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THE TEMPLARS ON CYPRUS AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER BRANCHES OF THE LATIN CHURCH, 1200–1307

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the relations of the Templars with the other branches of the Latin Church of Cyprus, founded in 1196 on the island during the pontificate of Pope Celestine III will be examined and discussed. These relations can be subdivided as follows. Firstly, the Templars acted as arbitrators, along with the Hospitallers and other clergy nominated by the pope, in disputes between the crown and nobles on one hand and the secular Latin Church on the other. Secondly, the Templars had relations with the secular Latin clergy of Cyprus. Thirdly, they had relations with the regular Latin clergy, including the other Military Orders. Finally, some of the testimony submitted by witnesses at the Trial of the Templars on Cyprus in 1310 sheds light on relations between the Templars, other regular clergy and the secular Latin clergy in the years before 1307 when the Templars were arrested. The sources used in preparing this paper are mostly published papal correspondence relating to Cyprus and the published account of the Trial of the Templars on Cyprus. Secondary works have also been used for comparisons with other parts of Europe.

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The Templars arrived in Cyprus before any other branch of the Roman Catholic Church, having purchased the island from King Richard I of England after he had conquered it in the summer of 1191. They returned it to him following a Greek uprising against their rule in Nicosia despite having crushed it, but nonetheless had good relations with Guy de Lusignan, the founder of the Lusignan dynasty and the first Latin ruler of Cyprus, and his successors, King Aimery and King Hugh I. It was only from 1277 onwards that Templar relations with the crown deteriorated when they supported the claims of Charles of Anjou king of Sicily and his successor Charles II to the throne of Jerusalem against those of King Hugh III of Cyprus. Templar relations with his successor King Henry II were also strained when he sought to limit their freedom of action. In this paper I examine the relations of the Templars with the other branches of the Latin Church of Cyprus, founded in 1196 on the island during the pontificate of Pope Celestine III. These relations can be subdivided as follows. Firstly, the Templars acted as arbitrators in disputes between the crown and the nobles on Cyprus and the secular Latin Church. Secondly, the Templars had relations with the secular Latin clergy of Cyprus. Thirdly, they had relations with the regular Latin clergy, including the other Military Orders. The loss of the Templar Order's conventual archives limits the sources used for examining relations between the Order and other branches of the Latin Church, on Cyprus as much as in Europe.¹ Therefore, the sources used in preparing this paper are mostly published correspondence from the papal registers relating to Cyprus, as well as documents from the Cartulary of Nicosia. The proceedings of the Trial of the Templars of Cyprus have been used in cases where the testimonies submitted shed light on relations between the Templars, other regular clergy and secular clergy for the period prior to their arrest in 1307. Secondary works have been used for comparisons with parts of Europe and with the Latin East. The object of this research into the Templars on Cyprus and their relations with other branches of the Latin Church is threefold. Firstly, it will show the nature of these relations and how they developed over time. Secondly, it aims to explain why on Cyprus the Templars seem to have had more relations with the secular than with the regular clergy, despite belonging to the latter group. Thirdly, through comparisons with Latin Syria and parts of Roman Catholic Europe it will place these relations and their evolution in a broader European and Mediterranean context.

¹ Pierre-Vincent Claverie, *L'Ordre du Temple en Terre Sainte et à Chypre au XIII^e siècle*, vol. 2 (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2005), 150.

THE TEMPLARS AS ARBITRATORS IN AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE CROWN, THE NOBLES AND THE SECULAR CHURCH

The most important agreement on Cyprus involving the Templars, other branches of the Latin Church and the secular power was the agreement of 14 September 1222, confirmed by Pope Honorius III on 21 January 1223. This was revised version of an initial agreement of October 1220 regulating issues of property between the crown, the nobles and the Latin Church, as well as matters concerning the Greek Church of Cyprus. The Greek Church was not party to either agreement. The masters of the Templar and Hospitaller Orders, not party to the initial agreement, were included in the revised agreement together with the Latin archbishops and the Latin bishops of Paphos, Limassol and Famagusta. Both the revised agreement and the papal confirmation of it state that it had been reached following mediation by Pelagius, cardinal bishop of Albano and papal legate to the eastern Mediterranean, and by the masters of the Templar and Hospitaller orders. At that time the master of the Templars was Peter of Montaigu and that of the Hospital was Garin de Montaigu. Both were brothers of the incumbent archbishop of Nicosia, Eustorge of Montaigu, and of Fulk de Montaigu, bishop of Limassol of Limassol between the years 1211–1218, an illustration of how the Templars were bound by familial as well as institutional ties to the secular Latin Church of Cyprus and the Hospitallers. Indeed, Archbishop Eustorge probably welcomed the mediation of his Templar and Hospitaller brothers in the formulation of the revised agreement for this very reason. Family considerations apart, the inclusion of the Templars and Hospitallers in the revised agreement indicates the importance they had acquired on Cyprus and the fact that they had become major landowners on the island by this time.²

The provisions added to the revised agreement of 14 September 1222 and absent from the initial agreement of October 1220 all concerned the Greek Church and Greek serfs. Greek bishops ordaining serfs without the permission of the Latin diocesan and the local lord were to be suspended from the office of conferring orders, with the serfs to revert to their initial servitude. Monks in Greek

