

## The economical sustenance of the Order of St. Lazarus in the Kingdom of Jerusalem

Charles Savona-Ventura

---

On the 14 July 1099, Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders who founded the Kingdom of Jerusalem; a kingdom that was to remain constantly threatened by Islamic forces until the Crusaders were eventually ousted from Acre on the 14 May 1291. In Jerusalem, the Crusaders found a number of functioning establishments that had been set up in previous centuries with the aim of providing succour to pilgrims. One such establishment was the leprosarium in *Hierosolymorum eremo (agro) sanctae Mariae in Monte Olivarum* set up by Aelia Eudoxia in the fourth century AD.<sup>1</sup> In the early decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this establishment was to assume a monastic form to become the *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani*. The assumption of a link between the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the 12<sup>th</sup> century establishments was made by Pope Pius IV.<sup>2</sup>

After the capture of Jerusalem, the region became to be considered central to Christianity and the *raison d'être* of the Monastic Orders which were set up to assist pilgrims and fight off the Islamic threat. In the case of the *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* funds were needed to support the leprosarium inmates, the knights and their entourage, and the undertaking of military campaigns. This financial support was forthcoming by funds acquired from other countries in Europe either through the economic activities of the Order in Europe or direct donations from the European royalty, nobility, and the ecclesiastical establishment. The workings of this Monastic Order were

---

<sup>1</sup> Baronii C. *Annales ecclesiasticidenuo excusi et ad nostra usque tempora perducti Tomus 9 500-545*. Barri-Ducis, Guerin, 1864, pp.396-397.

Available at: <http://www.archive.org/stream/annalesecclesias09barouoft>

<sup>2</sup> Pius IV. *Interassidua Dominici.....* dated 4 May 1565. In: L. Cerubinini, A.M. Cherubino. *Magnum bullarium romanum, a Pio Quarto usque ad Innocentium IX*. P. Borde, ' Arnaud & C.I. Rigaud, Lyon, 1673, vol.2, p.136

further supported by local economic endeavors within the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

### **Urban and Rural quarters' possessions**

The *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* owned a number of establishments right along the whole length of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem: The main central quarters of the *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* were sited outside the walls of Jerusalem in western angle of the city between St. Stephen and St. David Gates – two edifices one for males near St. Stephen Gate, and one for females near David's Gate.<sup>3</sup> The building as depicted on a contemporary map suggests a cloister-type building.<sup>4</sup> In 1169-1174, the German monk Theoderic of Wurzburg wrote that "Whoever makes the circuit of the city walls, beginning the journey at the Tower of David, will find at the western angle of the city the church and dwellings of the lepers, which are handsome and kept in good order".<sup>5</sup> Assumed to have been established in the fourth century by Empress Aelia Eudoxia, possession of the building was lost after Salah al-Din recaptured Jerusalem in 1187.

St Jean d'Acre: The secondary central quarters of the *Fratres* were established outside the original walls of St. Jean d'Acre. A leprosarium is said to have been established in the fourth century by St. Basil the Great Bishop of Caesarea. However, documentary evidence of an establishment in St. Jean d'Acre dates from 1240 after the Order of the Temple leased out to the *Fratres* for an annual rent of 15 *bezants* an area in the Montmusard region bounded by the public road to the east,

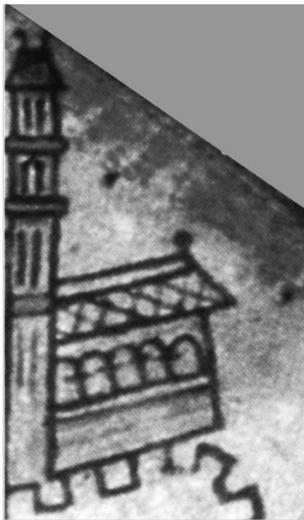
---

<sup>3</sup> *Work of Geography* (1128-1137). In: J. Wilkinson, J. Hill, W.F. Ryan. *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185*. Hakluyt Society. London, 1988, p.200; H. Dajani-Shakeel. Some Medieval accounts of Salah al-Din's recovery of Jerusalem (al-Quds). In: H. Nashabe (editor). *Studia Palaestina: Studies in honour of Constantine K. Zurayk*. Institute for Palesinian studies, Beirut, 1988

