

Gérard Lagleder



**Blessed Gérard
and his “Everlasting Brotherhood”:**

**The Hospitaller Order of
Saint John of Jerusalem**



Its founding and spiritual roots



***Dedicated to the “holy sick, our lords,”
and to all those who carry the spirit
of Blessed Gérard into the world
through selfless acts of service
under the Maltese cross.***

Table of contents

Forewords	5
INTRODUCTION : The legacy of the Order of St. John	8
PART I Historical Overview	10
1. Framework Conditions	10
Excursus: Scala & Amalfi	13
Excursus: Santa Maria Latina	29
3. Blessed Gérard Founder of the Order	47
Excursus: Baldwin I (1100–1118):	56
Excursus: Baldwin II (1118–1131)	57
Excursus: Baldwin III (1143–1162)	58
Excursus: Burial site and relics of Blessed Gérard	67
4. Blessed Raymond du Puy , author of the monastic rule	84
5. Further Development of the Order of St. John in Jerusalem.....	102
a. Grandmaster Frà Auger de Balben (1160 – 1162).....	102
b. Grandmaster Frà Arnaud de Comps (1162 – 1163).....	104
c. Grandmaster Frà Gilbert d'Assailly (1163 – 1170).....	106
d. Grandmaster Frà Gaston de Murols (1170 – 1172).....	109
e. Grandmaster Frà Jobert of Syria (1172 – 1177)	111
f. Grandmaster Frà Roger de Moulins (1177– 1187).....	115
6. The revival of hospitality in the Holy Land	125
a. The Hospital of the Holy Family in Bethlehem	125
b. The St. John Eye Clinic in Jerusalem	128
c. The Johanniter Order's Hospice in Jerusalem	131
Part II	134
A. The spirituality of the Order of St. John.....	134
1. Sources : The Order's Rule and Statutes.....	134
2. Spiritual Foundations and Spirituality in the Rule of the Order	145
a. The Image of God	145
b. The Liturgy	145
c. The Sacraments	146
d. The Image of Humanity	147
e. Asceticism	149
f. The Veneration of Saints	150
Excursus: The saints and blessed of the Order in the period up to 1187	157

g. The works of charity.....	166
Hospitality as the core task of the order	166
Glimmers of hope in the history of the order: New sources discovered	176
"The Vassals of Christ" (CML 4620):	176
"God's Host" (Vat. Lat. 4852)	182
B. Sources of spiritual Traditional goods.....	190
C. The New in the Spiritual Tradition.....	194
1. The vow of chastity	194
2. "Arme Christi" / <i>"pauperes Christi"</i>	196
3. Hospitality	198
4. The Origin of the Rule of the Order of St. John.....	201
D. The Influence of the Order	202
CONCLUSION AND VISION	215
PART III The rule of the Order of St. John.....	216
THE RULE OF THE BLESSED RAIMUND DU PUY	219
STATUTES OF FRÈRE JOBERT 1172-7	226
A. THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1176.....	226
"Bread Ordinance"	226
B. THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1177.....	227
"Church Ordinance"	227
STATUTES OF FRÈRE ROGER DE MOULINS 1177-87	229
THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1181	229
"Hospital Regulations" of March 14 (1182 or) 1181 Part One.....	229
"Hospital regulations" of March 14 (1182 or) 1181 Part Two	232
epilogue.....	234
Closing remarks.....	236
Bibliography.....	237
Attachment.....	250

Forewords

Foreword to the new edition (2026)

The printed second edition of my work, "Die Ordensregel der Johanniter/Malteser", is still available, but outdated. In recent years, I have translated the text into English, extensively revised it, and supplemented it with a wealth of illustrations. This version has been continuously updated on our platform, <http://blessed-gerard.org>.



Image 1 ➔

Instead of simply reprinting the original book version, I decided to fundamentally revise and expand the extended English version, translate it back into German, and publish it again as an electronic edition alongside the English version at <http://blessed-gerard.org>. I used Google's artificial intelligence as an editing tool and for stylistic optimization.