² *The Cartulary of the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom of Nicosia*, ed. Nicholas Coureas and Christopher Schabel (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1997), nos. 82–84, 95; Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “Stephen of Mezel, Bishop of Famagusta and his Age,” in *The Harbour of all this Sea and Realm: Crusader to Venetian Famagusta*, ed. Michael J. K. Walsh, Tamas Kiss, and Nicholas S. H. Coureas (Budapest: Central European University, 2014), 41–42; Pierre-Vincent Claverie, Emmanuel Grélois, and Jean-Pierre Grélois., “*Apud Ciprum Nicossiam*: Notes sur les relations Cypro-Auvergnates au XIIIe siècle,” *Epeterida Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon* XXXI (2005): 41–43.

monasteries were to be reduced to a predetermined numerical upper limit through death and translation, with new monks to be admitted only once the number had dropped below this limit, and then only from the estates of the lords on which this monastery was situated, and only with their express permission. As for the number of Greek bishoprics on Cyprus, this was to be fixed at four with the consent of the mediators and according to the wishes of both parties, namely the crown and the nobles and the Latin Church. The fact that all the new provisions concerned the Greeks and that the mediators granted their explicit consent to limiting the number of Greek bishoprics to four strongly indicates that it was the issues concerning the Greeks that the legate and the masters of the Templars and the Hospitallers had been asked to deal with primarily in their capacity as mediators. The four letters Pope Honorius III wrote to various parties between 30 December 1221 and 8 March 1222, in the period of time between the initial and final agreements, concerning the insubordination of the Greek clergy and the disposition of properties belonging to the Greek Church reinforce this supposition.³

The payment of tithes, a subject of the 1220 and 1222 agreements, continued to engender acrimony between the crown and the nobles on one hand and the Latin secular church of Cyprus on the other. Hence on 4 October 1232 the masters of the Templars and the Hospitallers, the archbishops of Caesarea and Nazareth and the bishop of Lydda convened at Acre in the Hospitaller vineyard called 'Mahomerie' to announce their arbitral decision on this acrimonious issue. Notwithstanding its location, the agreement concluded at Acre in Latin Syria dealt with Cypriot issues and inclusion of the masters of both the Templars and the Hospitallers in the committee of arbitration was not incidental. As heads of exempt orders of the Roman Catholic Church accountable solely to the pope their participation on a committee of arbitration reinforced the validity of the decisions reached. They decided in this instance that the crown and the nobles, other than those expelled or disinherited as a result of the Civil War on Cyprus between Ibelin and Imperialist factions of 1228–1232, should pay the archbishop and his suffragan bishops 2,000 silver marks in trimestrial instalments of 100 marks over the next five years, with the king paying an additional 1,000 silver marks on his own account for arrears between June 1231 and October 1232, the sum in question to be distributed among all the churches. Furthermore, King Henry I would grant the *casale* or *presterie* of Mendias to Eustorgue the Latin archbishop of Nicosia, while the church of Famagusta was relieved of making an annual payment of

³ *The Cartulary*, ed. Coureas and Schabel, nos. 82–84, 95; *Bullarium Cyprium: Papal Letters concerning Cyprus 1196–1314*, vol. 2, ed. Christopher Schabel (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2010), nos. c-35, c-37, c-40, c-46.

70 white bezants, drawn from the incomes of the *casale* of Koukليا, to a certain John Raynes, on account of the latter's death. Its only obligation, the payment of 350 white bezants to the deceased's wife by way of a dowry, had been fulfilled as the sum was now in her possession. Finally, both the crown and the Latin nobles were absolved from payment of arrears in tithes and other payments formerly demanded by the archbishop and his suffragans. Issues brought to the ecclesiastical courts frequently ended in arbitration throughout Latin Europe during the thirteenth century. The same occurred in Latin Syria. In 1257 the counter-claim that the Teutonic Order filed against Bishop Florence of Acre who claimed entitlement to tithes from the Order's *casalia* and from its mills in Acre itself aimed at forcing the bishop to accept arbitration, that cost less than recourse to the Roman curia. Therefore, arbitration on Cyprus fits into a broader pattern.⁴

THE TEMPLARS' ALLEGED COMPLICITY IN DEFRAUDING THE SECULAR LATIN CHURCH

Given that the Master of the Templars and his Hospitaller opposite number had been appointed as arbitrators in two occasions, in 1222 and 1232, to resolve disputes concerning tithes it is remarkable to find both Orders accused some years later of colluding with the crown and nobles of Cyprus to defraud the secular Latin Church of tithes. In a letter dated 17 November 1237 addressed to King Henry I and Queen Alice of Cyprus Pope Gregory IX complained of the subterfuges that the crown and nobility of Cyprus were resorting to in order to withhold full payment of tithes. The Latin archbishop and his suffragans had excommunicated nobles and their *baillis* for this, and so the nobles had simply removed Latin *baillis* and replaced them by Greeks and Syrians who were probably indifferent to such sentences, not being members of the Latin Church. A second subterfuge, involving both the Templars and the Hospitallers, as well as other religious orders exempted from paying tithes, was implemented when the crown and the nobles placed their estates in the custody of these orders, ostensibly by way of providing securities, so that the tithes due to the churches were not paid. In this manner, having defrauded the churches of the tithes due to them, the crown and nobles acquired greater incomes thereby, to the detriment of the churches, the archbishop and the suffragan

⁴ *The Cartulary*, ed. Coureas and Schabel, no. 87; Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 573–574; Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London: Variorum Publications Ltd, 1980), 302.

