of military tactics, religious scripture, and the language and customs of the order. The training was rigorous and demanding, aimed at preparing the candidate for a life of service to the Teutonic Knights.

The admission policy was designed to ensure the order's strength and cohesion, as well as its ability to attract the most capable and devout members of society. It was a reflection of the order's commitment to maintaining its place as a powerful and respected military order.
The Admission Policy of the Teutonic Knights

Johnannes A. Nol

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JOHANNES A. NOL

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