This non-commercial publication aims solely to illuminate the enduring significance of Blessed Gérard and his foundation, the Order of St. John. It is my hope to reach and motivate people to put the ideals of Blessed Gérard, as well as those of the Orders of St. John and Malta, into practice in their own lives.

Regarding the numerous images, I have made every effort to ensure correct source attribution. Should any copyrights have been inadvertently overlooked despite careful review, please inform me; the relevant content will be removed immediately in accordance with copyright law.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Rotraut Krall for numerous corrections and suggestions.

I hope you will find reading this rewarding. Since this work makes no claim to infallibility, I am always grateful for expert comments, additions, or corrections sent to bgt@bbg.org.za.

Warm greetings from Mandeni, South Africa, on the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Blessed Gérard's Church on September 3, 2026

Yours most sincerely

Father Gérard T. Lagledes O.S.B.

Founder and leader of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

¹Image: On March 4, 2011, I had the opportunity to examine the original manuscript of the oldest Latin version of the monastic rule, with which I had been studying so intensively, in the State Archives of the Canton of Aargau in Aarau, Switzerland.

Preface to the
revised German print version:

Gerhard Tonque Lagleder:

Die Ordensregel der Johanniter/Malteser.

Die geistlichen Grundlagen des Johanniter-/Malteserordens, mit einer Edition und Übersetzung der drei ältesten Regelhandschriften.

EOS Publishing House of the Archabbey of St.

Ottilien. 1983 (ISBN 3-88096-151-4)

[2nd revised edition 1994]

It is with great pleasure that I present this study on the spiritual foundations of the Orders of St. John and Malta to the public. The work is based on my theological diploma thesis, which was submitted to the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Regensburg on September 1, 1980. The original title was: "The New in the Spiritual Tradition of the Order of St. John: An Investigation and Presentation of the Spiritual Foundations of the Order of St. John, its Tradition, and Independent Elements."

Since receiving numerous requests for publication, I have decided to release this work. This study is primarily aimed at members of all organisations serving under the Order of Malta, to help them gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual foundation of their work. For this publication, the text has been completely revised: in particular, the first part has been made more accessible, current scientific findings have been integrated, and the third part has been restructured.

A crucial contribution to the discovery of the sources came from my family: My brother Johannes Lagleder and especially my father, retired director of studies Hans Lagleder, made the essential part of the transcription and translation of the medieval German manuscript of the Order of St. John.

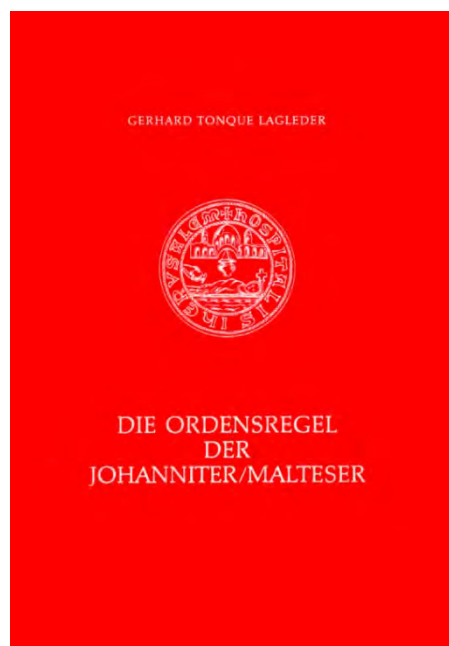
The publication would not have been possible without the generous support of Valentin Graf von Ballestrem, who, with his customary kindness, assumed the financial risk. He deserves my special thanks. I also thank the EOS publishing house in St. Ottilien, in particular Father Dr. Bernhard Sirch O.S.B. and Brother Otto Steidle O.S.B., for their excellent cooperation.

I sincerely thank my superiors, His Grace Archabbot Notker Wolf O.S.B. and Reverend Father Ansgar Schmid O.S.B., for releasing me from other duties, which enabled me to complete this study.

I hope all readers derive great benefit from this reading. May they be touched by that spirit which not only forms the historical foundation, but as the Holy Spirit remains the living source of power and the goal of every service under the Maltese cross.