Latin bishops. The pope's letter stated clearly that the Templars along with the Hospitallers and other religious orders based on Cyprus were colluding with the crown and nobles at the expense of the secular church. The pope ordered the king and queen to stop such practices and to have paid the outstanding sums owed. By way of reinforcing his instructions he wrote a similar letter to the abbot and prior of the powerful Premonstratensian monastery of Bellapais near Kerynia, ordering them to expressly urge the king and queen and to induce them to comply with his orders.⁵

If indeed the Templars together with the Hospitallers were guilty of colluding with the crown and nobles to defraud the secular church of tithes, the reasons behind this merit examination. As an exempt religious order, the Templars from the first half of the twelfth century onwards were exempt from paying tithes to the diocesan bishop on their demesne lands. The Hospitallers, and other religious orders enjoyed similar exemptions. Nevertheless, if such orders acquired estates from other parties the diocesan could claim tithes. Hence in 1181 the Hospitallers agreed to pay the archbishop of Petra in Latin Syria 40 bezants a year in lieu of tithes payable on their properties in his archdiocese, but also agreed that they would pay a half-tithe on future properties they might acquire there. Cyprus has no recorded instances of the Templars or other military orders acquiring properties from the secular church or lay lords and then refusing to pay tithes on such lands. But such examples do exist for neighbouring Latin Syria. The principal threat to the episcopal tithe there came from military orders when they started acquiring extensive fiefs from the mid-twelfth century onwards. In 1225 the bishop of Tortosa complained to the pope of how the Templars were not honouring an agreement reached with the bishopric in 1152 over the payment of tithes, when the incumbent bishop had granted the Templars half the tithes of the diocese including apparently those of the city of Tortosa, giving the Templars sole use of the tithe of Chastel Blanc and keeping for the bishopric sole use of the tithe of Maraclea. Perhaps similar unrecorded instances occurred in Cyprus. The crown and many nobles were heavily indebted after the Civil War on Cyprus between the Ibelin supporters and those of the German emperor Frederick II, which ended on Cyprus in 1233, which gave them an incentive to engage in this subterfuge. But why would the Templars and other religious orders on Cyprus take custody of estates belonging to the crown and the nobles with the express aim of defrauding the secular Latin Church? One possible explanation was the death in 1231 of the Templar Grand Master Peter of Montaigu, a brother of Archbishop Eustorgue. The new Templar Grand Master,

⁵ *Bullarium Cyprium: Papal Letters concerning Cyprus 1196–1314*, vol. 1, ed. Christopher Schabel (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2010), 320–322, d–27.

Armand of Périgord, was not linked by familial or regional ties to the archbishop and so was willing to take custody of royal and noble estates.⁶

THE TEMPLARS AND THE SECULAR CLERGY ON CYPRUS

Not all the relations between the Templars and other branches of the Latin Church in Cyprus involved the crown and the nobility. Sometimes issues arose concerning them and the secular Latin clergy. These issues sometimes concerned the resolution of disputes that had arisen between the Templars and the secular clergy, especially over the issues of tithes and urban properties. On other occasions the pope made use of secular clergy to implement Templar requests regarding the bestowal of ecclesiastical benefices and the filling of public offices requiring papal approval.

The mid-thirteenth century witnessed the resolution of disputes over tithes. According to a deed dated 30 September 1264 Thomas Berard the grand master of the Templars sold a house for 2,000 white bezants to the archbishop and the cathedral chapter of Nicosia, represented in this transaction by the notary Bonacursus. This sale was implemented in accordance with another agreement concerning the transfer of houses located on a public road next to the residence of the Latin bishop of Limassol. The second agreement had been the subject of a dispute between Templars and the Latin church of Nicosia, resolved before the archdeacon of Acre. This transfer had been implemented by the Templars and the Premonstratensian abbot of Bellapais acting on behalf of Archbishop Hugh of Fagianio of Nicosia, himself a Premonstratensian monk. The dispute had arisen on account of the bequest of Nicholas, a canon of the church of Nicosia, who had left these houses to the Templars in his will. It was decreed that were this sale not to take place then the archbishop was liable to pay double the sale price along with interest and damages. The whole affair shows how ownership of urban property in the capital Nicosia by the Templars and the secular Latin Church could engender disputes, in this case over the terms of a bequest. The incident recalls a dispute between the bishop of Hebron in Latin Syria and the Teutonic knights that arose after 1252, when the bishop claimed houses in the suburb of Montmusard in Acre that had come into possession of the knights and demanded 3,000 bezants in unpaid rents. The

⁶ Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 148–149, 285; Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191–1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 / 1994), 65–67; Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 136.

