

THE 'TEMPLAR OF TYRE'

PAUL F. CRAWFORD

CRUSADE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

About the Volume:

The crusading movement, which originated in the eleventh century and lasted beyond the sixteenth, bequeathed to its future historians a legacy of sources which are unrivalled in their range and variety. These sources document in fascinating detail the motivations and viewpoints, military efforts and spiritual lives, of the participants in the crusades. They also narrate the internal histories of the states and societies which crusaders established or supported in the many regions where they fought. Some of these sources have been translated in the past but the vast majority have been available only in their original language. The goal of this series is to provide a wide ranging corpus of texts, most of them translated for the first time, which will illuminate the history of the crusades and the crusader-states from every angle, including that of their principal adversaries, the Muslim powers of the Middle East.

To Peter W. Edbury
Sine qua non

The 'Templar of Tyre'

Crusade Texts in Translation

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Part III of the 'Deeds of the Cypriots'

PAUL CRAWFORD

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction	1
The ‘ <i>Templar of Tyre</i> ’ (§§237-702 of the <i>Gestes des Chiprois</i>)	15
<i>Glossary</i>	183
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	189
<i>Index</i>	191



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Regardless of the value of the contributions of others, the end result is mine, and any criticisms of its shortcomings, which are doubtless plentiful, must fall on me alone.



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Abbreviations

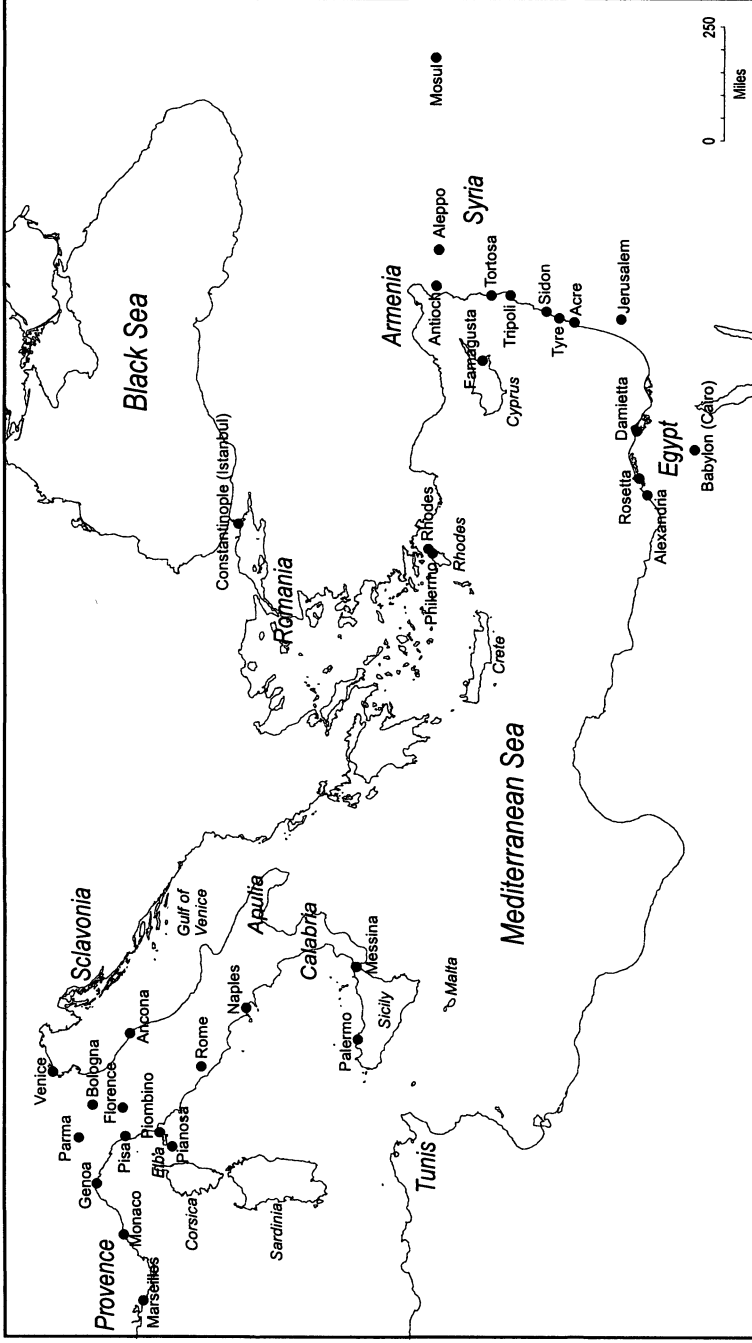
- AOL* *Archive d'Orient Latin*, ed. members of the *Société de l'Orient latin*, vol. II, Paris, 1884, repr. New York, 1971.
- Amadi* *Chronique d'Amadi*, ed. René de Mas Latrie, in *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, Paris, 1891–93, Part I (part of the series *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, Première série: histoire politique*).
- EHR* *English Historical Review*
- HC* *A History of the Crusades*, gen. ed. Kenneth Setton, 6 vols., Madison, Wisc., 1969–89.
- Minervini* *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243–1314): la caduta degli Stati Crociati nel racconto di un testimone oculare*, ed. and trans. Laura Minervini, Naples, 2000.
- Raynaud* *Les Gestes des Chiprois: recueil de chroniques françaises écrites en orient aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles (Philippe de Navarre [sic] et Gérard de Monréal)*, ed. and trans. Gaston Raynaud, Geneva, 1887.
- RHC* *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades [RHC], Documents arméniens*, vol. II, Paris, 1906, pp. 653–1012.