<sup>4</sup> *Cambridge bibl. Municipale, ms 466, fol.1*

<sup>5</sup> Theoderich of Wurzburg (1172). *Labellus de Locis Sanctis – Guide to the Holy Land*. Translated in: J. Wilkinson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.301

the sea to the west, the house of Saint Thomas Martyr to the north, and the lane near the house of Nicholas the Englishman to the south. The lease further allowed the brethren free access to the water cistern belonging to the House of the Temple; and further granted sovereignty over the Tower of Lazarus in the northern suburb of Montmusard.<sup>6</sup> Originally sited outside the walls of the city, the edifice became incorporated with the fortifications after these were expanded in the 1250s. The building as depicted on a contemporary map suggests a fortified-type building.<sup>7</sup> This served as the last outpost for the *Fratres* until the fall of Acre to Sultan Khalid in April 1291.



***Ecclesie Sancti Lazari***  
**Jerusalem**



***Domus militum Sancti Lazari***  
**St. Jean d'Acre**

---

<sup>6</sup> Doc. XXXIX (November 1240). In: A de Marsy. *Fragment d'un Cartulaire de l'Ordre de S. Lazare e Terre Sainte*. Institut Royal des Siurds-Nuets, Genes, 1883, pp.37-39

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Paris (1200-1259). *Ms. Roy. 14.C.VIII*, fol.4v British Library, London

Bethlehem: The *Fratres* in 1153 are reported to have had a convent in Bethlehem supported by agricultural land in the vicinity.<sup>8</sup>

Caesarea: Hugh of Caesarea, in 1160, with the consent of his spouse Isabella and his son donated to the *Fratres* freehold ownership of a garden and two adjoining houses previously owned by his brother Eustace and Armaid Gala, both members of the Order.<sup>9</sup> In 1234, Archbishop Peter of Caesarea with the consent of his chapter rented to the master of the *Fratres*, Raynaud Fleury, a house and the Church of St Laurent de Painperdu, to be used to serve the lepers and their carers against payment of eight candles.<sup>10</sup>

Ascalon: The *Fratres* owned property in Ascalon which included a house and garden. These holdings were further augmented by Count Almaric of Ascalon in 1155 by two *catuches* of land in the vicinity.<sup>11</sup>

Tiberias: The *Fratres* owned the Church of Saint Lazare in Tiberias. These holdings were further augmented by Ermengarde of Tiberias in 1154 by two *carucates* of land in Mahun and Caliphe.<sup>12</sup>

## **Agricultural holdings**

The *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* similarly owned a number of agricultural land holdings which aimed to serve and support the various houses of the Order. The management of these holdings probably followed the practice being used in France and other European countries during the Medieval Period of the Metayage System of so-called Granges. Granges were agricultural centres, possibly including other facilities such as a mill or a tithe barn, from which the monks exploited their landscape and coordinated farming and industrial work.

---

<sup>8</sup> Doc. XII (1153). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.13

<sup>9</sup> Doc. VIII (1160). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.18-19

<sup>10</sup> Doc. XXXVII (22 March 1234) and XXXVIII (1235). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.36-37

<sup>11</sup> Doc. XV (1 February 1155). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.16-17

<sup>12</sup> Doc. XIII (1154). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.14-15

These were manned by lay-brothers or lay tenants who cultivated the lands and reared livestock. The tenants were compensated by a sharecropping agreement. The granges thus supplied the monastery's food, clothing, utensils and building materials; while any surplus was sold for profit.