St. Ottilien, on the feast day of the founder of the order, Blessed Gérard,
September 3, 1983

Father Gérard Lagleder O.S.B.



Preface to the original version (dated October 1, 1980) as a typescript

A wealth of accounts exists on the history of the Order of St. John, comprehensively documenting its political development, legal history, and hospitality. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to acknowledge the Order's spiritual tradition to a degree commensurate with its significance. The aim of this study is not to present a complete compendium of the Order's spirituality. Rather, it is intended as a contribution to illuminating the intellectual and cultural development as well as the fundamental innovation that the Order of St. John represented for the history of religious orders with its founding. The inner motivation for this work stems from my personal vocation: In service under the Maltese cross, I have found a sphere of activity in which the pursuit of the effective practice of Christian charity is central. In the spiritual foundations of the Order of Malta, I have found a spiritual home that has decisively shaped my longing to follow Christ. Engaging with this spiritual heritage is therefore a personal concern of mine—coupled with the hope of conveying this enthusiasm to others.

My thanks go to everyone who accompanied the creation of this work.

I would like to express my special thanks to my highly esteemed teacher, Professor Dr. Fr. Gerhard Bernhard Winkler O.Cist., who, as Professor of Medieval and Modern Church History at the University of Regensburg, granted me great freedom in the preparation of this diploma thesis and showed me the way through decisive impulses.

I thank the Grand Magistry of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in Rome, and in particular His Excellency Bailiff Frà Oberto Pallavicini, for permission to use the Biblioteca Magistrale and for providing numerous sources. My thanks also go to the then advisor to the Order's government, Mr. Hans Ludolf von Kotze, and to the librarian, Signora Irene Topai, for their patient support.

My deepest thanks are due to the directors of the Vatican Apostolic Library, in particular His Excellency Archbishop Dr. Stickler, in whose manuscript department I was privileged to study the key sources, as well as to the Rector of the German College at the Vatican, Professor Dr. Erwin Gatz. I am also indebted to the State Archives of the Canton of Aargau, the Bavarian State Archives, the Bavarian State Library, and the University Library of Regensburg.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Carl Wolfgang Count von Ballestrem, whose personal interest and valuable suggestions significantly advanced my work. I am also grateful for the diverse support and valuable input of Mr. Heinz Himmels (Malteser Relief Service Cologne), Dr. Berthold Count von Waldstein-Wartenberg, Fr. Dr. Adolar Zumkeller OSA, Fr. Stephan Senft OSA, Mother Superior Rose Baroness von Oer, and Valentin Count von Ballestrem (Malteser Relief Service Regensburg).

Finally, I thank Fr. Dominik Conrad O.H., Sr. M. Theresa Brenninkmeijer O.Cist., Fr. Arnold Pirner, as well as my father, Mr. Hans Lagleder, and my brother, Mr. Johannes Lagleder, for their constant support and valuable advice.

INTRODUCTION : The legacy of the Order of St. John

The annals of church history contain numerous religious orders of knighthood – significant and ephemeral, early foundations and modern institutions, communities still active today and those whose glory lives on only in archives. Of all these institutions, none bears more impressive witness to its history than the oldest religious order of knighthood in Christendom: the Order of St. John.

Its official title is "Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta." Over the centuries, various shortened names such as Hospitallers, Knights of Rhodes, Knights Hospitaller, or Knights of Malta arose. Until the Reformation, these names were used synonymously for the entire community. Today, the Catholic branch of the order usually refers to itself as the Order of Malta, while the Protestant branch, re-established in 1852, bears the name Order of St. John. In Great Britain, the "Most Venerable Order of St. John," established under the Crown in 1831, also continues the tradition.

The story unfolding here, however, is rooted in a time more than six centuries before the Reformation.

The Order of St. John played a key role in the history of religious orders as well as in world politics. Originating from the "Brotherhood of the Hospital of Jerusalem," it developed into a religious order and, from 1135, into a military order. As a subject of international law, it maintained its sovereignty² after losing its territories. To this day, it continues to operate true to its motto "tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum" (protection of the faith and service to the poor),³ as a religious community and as an international relief organisation.