Master of the Teutonic knights invoked the Order's exemption from any authority other than the pope's, threatening to appeal to the papal curia. A compromise was finally reached, with the Order agreeing to pay the bishop an annual rent of seven bezants for the houses.⁷

As stated above, the military orders enjoyed a general immunity from paying tithes to the Latin secular church, but this did not invariably apply to their urban properties. Hence on 8 July 1261 Thomas Berard the Templar grand master and Archbishop Hugh of Fagiano reached an agreement whereby the Templars would pay the archbishop and church of Nicosia 190 white bezants annually by way of settling arrears in payment of tithes on their properties and incomes in the city and diocese of Nicosia. In addition, they agreed to pay him one silver mark annually every 1 October instead of the usual one fourth payable on burial fees, legacies and bequests, thereby receiving these dues from those choosing burial in Templar churches and making bequests to them. The archbishop in return undertook to allow those requiring Templar burial to be transported straight to the Templar church in Nicosia, and not via the cathedral of Nicosia unless the deceased had requested this before death. Servants in the Templar house of Nicosia and in other lands or localities within the city or diocese of Nicosia would come under the archbishop's jurisdiction, but fathers could have their adolescent sons who had died before reaching manhood buried in the Templar church of Nicosia.⁸

This agreement, in which Archbishop Hugh granted spiritual and financial concessions to the Templars more generous than those granted in similar agreements concluded between the Templars and secular clergy in Western Europe, is an indication of the power the Order enjoyed in Cyprus in relation to the Latin archbishopric of Nicosia. Furthermore, it bears comparison with one concluded five years earlier, on 16 August 1255, between Archbishop Hugh and the Hospitaller Grand Master William of Chateaufort. Its terms were very similar, but in this instance the Hospitallers agreed to pay 300 white bezants annually instead of tithes payable on its properties in the city and diocese of Nicosia. This indicates that the Hospitaller properties in the city and diocese of Nicosia were of a greater value, or at any rate yielded more income, than those of the Templars, although the possibility that the Templars were simply tougher negotiators is also open. The disputes over arrears in tithes between the military orders and the secular Latin Church in Cyprus mirror similar disputes between both parties in thirteenth

⁷ *The Cartulary*, ed. Coureas and Schabel, no. 51; Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 298–299.

⁸ *The Cartulary*, ed. Coureas and Schabel, no. 89.

century Acre, between the bishops of Acre and the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights.⁹

The Templars together with the prelates of the secular Latin Church acted on occasion as papal executors, enforcing papal decisions applicable to Cyprus. On 31 July 1264 Pope Urban IV wrote to the prior of the Templar house and to the cantor of the Latin cathedral of the Holy Wisdom in Nicosia instructing them to place the papal chaplain Nicholas de Thesauro or his procurator in possession of the archdeaconate, a canonry and a prebend in the church of Famagusta as well as the house, incomes and rights pertaining to them that Archdeacon John of Famagusta, who had recently died at the Apostolic See, possessed, notwithstanding the claims of other parties to these specific offices, incomes and properties. Nicholas, moreover, was also to have a stall in the choir and a place in the cathedral chapter of Famagusta. Those placing obstacles to this appointment were to be brought in line by ecclesiastical censure and appeal if necessary to the secular arm. The chaplain's procurator was to take the oath on his behalf and was to be presented to the bishop and chapter of Famagusta, but following the arrival of the papal chaplain he would take the oath in person.¹⁰

Towards the close of the thirteenth century the Templars' and Hospitallers' importance as defenders of Latin Christendom in the eastern Mediterranean had increased on account of the threat posed by the Mamluks, who had recently reconquered the last Western possessions in Syria and Palestine. Pope Boniface VIII authorised Templar requests regarding the appointment of several persons to the office of *tabellionatus*, public scribes entrusted with notarising legal contracts. The Templars, who needed holders of this office to conduct legal affairs, had recourse to the pope because this office was granted by papal authority and its holders required papal approval. On 31 August 1299, the pope wrote to Bishop Guy of Famagusta, informing him of his favourable response to a request that the Templar Grand Master James of Molay had submitted to him. The bishop was instructed to grant the office of *tabellionatus*, to a person that the grand master had chosen, provided that this person was shown to be suitable following a thorough examination and then took the oath attached to the letter. The pope approved a similar request submitted by the grand master before 4 August 1301, on this occasion for the appointment of two *tabellionati*. According to this letter, addressed to bishops Guy of Famagusta and Peter of Limassol, the Templar grand master had informed

⁹ Ibid., no. 91; Claverie, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 2: 150–151, 157–158; Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 301–302; Peter Edbury, "The Templars in Cyprus," in *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, ed. Malcolm Barber (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1994), 192.

