CHAPTER THREE

CYPRUS (1291–1310)

Infrastructure

When relocating from Jerusalem to Acre (1187/91), both Hospitallers and Templars had been able to establish themselves in a pre-existing infrastructure of their own. The same was true when they moved from Acre to Cyprus; however, the Cypriote infrastructure lay outside the kingdom of Jerusalem in a different eastern province, which gave the central convent of both orders another chance to display its adaptability. The Templars’ ties to Cyprus dated back to the Third Crusade. In 1191, Richard Lionheart had conquered the island and sold it to their master, Robert of Sablé. The order established itself at Nicosia, but seems to have treated the natives so badly that there was an uprising in April 1192, and for a while, the Templars, led by Reynald Boschart, the order’s preceptor of Cyprus, were under siege in the castle of Nicosia. Though they managed to put down the uprising, the Templars decided to retreat from the island. Guy of Lusignan took over their financial obligations toward King Richard, and Cyprus became a kingdom in 1197. However, the order’s retreat was not permanent. By 1210, the Templars had acquired new property, and according to their statutes, they used the island as a penal colony in the thirteenth century. They soon built or acquired a representative building or church at Nicosia which would serve as a final resting place for King Henry I of Cyprus (d.1253). The 1258 agreement between Templars, Hospitallers, and Teutonic Knights suggests that all three orders had magni praeceptores (grand preceptors) in charge of their respective houses on the island.
and a 1261 agreement between the Templar Master Thomas Berardi and the archbishop of Nicosia indicates that the extent of the order’s property on Cyprus was considerable. However, when the Templars decided to support the Anjou claims to the throne of Jerusalem, their relationship with the royal house of Cyprus deteriorated. In 1279, King Hugh III of Cyprus and the Templar Master William of Beaujeu clashed over this issue at Tyre, and when Hugh returned to Cyprus he had the Templar house at Limassol destroyed and the order’s possessions on the island confiscated. Years later, Pope Martin IV (1281–5) still had to admonish the king to refrain from his actions against the Templars. Thus, in 1291, when the brothers sought refuge on Cyprus after the fall of Acre, they were admitted, but probably not welcomed.

The Hospitallers were established on Cyprus by the early thirteenth century. In 1210, King Hugh I gave various properties to William of Beaune, then the order’s preceptor of Cyprus, among them the casale Kolossi (ten kilometers west of Limassol) which would become an administrative center and maybe the seat of the Hospitaller preceptor of Cyprus. Before long, the Hospitallers had a palace, a hospital, and a church at Nicosia. King Hugh I (d.1218), his son-in-law Henry of Antioch (d.1276), and the Hospitaller Master Raymond Berengar (d.1374) would be buried in this church. At Limassol, where the Hospitallers’ central convent resided between 1291 and 1310, the order had built a fortified tower even before 1291. With regard to the military orders’ pre-1310 buildings at Nicosia and Limassol the archaeological evidence is sparse, maybe due to an earthquake which caused considerable damage in 1330. In 1299, the Hospitaller convent had to remind Master William of Villaret that, following the fall of Acre, Cyprus had become the seat of the master and the convent (siege dou maistre et dou

---

7 1258: CH II 2902; RRH 1269. 1261: Coureas and Schabel, Cartulary, n. 89.
8 Röhrich, 978.
9 Bustron, 116; cf. “Annales de Terre Sainte,” ed. Röhrich and Raynaud, 456 (A redaction, where this is incorrectly dated to 1276); cf. also Röhrich, 978; Edbury, Kingdom, 95–6.
10 Potthast 22194.
11 CH II 1354; RRH 844; cf. Fedden and Thompson, Kreuzfahrerburgen, 101–2; Riley-Smith, 432.
12 Gestes, 55 § 143; cf. Röhrich, 801–2.
14 Gestes, 45 § 130.
15 Bustron, 254.