Two contracts, dated 1151 and 1164 respectively, tend to suggest this type of arrangement. In the former, Queen Melisende of Jerusalem donated a vineyard to the *Fratres* with the proviso that the cultivators of the land – Masters George and Salamon – retain half of the proceeds annually.<sup>13</sup> In 1164, Walter II of Brisebarre of Beirut transferred his annual share of the produce from a vineyard cultivated by Master Lambert.<sup>14</sup>

Region of Jerusalem – Bethlehem – Bethania: The larger part of the agricultural land holdings of the *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* was in the surrounding countryside of Jerusalem and other nearby villages. Throughout the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, various individuals had undertaken to support the *Fratres* by donating land holdings suitable for the sustenance of the house. The first donation mentioned in the cartulary dated to circa 1135 when the Armenian Monk Abraham donated a cistern previously owned by the prior Patriarch of Jerusalem Warmund, presumably sited in Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> In 1142, Baldwin of Caesarea donated an area of land sited between the Mount of Olives and the Red Cistern on the road that leads to the River Jordan<sup>16</sup>; while in 1148 Rainier, stepbrother to Barisan of Ibelin, donated 10 *carucates* of land outside the walls of Jerusalem.<sup>17</sup>

The *Fratres* also owned land in the surrounding region of Bethlehem and Bethania. These holdings seem to have been initiated in 1150 by the

---

<sup>13</sup> Doc. X (1151). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.12-13

<sup>14</sup> Doc. XXI (18 March 1164). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.21

<sup>15</sup> Doc. I (1130-1145). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.5

<sup>16</sup> Doc. II (1142). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.5-6

<sup>17</sup> Doc. V (1148). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.7-9

*Fratres* themselves with the purchase of 4 *carucates* of vineland on the Bethlehem plain from the Syrian sheikh Mélegan for the price of 1050 bezants and a horse.<sup>18</sup> These were subsequently supplemented by further donations of five *carucates* of land in the plain of Bethlehem with access to half of the proceeds by Queen Melisende in 1151<sup>19</sup>; and the donation of a vineyard in Bethlehem adjoining the land previously held by the *Fratres* and sited in front of the convent in 1153 by Robert of Franclieu.<sup>20</sup> In 1159, Queen Melisende donated a *gastina* in region of Bethania to sustain the care of an additional leper.<sup>21</sup>

Ascalon: The Count Amalric of Ascalon in 1155 donated two *carucates* of land in the casale of Mejesie, close to the house that the Order owned in Ascalon.<sup>22</sup>

Caesarea: Hugh of Caesarea in 1160 gave to the *Fratres* the free-hold use of a garden, besides two adjoining dwellings.<sup>23</sup>

Tiberias: Ermengarde of Tiberias in 1154 donated two *carucates* of land in the areas of Mahun and Caliphe.<sup>24</sup>

Nablus: Amalric of Ascalon confirms the donation made by Philip of Nablus in 1155 of ten *carucates* of land in the casale of Zaythar.<sup>25</sup>

Rama: Hugh of Ibelin in 1169 extended the donation made originally by Ranier Donation of land in the territory of Rama.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Doc. VII (22 June 1150) and Doc. VIII (1150). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.10-11

<sup>19</sup> Doc. X (1151). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.12-13

<sup>20</sup> Doc. XI (1151). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.13

<sup>21</sup> Doc. XVI (1159). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.17

<sup>22</sup> Doc. XV (1 Februy 1155). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.16-17

<sup>23</sup> Doc. VIII (1160). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.18-19

<sup>24</sup> Doc. XIII (1154). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.14-15

<sup>25</sup> Doc. XIV (3 July 1155). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.15-16

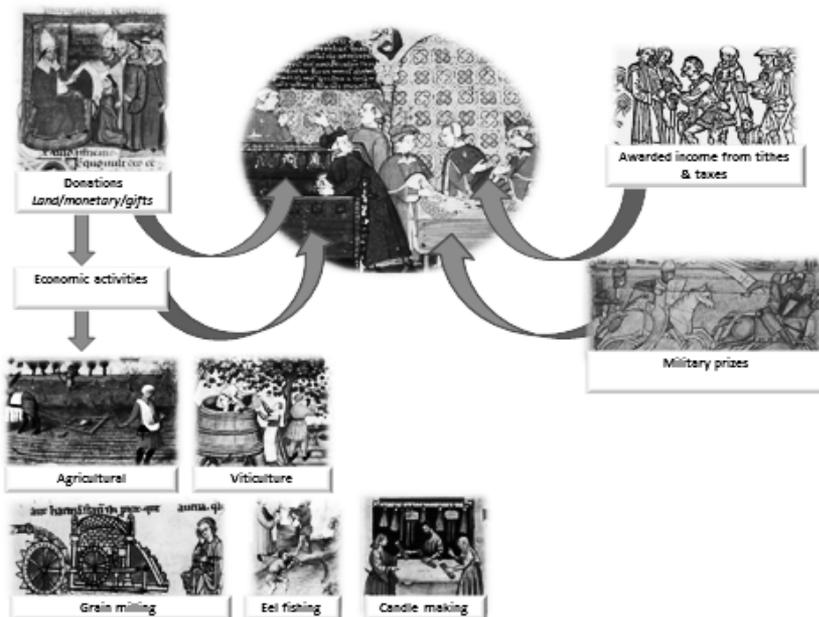
<sup>26</sup> Doc. XXV (1169). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.24-25