¹⁰ *Bullarium*, II, ed. Schabel, 54–57, 8–31, 8–32.

him that Cyprus suffered from a shortage of persons suitably qualified to draw up legal contracts, judicial acts and other similar instruments. Therefore, he instructed them to confer the office of *tabellionatus* on two suitable persons, proven worthy following a thorough examination and on having received from them the oath attached in the letter. The dearth of suitable notaries reported by James of Molay reflects the rising commercial importance, and the commensurate increase in legal contracts, of Cyprus in general and Famagusta in particular following the fall of Acre and Tyre in 1291. Notaries attaining the office of *tabellionatus* did so only after passing examinations. The related issue of whether persons could teach law on the basis of years of experience in court or only after passing examinations was addressed by John of Ancona in his two summae or legal treatises written in the years 1258–1266 and 1265–1268 in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem where he was resident.¹¹

The impending arrest, trial and abolition of the Templar Order on papal instructions that took place throughout Europe between the years 1307–1312 finds no inkling in the letter of Pope Benedict XI dated 6 February 1304, addressed to Bishop Peter of Limassol and to six other Latin prelates outside Cyprus. This letter furnishes an example of how the pope supported the Templar Order in order to maintain its exempt status from all jurisdiction other than the pope's. In this letter he observed how certain parties were harassing the persons and properties of the master and brothers of the Templar Order in numerous ways. Wishing to provide for their tranquillity and to end to these perverse attempts the pope instructed the bishop of Limassol and the other prelates to uphold the master and the brothers of the Order, forcing those harassing them to obey without the right of papal appeal. This measure was to be applied regardless of any rulings or exemptions to the contrary granted by previous popes or under the provisions of canon 37 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 exempting accused clerics from attendance at the court of the diocesan if it were more than three to four days' travelling distance. Besides, the bishop was to implement this order, without overstepping its limitations, with particular care during the quinquennial period of its validity.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., 255, 0–42, 276–277, 0–55; David Jacoby, "The Rise of a New Emporium in the Eastern Mediterranean: Famagusta in the Late Thirteenth Century," in idem, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion*, part VIII (Northampton: Variorum Reprints, 1989), passim; Jonathan Rubin, "John of Ancona's Summae: A Neglected Source for the Juridical History of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 29 (2011–2012): 186–192.

¹² *Bullarium*, II, ed. Schabel, 292–294, p. 3; Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1992), 127.

The testimonies given by witnesses at the trial of the Templars, that on Cyprus took place in the years 1310–1311, falls outside the chronological scope of this paper. Since, however, some of the testimonies contain material shedding light on relations between the Templars and the secular clergy on Cyprus during the period antedating their arrest in 1307 these will be discussed here. These testimonies were submitted by members of the secular clergy between 1–5 June 1310. A total of seventeen members of the secular clergy testified. Eight of them stated the number of years they had spent with the Order, the shortest length of time stated being five years, the longest 40 years, one of eight years and another five of the secular clergy declaring between fourteen and eighteen years spent with the order. Those witnesses giving testimony on the Templars' religious and charitable activities all responded positively. Much of their testimony with regard to these two issues was general. Nevertheless, some of the secular clergy offering additional testimony to substantiate their claims reveal the long-standing relations they had with Templars on Cyprus.¹³

Robert the titular bishop of Beirut, who testified on 2 June 1310, supported his claims that the Templars believed in the sacraments of the altar and the church, took communion, believed in the Eucharist and adored the body of Christ by citing the fact that he had lived with them for 40 years. As a priest he had administered communion to many brothers of the Order and saw them take it with devotion. Lawrence of Beirut who had a benefice in the church of Nicosia likewise mentioned his eighteen years of co-habitation with the Templars to substantiate his testimony of 2 June 1310 that their religious beliefs concerning the sacraments, adoration of the cross and the pronouncing of the canon of the mass by the priest-chaplains of the Order were above reproach. He stated that whilst living with the Templars he had confessed at least 60 brothers and had administered communion to them. James Symeonis the archdeacon of Beirut similarly offered positive testimony on the same date, justifying his positive assessment of the Templars' religious beliefs and practices and their charitable actions by pointing out how he had lived with them in Cyprus and abroad, having himself administered communion to them in Barletta.¹⁴

The priest John Frisoni testifying on 2 June 1310 offered the most detailed description of his long-standing relations with the Templars on Cyprus. He had lived with Peter Dudo, a Templar brother at their house in Nicosia and responsible for the finances of the Templar church of Nicosia, for eight years as his chaplain.

¹³ *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus: A Complete English Edition*, ed. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 1998), 406–409, 410–417, 418–419, 421–422, 423–426.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 409–411.

During that time, he had heard his confession four times a year and had given him communion. Furthermore, Brother Peter had requested him to celebrate and say mass for him daily, and he also wished to hear the ecclesiastical office every day. John Frisoni added that he had stayed for four years with the Templars as a cleric of their house, in which period of time he witnessed them celebrating mass, receiving the sacraments and hearing the divine offices with great devotion. The priest Paschal, a former treasurer of the church of Beirut living in Nicosia, supported his assertion that the Templars believed in the Eucharist by recounting how fourteen years ago he had seen three Templar brothers receive communion in Famagusta devoutly. The priest Nicholas of Vienne likewise backed up his testimony that the Templars believed in the Eucharist by citing his residence in the Templar house in Nicosia for 14 years. During that time, he had witnessed them receiving communion from his hands with devotion and had heard the confessions of numerous Templar brothers.¹⁵