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Map 1 Medieval Mediterranean

** Maps prepared by the author with the kind assistance of Kazimierz Zaniewski*



Map 2 Medieval Eastern Mediterranean

** Maps prepared by the author with the kind assistance of Kazimierz Zaniewski*

Introduction

The chronicle commonly attributed to the ‘Templar of Tyre’ is the single most important surviving account of the last days of the mainland crusader states. It is, for example,¹ the only chronicle with a contemporary eyewitness account of the fall of Acre in 1291, and it is the most reliable source we possess for much of the history of the Latin East between the 1230s and 1240s, when it begins, and the early fourteenth century (it breaks off in the middle of the events of 1309, after having made reference to events in 1314²). It is the third section of a longer work known since the nineteenth century as the *Gestes des Chiprois*,³ a history which in its original form may have begun with Adam (or perhaps with the First Crusade) and ended sometime between 1314 and 1343 (probably before 1321 and almost certainly not later than 1324). As such, it lies within the tradition of the *Annales de Terre Sainte*, the ‘Annals of the Holy Land’, rather than the tradition of William of Tyre and his continuators.

Despite its importance to historians of the Crusades and of the Latin East, the ‘Templar of Tyre’ has not previously been rendered into English, although a modern edition and translation into Italian was published by Laura Minervini in 2001.⁴

¹ There is at least one other contemporary eyewitness account, a letter written by the Hospitaller Master John of Villiers, written in summer (possibly June) 1291 to the Hospitaller Commander of Provence William of Villaret. There appear to be no other accounts by eyewitnesses, though many other reports exist.

² See the discussion of the ending date of the chronicle on page 10 below, esp. n. 37.

³ See the *RHC*, p. ccxii, noting that Florio Bustron refers to Philip of Novara’s portion by this name, and extending it to the whole chronicle. The first section of the *Gestes des Chiprois* (part of which is missing) is an augmented variant of the *Annales de Terre Sainte*, now covering the years 1132–1218; the second section is based on the memoirs of Philip of Novara, covering the years 1218–43 and supplemented by the author-compiler of the *Gestes* with material from the *Annales*.

The first section has never been translated into a modern language. In 1936 John La Monte published an English translation of a hypothetical reconstruction of Philip’s original text, including (in an appendix) paragraphs which he believed to have been additions by the author of the *Gestes* (John La Monte & M. J. Hubert (trans.), *The Wars of Frederick II against the Ibelins in Syria and Cyprus*, New York, 1936). La Monte relied mostly on the reconstruction of Philip of Novara as published by Kohler in the *RHC* edition rather than Raynaud’s more straightforward edition, though he made a few emendations of his own (La Monte & Hubert, p. 6).

⁴ Laura Minervini, trans. & ed., *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243–1314)*, Naples, 2000.

The author

Although the work presented in this volume has been known for more than a century as 'The Templar of Tyre', implying that it was written by a member of the Templar Order who lived in Tyre, the text itself neither possesses a formal title nor provides any direct indication of its author; the only extant medieval copy is missing its beginning and ending folios, so the title, if any, which its author might have given it is lost. So is incontrovertible proof of its author's name.

The modern title of 'Templar of Tyre' derives from the fact that the author plainly had an association of some kind with William of Beaujeu, master of the Templars from 1273–1291. But this association is insufficient to identify the author as an actual member of the Order, since many people served with the Order in varying capacities without being fully-fledged members of it. In addition, if the author had been a member of the Order, he would almost certainly have been arrested and imprisoned in 1308 along with the other Templars who were in Cyprus, and it is fairly plain that he was not. Most authors writing after the initial discovery of the manuscript in the nineteenth century have doubted or denied that the author of the text was a Templar, though for want of a better title 'Templar of Tyre' has stuck.