Buildings and land holdings  
Kingdom of Jerusalem: 1099-1291

## Economic activities

The *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* used many of the agricultural land holdings to help support their establishments and their social and military activities. The income accruing from economic activities were further supplemented by income derived from donations of tithes and taxes and from any prizes acquired during military razzias.



### **Economic activities: *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani***

Viticulture economy: Many of the agricultural holdings mentioned in the various contracts pertaining to the *Fratres* were identified as being cultivated as vineyards. Thus in Jerusalem, the *Fratres* in 1144 transformed the land donated by Baldwin of Caesarea in 1142 into a vineyard<sup>27</sup>; this being supplemented in 1153 by a donation from Robert

<sup>27</sup> Doc. III (1144). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.6-7

of Franclieu of adjoining vineyard land.<sup>28</sup> In the Bethlehem Plain, the *Fratres* in 1150 purchased four *carucates* of vineyard land<sup>29</sup>, which land was in 1151 further augmented by five *carucates* of land donated by Queen Melisende.<sup>30</sup>

Besides the produce grown on land belonging to the *Fratres*, further grapes or wine was obtained by direct donation of produce. Thus, Humphrey II of Toron and his heirs in 1148 committed themselves to the donation of ten quintals of grapes annually to the Order.<sup>31</sup> In 1160, Hugh of Corbeil and his heirs committed themselves to the annual donation of thirty litres of wine annually, the amount being increased to fifty litres after the death of Hugh.<sup>32</sup> Walter II Brisebarre of Beirut in 1164 committed himself to donate half the vintage from a vineyard cultivated by Master Lambert<sup>33</sup>; while Adam the Elder and his heirs in 1186 committed themselves to donate fifty litres of wine annually made from a vineyard owned at Terre-Blanche; and a further twenty-five litres made from a vineyard at Chanterperdriz.<sup>34</sup>

Other supporting agricultural activities: It appears likely that the *Fratres* had other economic activities to support their establishments. In 1151, mention is made of a mill owned by the Order sited outside Porta Davide in Jerusalem. This was removed against compensation by Queen Melisende since it obstructed access to the city.<sup>35</sup> The two other Monastic Orders in Jerusalem both had functioning mills throughout the Kingdom. Another source of income was from eel fishing. In 1216, Prince Rupin of Antioch confirmed a donation made by his ancestor Bohemond of an annual donation of 1000 eels captured from Antioch every

---

<sup>28</sup> Doc. XI (1153). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.13

<sup>29</sup> Doc. VIII (1150). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.10-11

<sup>30</sup> Doc. X (1151). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.12-13

<sup>31</sup> Doc. VI (1148). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.9

<sup>32</sup> Doc. XIX (March 1160). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.19-20

<sup>33</sup> Doc. XXI (18 March 1164). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.21

<sup>34</sup> Doc. XXXI (30 October 1186). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.30-31

<sup>35</sup> Doc. X (1151). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.12-13

September.<sup>36</sup> Another economic activity prevalent in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, possibly by the *Fratres* themselves, was apiculture and candle production. In 1235, Archbishop Peter of Caesarea donated property to the Order on condition of an annual payment of eight candles.<sup>37</sup>