Philip Bonjoury, who was beneficed in the church of Famagusta, submitted his testimony on 4 June 1310. He cited the evidence of his eyes to support the positive testimonies he gave regarding the Order. He stated his belief that the Templars believed in the sacraments, citing as evidence how 'many, many years ago now' he had seen numerous Templars come to the church in Famagusta, hearing masses and the divine offices with devotion. To support his belief that the priest-chaplains of the Order spoke the words of the canon of the mass through which the body of Christ is consecrated he recounted how he had seen them in Limassol celebrate mass devoutly in the Templar church. In refuting the accusation that the Templars did not offer charity he stated that he had seen the Templars offer alms generously in the houses in Famagusta and in Limassol, describing how they had offered bread, meat and dishes of food to the poor. He also specified that this had occurred fourteen years ago.¹⁶ The testimonies discussed above show that there existed secular clergy on Cyprus who had long standing relations with the Templar Order and with individual Templars, going back very many years. These clergy heard Templar confessions, offered them communion, witnessed them attend mass, celebrate the divine offices and perform acts of charity on a regular basis. It is hardly surprising that their overall testimony with regard to the Templars on Cyprus was favourable.

¹⁵ Ibid., 412–414.

¹⁶ Ibid., 425–426.

THE TEMPLARS AND THE REGULAR CLERGY ON CYPRUS

The Templars formed part of the regular clergy but had fewer contacts on Cyprus with the other branches of the regular Latin clergy than with their secular counterparts. This can be attributed in part to the silence of the sources. This phenomenon is an obstacle to understanding the nature of relations developed between the Templars and the regular Praemonstratensian and Cistercian communities on Cyprus, and also in Latin Syria. All recorded contacts, moreover, are from the second half of the thirteenth century. One issue arising at that time was the obligation of the Templars and of other military orders to pay general taxes the papacy demanded from the church, known as clerical tenths. On 9 February 1256 Pope Alexander IV in a letter to the abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Jubin in Syria specifically exempted the Templars and Hospitallers in the kingdom of Cyprus and the principality of Antioch from granting one tenth of their incomes to Opizo the Latin patriarch of Antioch for the defence of Qusair castle, an important fortress in the principality that was under threat on account of Muslim attacks. The pope had ordered one tenth of all ecclesiastical incomes of the secular and regular branches of the Latin churches in Cyprus and Antioch to be paid to the patriarch over the next three years.¹⁷

Exemption from payment of clerical tenths was not normally granted to military orders in the second half of the thirteenth century. In the 1280s the popes Martin IV and Nicholas IV instructed them to pay tenths imposed to support the Angevins of Naples after the Sicilian Vespers of 1282, as a result of which the Angevins had lost Sicily. Pope Martin IV also required tenths from the Orders to finance the French crusade against the kingdom of Aragon. But the Orders were not requested to pay such taxes when they were levied to assist the Holy Land. The exemption granted in 1256 to the Templars and Hospitallers probably took into account the very important role they played both in financing the defence of the Latin possessions in the Holy Land and manning important castles there. To the north of Tripoli, the Templars acquired the great castles of Chastel Blanc sometime before 1152 and of Tortosa in that year, and to the south of Tripoli they acquired Safed in 1168 and built Athlit with crusader help in 1218. In the north the Hospitallers acquired the castles of Crak des Chevaliers in 1144 and Marqab in 1186, while in the south they acquired Belvoir in 1168. From 1243 onwards, the Military Orders became increasingly powerful in Latin Syria. They alone had

¹⁷ *Bullarium*, I, ed. Schabel, 477–479, f–19; Claverie, *L'Ordre du Temple*, 2: 182.

the money to recruit European knights to come and serve there for long periods of time and to keep the major fortresses in a state of military readiness.¹⁸

One noteworthy agreement of the later thirteenth century was that concluded by the Templars with the other major military Orders, the Teutonic knights and the Hospitallers on 9 October 1258. This agreement was reached according to the text because the Orders party to it were frequently in dispute among themselves over goods and rights pertaining to their houses in the kingdoms of Jerusalem, Cyprus and Armenia, the principality of Antioch and the county of Tripoli. As a result, the integrity of their religion was being dishonoured and the bonds of affection between them were being undermined, to no small detriment of the Holy Land. Having deliberated over this carefully they had on the advice of trustworthy men decreed in harmony and unanimity that whenever an issue of this kind over goods and rights might arise between them a suitable person from among the brothers of each order should be chosen by his preceptor to resolve such disputes amicably, so that whatever the chosen brothers, or two out of three, might decide so as to resolve and settle the dispute in a friendly manner should be followed by the parties concerned inviolably, the masters, preceptors and convents having taken oaths in person and having determined suitable penalties with this end in mind, as the letters composed over this issue were said to contain more fully. If disputes of this kind arose among military orders on Cyprus they are unrecorded. In consequence, the relations between the Templars and the other military orders on the island concerning such conflict resolution cannot be discussed. Nevertheless, the inclusion of Cyprus meant that if such disputes arose there these could be resolved in line with the provisions of the agreement.¹⁹

This agreement made by the military orders to resolve disputes over property and goods resembles previous agreements made with the same end in mind by various military orders based in the Iberian Peninsula. The orders of the Temple, the Hospital and Santiago concluded such an agreement in the kingdom of Leon in 1178 and in 1224 the orders of Santiago and Calatrava together with those of the Templars and the Hospitallers reached an agreement over procedures of arbitration in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon. In practice the provisions for arbitration made in the agreements concluded in the Iberian Peninsula were frequently ignored, the disputes in question being settled by other means. The agreement of 1258 made regarding the Latin East was exceptional in that it was implemented

¹⁸ Hans E. Mayer, *The Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 163, 277–278; Barber, *The New Knighthood*, 81, 129.