Although the author's name cannot be determined conclusively, elements of his biography can be extrapolated from the chronicle. We do not know his birthplace, although it probably was Cyprus, since in 1269 the author was a *valet* or *valé*, probably a page (although the word can also mean 'squire') in the service of Margaret of Antioch-Lusignan when she married John of Montfort at Tyre.¹ Since boys ceased to serve in the capacity of pages at about age 15, we can be reasonably certain that our author was born not earlier than 1254. The author says he served Margaret for a year, so it seems reasonable to suppose that he was about 14 in 1269, with another year to go before he became a knight. This would place his birth in or about 1255.

Margaret of Antioch-Lusignan was the sister of King Hugh III of Cyprus, and married to one of the great nobles of the kingdom of Jerusalem. It therefore also seems reasonable to suppose that the author was at least of minor nobility, since a commoner would hardly have been taken into the service of such a high-born lady.

Margaret and her husband lived in Tyre – hence the association of the author with that city. As noted above, this was probably not his native city; however, the text strongly implies that the author lived in Tyre at least between 1269 and 1283.

For example, he recounts the assassination in 1270 of his lady's father-in-law, Philip of Montfort, in such vivid detail that one is forced to conclude that he was either there himself at the time it happened, or that he had an immediate and thorough report from someone who was.² He appears to have continued to live in

¹ §371.

² §374.

Tyre, whether or not in the service of the Montforts, for some time thereafter (although he appears to have witnessed a rather nasty victory celebration held in Acre by the Pisans in 1282¹). In 1283 we find him at the burial of John of Montfort, still in Tyre.²

Shortly after that, in 1285, he describes himself as being at Acre, serving the master of the Templars, William of Beaujeu, as a scribe, writing out the text of a peace treaty between the Templars and the king of Cyprus.³ He was still there the next year (1286), when the young king of Cyprus, Henry II, came to Acre to be crowned king of Jerusalem as well. The author describes the lavish festivals put on for the affair, which included cross-dressed jousts and something very like Arthurian live-action role-playing. His loving detail strongly suggests that he was personally present.⁴

Thereafter he appears as a close advisor of the Templar master: as Charles Kohler put it, a confidante and a collaborator. Again in 1286, he is found in the private counsel of the master in an interesting little affair. The prince of Antioch-Tripoli intended, in 1286, to arrest a Genoese admiral named Tommaso Spinola. A knight sent the Templar master a letter warning him of this fact; the master gave the letter, with the knight's name excised, to the author, who sent the now anonymous warning on to Spinola, saving him from arrest and imprisonment.⁵ This is a significant report, as there are also several other indications that the author may have served as a sort of private intelligence officer for William of Beaujeu.

The next personal reference is from 1288, when the author says that two merchants from Alexandria urged the sultan of Egypt to attack Tripoli, and that he could tell the reader the very names of the merchants if he chose to do so (he does supply the words with which they addressed the sultan, either by reconstruction or because he actually knew what they had said).⁶ Again in 1288, we find that Master William of Beaujeu had a spy in Egypt – not surprising, perhaps, but what is significant is that the author not only knows about it, but also knows the name of the informant, who was a highly placed Saracen emir. Furthermore, this communication was not an isolated event; the emir was in the permanent pay of the Temple and was to alert them to any dangerous moves on the part of the sultan. The fact that the exact identity of such an important spy was revealed by William of Beaujeu to the author would seem to place him in a position of great trust and confidence, privy to knowledge that only a very few people could possibly have been allowed to know.⁷ Charles Kohler even speculated that the author himself may have been a messenger between the two; as we shall see, the author spoke

¹ §412.

² §420.

³ §435.

⁴ §439.

⁵ §457.

⁶ §473.

⁷ §474.

Arabic and could have performed this office, though there is no direct evidence that he did.¹

The author next refers to himself in 1290, as the final curtain was descending on Christian Outremer. At least at one point during the correspondence carried on between Sultan Khalil al-Ashraf and the master of the Temple, the author himself translated the sultan's letters from Arabic to French for the master, demonstrating, as mentioned above, that he had command of the former language.² He was apparently *not* privy to the deliberations of the city council of Acre in 1290, as was his employer.³

During the subsequent siege of Acre in 1291, the author's description demonstrates an intimate knowledge of events. He was present on 18 May 1291, when a lightly armed William of Beaujeu led a hastily-assembled, desperate counterattack against the Saracens who were breaking in everywhere.⁴ With the master were the personnel of his household, and among them was certainly the author. He describes how the Templar troops put up a fierce fight against overwhelming odds; he gives a short but terrible picture of the death of an English *valé* who was caught in a burst of Greek fire; and he recounts the mortal injury and subsequent removal from combat of his master in such vivid detail that the reader may almost imagine himself to have been present as well.