Prizes from Military razzias: The participation in military expeditions was also a fruitful source of income through prizes being captured during the campaign. In 1164, King Amauri of Jerusalem gave his permission for the *Fratres* to keep as a prize one of the captured slaves during any of the expeditions led by the king, provided that the king himself kept ten captives and provided the captive was not a dignitary soldier presumably because the latter would be used for ransom.<sup>38</sup> This donation document suggests that the *Fratres* undertook military activity by the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This is further confirmed by the Letters Patent made in 1155 by King Henri II of England in favour of the *Chevaliers & Freres de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem*.<sup>39</sup>

Participation in a military razzia by the *Fratres* led by their master in 1253 during the Syrian campaign under King Louis IX has been documented by John of Joinville who wrote that “whilst the King was encamped by Jaffa, the Master of Saint Lazarus had got wind at Ramah, three good leagues from the camp, of some cattle and other things, where he thought he might make a good haul”. This nearly ended in disaster.<sup>40</sup>

Donations, tithes & taxes: Another important source of income to help maintain the *Fratres* were commitments for regular or once only monetary donations. A number of these have been recorded in the

---

<sup>36</sup> Doc. XXXII (1 September 1216). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.31-32

<sup>37</sup> Doc. XXXVII (22 March 1234) and XXXVIII (1235). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.36-37

<sup>38</sup> Doc. XXII (25 April 1164). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.22

<sup>39</sup> Doc. III (1155). In: P.E.G. de Sibert. *Histoire des Ordres Royaux, Hospitaliers-Militaires de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel, et de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem*. Royal press, Paris, 1772

<sup>40</sup> John of Joinville. *Memoirs of John of Joinville*. Supplement 20 I 6 ms. In: Bibliothèque Royal dated c.1305

cartulary of the Order over the period 1147-1266. In 1147, Bishop Roger of Rama donated half of the income from a *casal* in the territory of Rama.<sup>41</sup> Definite annual sums were donated to the *Freres* by various members of the royalty and nobility. The annual sum of 30 *besants* to be paid on the Feast of St. Hilary [14 January] obtained from the taxes imposed in the region of Toron was committed by Humphrey II of Toron in 1151, this being reconfirmed by Princess Alis of Toron in 1234<sup>42</sup>; while Geoffrey of Tort in 1159 committed the annual sum of 20 *besants* from revenue obtained from owned land payable on Christmas day.<sup>43</sup> In 1164, Marie of Beirut committed the annual sum of 15 *besants*, derived from revenue obtained from the *casal* of Muscaqui<sup>44</sup>; Beirut Walter III of Montréal in 1168 further committed the annual sum of 40 *besants* taken from tax revenue on money-changing rights<sup>45</sup>; while in 1170 Walter of Galilee committed the annual sum of 8 *besants* taken from taxes collected in Tiberias, payable in middle of April.<sup>46</sup>

In 1171, King Amalric of Jerusalem committed the annual donation of 50 *besants* specifically with the aim of supporting the care of a leper in the *Frates* establishment.<sup>47</sup> Shortly before the fall of Jerusalem to Salah al-Din, Count Raymond of Tripoli in 1185 committed himself to an annual donation of 20 *besants* obtained on the *funda* of Tripoli, payable on the Feast of Purification of Our Lady [2 February].<sup>48</sup> In 1174, Walter of Beirut committed 40 *besants* annually obtained from tax revenue of the chain of Acre and the *assise*<sup>49</sup>; while in 1183 Humphrey IV committed 20

---

<sup>41</sup> Doc. IV (September 1147). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.6

<sup>42</sup> Doc. IX (May 1151) and Doc. XXXVI (November 1234). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.11-12;35

<sup>43</sup> Doc. XVII (1159). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.18

<sup>44</sup> Doc. XXIII (16 August 1164). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.23

<sup>45</sup> Doc. XXIV (18 November 1168). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.23-24

<sup>46</sup> Doc. XXVI (1170). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.25-26

