CHAPTER TWO

ACRE (1191–1291)

Infrastructure

The city of Acre, located on the Mediterranean coast to the north of Haifa, was conquered by King Baldwin I of Jerusalem in 1104. It soon became the main port of the realm,1 an important commercial center, a first stopover for many pilgrims from the west, a port of arrival and departure for members of the military orders,2 and a favorite royal residence.3 Compared to Jerusalem, Acre’s climate was more pleasant and its atmosphere less sacred, even though there were spiritual reasons to visit the city.4 Both Hospitallers and Templars established major houses in Acre as they sought to be in the vicinity of the king. The Hospitallers obtained a royal confirmation of their property in Acre as early as 1110,5 were exempt from paying tithes in the diocese of Acre by the 1130s,6 systematically acquired real estate in the city from 1149 on,7 and had, by 1155, not only a preceptory, led by the magister de Accon (master of Acre), but also a hospital with its own custos infirorum (guardian of the sick).8 By the 1160s (at the latest), the Templars also had a house in Acre, governed by the comandeour d’Acre (preceptor of Acre),9 there were storage facilities in which a sergeant brother, known as the comandeor de la vote de la mer d’Acre (preceptor of the vault at the sea in Acre), kept provisions,10 and by 1175, the order’s house in Acre served as a payment office where the Templars paid the fees for the casalia they were renting.11 Around 1170, Theoderic admired the buildings of

1 Stickel, Fall, 11.
2 The Templar Geoffrey Fulcherii arrived at Acre in 1164: RHGF XVI, 38–9 n. 124; RRH 398.
3 Usamah Ibn-Munqidh, Arab-Syrian Gentleman, 61, 226 (King Fulk, King Baldwin III); Continuation, ed. Morgan, 35 (King Guy).
6 Hamilton, Latin Church, 148.
7 1149: CH I 180 (exchange and purchase); RRH 256; date: Mayer II, 860. 1155: CH I 237 (donation and lease); RRH 311.
8 CH I 237; RRH 311; cf. Chapter Nine: [Pons (H) hospitaller 1155].
9 RT 87, 93.
10 RT 143, cf. ibid, 609.
11 Manosque, f. 561 64 P, 578’ 67 J; CH II, p. 907 n. xvii; RRH 535a.
both communities, the Templar house on the coast and the Hospitaller house in the city. When Saladin conquered the city in 1187, he had the Hospitaller buildings converted into schools, but took possession of the Templar quarter where he built a new tower. On 12 July 1191, the crusaders reconquered Acre, and both Hospitallers and Templars were soon reinstated in their former possessions (the Hospitaller possessions were confirmed by King Guy on 31 January 1192). The king of Jerusalem had every interest to tie the military orders to his new capital. Due to their existing buildings, it was probably fairly easy for the two communities to establish their central convent in Acre, but infrastructural expansions were inevitable.

According to medieval maps, Acre consisted of Old Acre and the Montmusard suburb. The thirteenth-century map of Matthew Paris, which is not very detailed, places the Templar house into Old Acre and that of the Hospitallers mostly into the Montmusard. However, the two much more detailed fourteenth-century maps of Peter Vescotte (sometimes ascribed to Marinus Sanutus) and Paulinus of Pozzuoli (Paolino Veneto) indicate that both communities held properties in Old Acre and the Montmusard.

Table 5: The Acre Headquarters of Templars and Hospitallers on Medieval Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>map</th>
<th>date</th>
<th>Templars</th>
<th>Hospitallers</th>
<th>source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terra Sancta (focus: Acre)</td>
<td>c.1252</td>
<td>le Temple (Old Acre)</td>
<td>la maison del hospital saint Johan (mostly Montmusard)</td>
<td>Matthew Paris¹⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acre (Ciuitas Acon siue Piolomayda)</td>
<td>(1320s)</td>
<td>Templum (Old Acre); burgus Templi, bovaria Templi (Montmusard); custodia Templariorum (Montmusard walls)</td>
<td>hospitale (Old Acre); hospitium hospitalis (Montmusard); custodia Hospitaliorum (Montmusard walls)</td>
<td>Peter Vescotte (sometimes ascribed to Marinus Sanutus)¹⁶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

¹⁴ CH I 917; RRH 698; date: Mayer II, 881; cf. Favreau, Studien, 55; Jacoby, “Evolution,” 100.