The author then notes that some Templars, including the next master, Theobald Gaudin, were sent out of the doomed city to Sidon.⁵ His description of the events of the last ten days of dying Acre loses so much detail and accuracy compared to the account prior to that point that it seems almost certain that he accompanied these refugees. Indeed, if he had not, he would surely have perished with the thousands who died when the last centre of resistance, the Templar stronghold, fell on the twenty-eighth of May. At the least he would have been captured, but the text gives no indication that he was.

From Sidon he appears to have gone, with other refugees, to Cyprus, and after this his association with the Templars seems to have ended, a fact which almost conclusively demonstrates that he was not, in fact, a professed Templar brother.⁶ He is sharply critical of the behavior of the new master, Theobald Gaudin, blaming

¹ *RHC*, p. ccxlii.

² §485. Various Templar officers are to be provided with a 'Saracen scribe' according to the Templar Rule; see *The Rule of the Templars*, Judith Upton-Ward, trans., Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1992, §§77, 99, 110, 120, and 125. Further evidence of the author's grasp of Arabic may be found in §§310–11, 485, and 599 (in §§310–11 he has not gotten the translation precisely right, but in §599 he uses the correct word for the 'wilderness' between Syria and Egypt).

³ §481.

⁴ §498.

⁵ §509.

⁶ It was not uncommon, in any event, for secular knights to associate themselves with military orders for a time. See, for example, §392, where the secular knight Paul of La Tehaffa is on campaign with the Templars.

him for the loss of Sidon and all-but-openly accusing him of cowardice.¹ He shows no partisanship for the Templars against the Hospitallers,² and he is intimately acquainted with the privations suffered by the mainland refugees in Cyprus and with the general indifference shown to their plight by the Cypriots.³ He may have been attached in some capacity either to Philip of Ibelin or to the court of King Henry II himself; for example, in 1293 he was at Larnaca on the southern coast of Cyprus when a Venetian captain stopped by, on his way to one of the endless battles between the Most Serene Republic and her archrivals, the Genoese. The author was present at the audience King Henry gave to the captain, and reports parts of this rather insignificant conversation verbatim.⁴

After the end of 1293, the author seems to have had little direct involvement in the events he describes, although the detail and tone of his description of the combined raiding expedition of the Cypriots and military orders in 1300 do strongly suggest that he accompanied it.⁵ Much of his material after 1293 appears to be second-hand. He seems to have settled permanently in Cyprus, though there is one tantalizing hint that he might have taken a voyage to the West some time between 1293 and 1314: he gives a very precise description of what Philip the Fair looked like.⁶ Had he himself seen Philip? It is possible that he is merely repeating a second-hand description, but the account is suspiciously detailed, like the accounts of other events at which he was plainly present.

All this leaves us still without a name for the author. The nineteenth-century editors of the work suspected that he may have been a knight by the name of Gérard de Montréal, and there is some justification for this theory, though the evidence for it is not conclusive. Florio Bustron, who himself wrote a history of Cyprus in the sixteenth century, lists the *Gesti di Ciprioti* (*Gestes des Chiprois*) as one of his sources. He describes this *Gesti* as a work written by Philip of Novara, plainly referring to the middle section of the larger *Gestes des Chiprois*. Bustron goes on to say that after him (that is, after Philip of Novara), Gérard of Montréal memorialized many of the things that happened in his own time.⁷ Count Paul Riant was the first to note this attribution, in the early 1880s, and his tentative identification of the author of the 'Templar of Tyre' with Gérard of Montréal has

¹ §510.

² §678.

³ §§516 and 530.

⁴ §538.

⁵ §615–19.

⁶ §649.

⁷ Florio Bustron, *Historia overo Commentarii de Cipro di Florio Bustron*, in *Mélanges historiques. Choix de documents. Tome cinquième*, Paris, 1886 (part of the series *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France: Mélanges historiques*), p. 8.

not been seriously challenged since then, despite the fact that it is not conclusive and other interpretations of Bustron's reference exist.¹

We know a little more about Gérard: the anonymous early modern history of Cyprus owned by Francesco Amadi (whose name has become attached to that history) follows Gérard's text for that portion of the chronicle which covers the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.² Although the last pages of the 'Templar of Tyre' itself are missing, we can look to 'Amadi' for clues as to what those pages might have contained, because 'Amadi' becomes rather short on detail just after the point where the 'Templar' breaks off. 'Amadi' gives us one last glimpse of Gérard: he and another individual called William of Mirabel are involved in negotiations surrounding the return of King Henry II to Cyprus, after his brother Amalric, who had supplanted him, was murdered in June 1310.³ This bit of information almost certainly comes from the lost pages of Gérard's own chronicle.⁴