¹⁹ *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, vol. 2, ed. Joseph Delaville Le Roulx (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894–1906), no. 2902.

in 1260, when two Templars, two Hospitallers and one member of the Teutonic Order were arbitrators in a dispute between the orders of the Temple and the Hospital over rights in the lordship of Margat. Yet the issues covered by the agreement of 1258 were limited, as they excluded disputes over castles, *casalia* and towns. The issues covered according to the text of the agreement were goods and rights (*bonis et iuribus*) of the Orders in dispute. Perhaps this referred to goods and their movement. The dispute of 1257 between the Teutonic Order and bishop of Acre was resolved when the Order agreed to pay the bishop one silver mark per annum and to give him one fifteenth of the produce of its *casalia* in his diocese, after carriage charges incurred for marketing these goods had been deducted.²⁰

Because of the limitations of the 1258 agreement another agreement covering disputes over all issues arising in Latin Syria between the orders of the Temple and the Hospital was reached in 1262. Such disputes were henceforth placed under the arbitration of the Bishop of Bethlehem, the Grand Commander of the Teutonic Order and the constable and seneschal of the kingdom of Jerusalem. The appointment of secular clergy and lay persons as arbitrators indicates that the military orders felt unable to resolve disputes arising between them by themselves and without recourse to outside clergy. Pope Gregory X confirmed the agreement of 1258 on 13 March 1275, but the utility of his confirmation was limited. The principality of Antioch had fallen to the forces of the Mamluk sultan Baybars on 18 May 1268. Furthermore, in 1271 Baybars took the Templar fortress of Chastel Blanc, the Hospitaller fortresses of Crak des Chevaliers and Akkar and the Teutonic fortress of Montfort.²¹

One way to supplement the exiguous evidence on relations between the Templars and other branches of the regular Latin Church is by examining the evidence given during the Trial of the Templars that took place the years 1310–1311 by the religious of other branches of the regular Latin clergy who had served in the Order of the Temple. Six members of the regular clergy offered testimony at the trial. Most of the testimony submitted consists of answers to the specific accusations against the Order. Certain parts of this testimony, however, reveal their relations with the Templar Order and its members in the years before the Templars' arrest in 1307 throughout Europe and the trial of the Order's members in Cyprus and other countries. Brother Bartholomew, the abbot of the monastery of St Augustine of the Praemonstratensian Order at Episkopia, present day Bellapais near Kyrenia,

²⁰ Alan Forey, "Procedures for the Settlement of Disputes between Military Orders in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Ordines Militares Colloquia Torunensia Historica. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders* 19 (2014): 29–35; Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 302.

²¹ *Bullarium*, II, ed. Schabel, 95–96, i–111; Mayer, *The Crusades*, 281–282; Barber, *The New Knighthood*, 160.

stated in his testimony given on 5 May 1310 his belief that the Templars did and continued to believe in the Sacraments. On asked to explain his belief, he stated that he himself had seen them behave in their acts honestly and devoutly like other Christians, both in church and outside, and had seen them hear mass with the same degree of devotion. This testimony, apart from refuting the accusation that the Templars did not believe in the sacraments, affirms that the Templars attended church along with members of other religious Orders, acting devoutly in church but also outside in the presence of other religious.²²

Some of the testimony submitted indicates that the Templars on Cyprus gave alms generously to members of other religious orders. Francis the prior of the church of St Julian in Nicosia of the Order of the Crucifers, a valetudinarian order of religious founded in the thirteenth century, offered testimony on 4 June 1310. He stated his conviction that the Templars believed in the sacraments. When refuting the accusation that the Templars did not practise charity he stated that he had seen them dispense charity at their house in Acre prior to its capture by the Muslims. In addition, he himself used to receive three days a week from the Templars offerings of bread, wheat and wine for the hospital of St Julian. It transpires from the testimony of Brother Francis that he knew them for at least two decades, given that the Muslims took Acre in 1291, and that he continued to have regular contact with them in Cyprus, where the Order is attested by 1300, although the exact time of their arrival is unknown. Another religious who affirmed that the Templars dispensed charity was the Dominican brother Baldwin of Ghent, prior of the Dominican Order in Nicosia. He stated on 4 June 1310 that he had witnessed the Templars give alms generously in Cyprus, both in Nicosia and Limassol to the Dominican order and its friars both cities, who received bread, wine and money at the houses of the Order of the Temple. He had first witnessed this sixteen years ago and the almsgiving by the Templar Order had continued since then for many years. Furthermore, he stated that he had seen the Templars act similarly in France, showing that the charity offered in Cyprus can be placed in a wider context. From the Dominican prior's deposition at the trial it is clear that he had known them from 1294 onwards. His testimony on the relations between Templars and Dominicans, who as mendicant friars must have appreciated greatly the liberal almsgiving that the Templars had offered them over the years, in Cyprus and France, was strongly favourable to the Order. He added that he had witnessed the Templars receive and house in their houses religious and others, evidence that