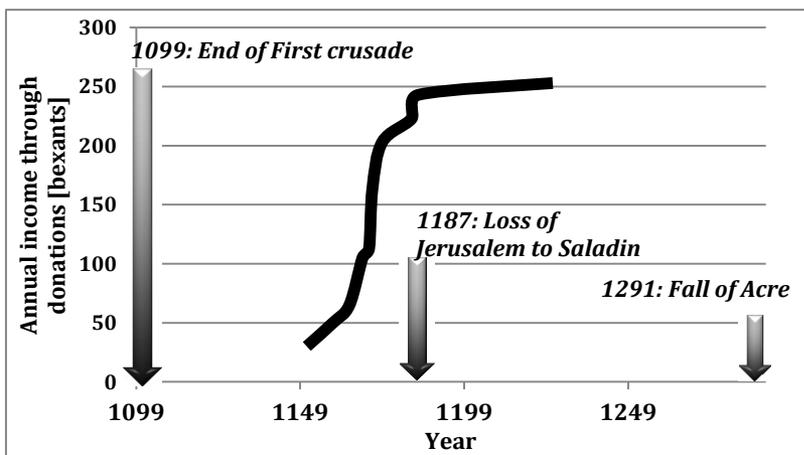
<sup>47</sup> Doc. XXVIII (24 February 1171). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.27-28

<sup>48</sup> Doc. XXX (December 1185). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.29-30

<sup>49</sup> Doc. XXVII (4 February 1171) and Doc. XXXV (October 1228). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.26-27; 34-35

*besants* annually, obtained from the custom tax in Acre.<sup>50</sup> Both these donations were reconfirmed by Emperor Frederic II in 1228.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, further monetary donations were acquired by the *Fratres*. The frequency and amount of the donations, however, decreased substantially. The only substantial donation of 10 *besants* annually obtained from revenue from the Baruth Gate, payable in Easter, appears to have been made in 1226 by Walter II Brisebarre, the donation being confirmed by Jean of Ibelin.<sup>51</sup> Other donations included that made by Stephan of Salerno in 1248 of a pension of ten *setas* to admit his son Austorge as a brother of the Order<sup>52</sup>; and the donation of items of clothing by Count Odo of Nemours in 1266.<sup>53</sup> No further donations were acquired after Sultan Baybars took Antioch in 1268, and Sultan Qalawun retook Tripoli in 1289.



**Accumulative annual income through monetary donations**

<sup>50</sup> Doc. XXIX (21 April 1183) and Doc. XXXIV (October 1288). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, pp.28-29;32-33

<sup>51</sup> Doc. XXXIII (6 March 1226). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.32

<sup>52</sup> Doc. XL (about 1248). In: A de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.39

<sup>53</sup> Barber M. The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades. *The Catholic Historical Review*, 1994, 80(3):p.448

## Conclusion

The cartulary confirms that during the first century of its existence the *Fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani* received sufficient benefices to maintain an economic stability to allow it to carry out its primary function of caring for those afflicted with leprosy and to participate in military campaigns. However, after the loss of land suffered at the hands of Salah al-Din in 1187, land and monetary donations dwindled and foreign support became more necessary. These came in direct monetary donations such as the 2000 marks given by King Philippe-Auguste of France in 1223<sup>54</sup>, or in exchange of indulgences promulgated by Papal Bulls of Pope Gregory IX in 1234 who offered a 28-day indulgence to those giving alms<sup>55</sup> and Pope Alexander IV in 1255 who provided a 100-day indulgence and income up to 200 marks of silver from the remission of crusading vows.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Hyacinthe R. *L'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem au Moyen Age*. Conservatoire Larzac Templier et Hospitalier, Millau, 2003, p.30

<sup>55</sup> Gregorie IX. *Universos fideles monet et bortatur ut...* dated 14 January 1234. In: L. Auvray (Ed.). *Les registres de Gregoire IX* (series 2, vol.1:p.942). BÉFAR, Paris, 1896-1907

<sup>56</sup> Alexander IV. *Cum á nobis petitur...* dated 11 April 1255. In: L. Cherubini & A.M. Cherubino. *Magnum bullarium romanum, a B. Leone Magno usque ad S.D.N. Innocentium X*. P. Borde, L. Arnaud & C.I. Rigaud, Lyon, 1655, vol.1, pp.131-132