After this we have no certain knowledge of him, though there is one more tantalizing possibility. In 1531, the Venetians (who by then owned Cyprus) carried out an inquiry into Cypriot law. Their commission reported back that one Gérard de Montréal, a noted jurist, had compiled an edition of these laws, or *Assises*, and written a sort of preamble to them. The Venetians praised the work of this Gérard de Montréal highly, and translated it into Venetian for their own use.⁵

Count Paul Riant, writing in the 1880s, believed that this Gérard was the same person as the author of the 'Templar'. Charles Kohler, writing in 1906, thought it was a different person with the same name.⁶ He believed that the legal works of this Gérard of Montréal were not written until after 1369, partly because on that date a legal assembly of Cypriot lords was held but did not mention such a work, and partly because he did not think that the fourteenth-century Gérard of Montréal, author of the 'Templar', evidenced the sort of legal mind that could or would produce an edition of the *Assises*.

This seems a conclusion based on slender evidence. The author of the 'Templar' was plainly familiar with the laws of the kingdom of Jerusalem and Cyprus, as his discussion of the military responsibilities of various entities, drawn

¹ There is the possibility that Bustron was referring to the work of two different authors – that Bustron, and 'Amadi' before him, did indeed draw on the work of Gérard of Montréal, but that Gerard's work was distinct from the text of the 'Templar' and is now lost. In this case, the linkage between Gérard and the 'Templar' would disappear.

² 'Chronique d'Amadi', in *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi, Première partie*, Paris, 1896 (part of the series *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France: Première série, Histoire politique*).

³ 'Amadi', p. 345; Bustron, p. 207.

⁴ Bustron also reports the incident, but he seems essentially to have reworked 'Amadi' for the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth (i.e., the period covered by the 'Templar of Tyre') and so has little independent value here.

⁵ Louis de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan*, vol. III, Paris, 1861, pp. 517, 529.

⁶ *RHC*, ccxlii–ccxlvii.

apparently from the pages of John of Ibelin's *Assises*, clearly shows.¹ Nor does the rest of the 'Templar' display the work of a mind incapable of legal thought; for example, the author demonstrates interest in and familiarity with the terms of the royal Cypriot privileges to the Genoese, and criticizes a royal castellan for not upholding them under pressure.² However, without further evidence, which was probably destroyed by the Turks on or after their capture of Cyprus in 1571, it is impossible to reach a firm conclusion on the matter. The author of the 'Templar of Tyre' may very well have been Gérard of Montréal – but we shall have to leave it at that.

History of the manuscript

We cannot be certain of the exact date of compilation of the text of the 'Templar of Tyre'. But whenever it was that author of the 'Templar' completed his work, the manuscript, or at least a copy of it, must have been in the castle at the Cypriot town of Kyrenia in 1343. In that year, an individual known as John le Miege made a copy of it.

John le Miege may have been a doctor – 'miege' is an Old French word for 'médecin' or doctor. The word was also a fairly common general-purpose surname, however. Whatever John's profession, he somehow fell afoul of the powers-that-were in fourteenth-century Cyprus, and found himself imprisoned in the castle at Kyrenia. There he set about making a copy of the *Gestes des Chiprois* to occupy his time.

This was both fortunate and unfortunate from a historical point of view. It was fortunate, because John's copy is the only manuscript of the *Gestes* to survive. It was unfortunate, on the other hand, that John himself was the individual to wield the copyist's pen, for he appears to have been poorly educated, and he carried out his task rather sloppily. The copy appears to contain many mistakes of a number of different kinds, and there is now no certain way to know the precise original text.³

And there is presently no way to know what happened to the manuscript from which John le Miege copied, which may or may not have been the autograph; it disappears from history. Charles Kohler believed that it was likely to have been in the possession either of the lieutenant of the castellan of Kyrenia, a man named Aimery of Milmars, or else of the castellan himself.⁴ Perhaps it was still at Kyrenia

¹ §§520–21.

² §539.

³ In addition, Charles Kohler believed that John le Miege both deleted and added material; his edition of c. 1913 attempted to reconstruct the text as it had originally been (*RHC*, p. ccxxi). This is problematic, however: it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether the copyist himself made alterations, or whether he merely copied a defective exemplar faithfully.

⁴ *RHC*, p. ccxx.