²² *The Trial*, ed. Gilmour-Bryson, 74–75.

the Order offered hospitality as well as charity to the clergy of other religious orders.²³

The Templars on Cyprus had recourse to members of other religious Orders when giving the sacrament of confession, as appears from the testimony of various witnesses belonging to the regular and secular clergy, and even from a layman. The Templar rule forbade Templars from making confession to priests not belonging to the Order, stating by way of justification that the Templars did not need permission to see the Order's chaplain brothers and that they had more power to absolve them on the pope's behalf than an archbishop. But in practice this injunction was never strictly enforced. During the trial of the Templars in the Auvergne in southern France the Templar brother Bartholomew Vassales likewise acknowledged that sacramental absolution could be solicited from Templar, Carmelite or other priests once permission for this had been granted. William of Jubail, a priest originating from Latin Syria who submitted testimony on 2 June 1310, stated that he had been at the Templar house in Acre for 15 years and had seen them confess 'regularly and frequently' to Franciscans and Dominicans, as well as taking communion from them, although he stated clearly that he had seen this in Acre, not in Cyprus. Another secular priest resident in Nicosia named Nicholas of Vienne who had served them as a priest for 14 years declared on 4 June 1310 that he had seen Templars confessing to Franciscan and Dominican friars, as well as to others. Balian of Mirabel, a knight of Famagusta who testified on the same day, stated that he had heard from a Carmelite friar named Adam resident in Nicosia that he had often heard the confessions of Templars, to whom he had administered confession in Nicosia. He stated that he had heard this many years ago, and his testimony reveals that Carmelites as well as Franciscans and Dominicans administered confession to the Templars.²⁴

The abovementioned Dominican prior Baldwin of Ghent also stated in his testimony that Dominican friars whose names he could not recall had told him that the Templars confessed their sins to them frequently. Another Dominican witness affirming that the Templars confessed to Carmelite friars was Nicholas of Marsilia, lector at the Dominican house in Nicosia and probably identical to the Dominican Nicholas of Marsilly, a royal counsellor and chaplain who testified at

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 413–414, 416–417, 436; *The Rule of the Templars*, trans. Judith M. Upton-Ward (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 79, no. 269, 141, no. 542; Karl Borchardt, "Confession to Non-Ordained Brethren as one of the Causes for the Suppression of the Templars in 1312?" in *Bausteine zur deutschen und italienischen Geschichte: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Horst Enzensberger*, ed. Maria Stuber and Michele Spadaccini (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2014), 40–42.

the trial. He stated that he had heard that the Templars were instructed by their superiors not to confess to persons other than to Templar priest-chaplains and to some Carmelites, but that he could not remember who had told him this, nor could he remember the names of the Carmelites who administered confessions to the Templars. This directly contradicts the testimony of the Dominican prior stated above, and suggests that Templars may have fallen victim to some rivalry between the Dominicans and the Carmelites. The Carmelites founded houses in both Nicosia and Famagusta in the early fourteenth century and were growing in importance on Cyprus. Furthermore, within a wider European context they began developing a provincial system of education at the close of the thirteenth century and were producing distinguished theologians in the first half of the fourteenth.²⁵

CONCLUSION

It emerges clearly from the above examination of the relations that the Templars developed on Cyprus with the secular clergy of the Latin Church as well as with other branches of the regular clergy that with few exceptions, such as alleged Templar complicity in defrauding the secular church of tithes, their relations with other branches of the Latin Church were good. As an exempt Order accountable solely to the pope they enjoyed papal support throughout the thirteenth century and right up to their arrest in 1307. This comes through from examining papal correspondence regarding the Order and its relations with both secular and regular clergy. The exiguous evidence for relations between the Templars and other branches of the Latin regular church on Cyprus, including other military orders such as the Hospitallers and the Teutonic knights, can be attributable to the silence of the sources but also perhaps to the lack of any contentious issues arising on Cyprus that could affect their relations. Papal support for the Templars on Cyprus continued after 1277 when they came into conflict with King Hugh III of Cyprus over their espousal of Angevin claims to the kingdom of Jerusalem and when the relocation of the Order from Latin Syria to Cyprus strained its relations with Hugh's successor King Henry II after 1291. It was this support that strengthened the Templars in their relations with other branches of the Latin Church, enabling them to stay on good terms with them. Papal ceased abruptly in 1307 with the

²⁵ *The Trial*, ed. Gilmour-Bryson, 437–439; Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus 1195–1312* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1997), 217–218; Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 26–28.

arrest of the Templars in Cyprus and throughout Roman Catholic Europe, which set in motion judicial processes culminating in the Order's dissolution in 1312.

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