To understand the nature and activities of this order, knowledge of its intellectual and historical development, as well as the spiritual circumstances of its founding, is essential. This book is dedicated to this exploration. The historical investigation focuses on the first period of the Order of St. John: from its beginnings to the fall of Jerusalem in 1187.

The following outlines the historical facts that gave rise to the foundation, shaped the circumstances of its development, and established the far-reaching consequences for Christianity.

²Detailed information on the international legal status is available here:

- **Hafkemeyer**, Georg Bernhard: The Order of Malta. Hamburg 1956 = Proceedings of the Research Centre for International Law and Foreign Public Law of the University of Hamburg 7. Identical text to: Hafkemeyer, Georg Bernhard: The Legal Status of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta as a Subject of International Law without Territorial Sovereignty. Diss. Hamburg 1956.
- **Waldstein-Wartenberg**, Berthold: Legal History of the Order of Malta. Vienna 1969 (hereinafter referred to as: Waldstein-Wartenberg: Legal History) and
- **Himmels**, Heinz: The Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Unpublished typescript (Cologne 1979)
- **Schwetz**, Florian: The Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Vienna ²2023, pages 75-85, describes the sovereignty of the Order from a current perspective.

³This motto originates from the **Stabilimenta militum sacri ordinis divi Joannis Hierosolymitani (Salamanca: Juan de Junta 1534, fol. 6)**, published by Grand Master **Philippe de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam**. In this first comprehensive printed version of the Order's rule, statutes, and customs after its settlement in Malta, the vocation of the brothers is defined as: "... omnes fratres accedentes ad **obsequium pauperum et tuitionem fidei** catholicae ..." (... all brothers who have come to serve the poor and protect the Catholic faith ...). See also the accompanying bull of **Pope Clement VII**.



Blessed Gérard tending to the sick⁴

⁴ Painting by Mattia Preti in the Oratory of St. John the Baptist, St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, circa 1680 | © Image: www.stjohnscocathedral.com. Picture Source: <https://www.malteser-geistlicheszentrum.de/spiritualitaet-und-geschichte/gerhard.html>

PART I

Historical Overview ⁵

1. Framework Conditions

The emergence of the Order of St. John in the 11th century was not an isolated event, but the result of profound historical developments. Since the **rediscovery of the Holy Sepulchre** by Helena ⁶ ➔, the mother of Emperor Constantine, and the subsequent construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre ⁷ ↓ Jerusalem exerted an unbroken attraction on the Christian West.



With the Constantinian shift, Christianity transformed from a persecuted minority to the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Helena's archaeological endeavours in the Holy Land aimed to

make the sites of Jesus Christ's ministry, suffering, and resurrection physically tangible. The construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre enabled generations of believers not only to visit these places but also to celebrate the memory of salvation there in the liturgy and the Eucharist.

⁵ A basic, detailed Source studies-based Investigation Offers: Hiestand, Rudolf: The Beginnings of the Knights Hospitaller. In: Fleckenstein, Josef / Hellmann, Manfred (eds.): The Spiritual Order of Knights Europe's, Sigmaringen 1980 (= Lectures and Research. Constance Working Group for Medieval History, Vol. 26), pp. 31–80.

⁶ Image: The Dream of Saint Helena, Paolo Veronese, Source: <https://uploads2.wikiart.org/00392/images/paolo-veronese/1355020641-0717998-www-nevsepic-com-ua.jpg!Large.jpg>

⁷ Picture: Schematic Depiction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Woodcut. from: Breydenbach, Bernhard von: *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam*, Speyer: Peter Drach 1502 [First edition Mainz 1486].

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/85/Forma_et_dipositio_dominici_sepulchri_-_Breydenbach_Bernhard_Von_-_1502.jpg/1488px-Forma_et_dipositio_dominici_sepulchri_-_Breydenbach_Bernhard_Von_-_1502.jpg



These thousands of crosses carved into the stone walls of the stairway leading to the **Chapel of St. Helena in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem, are medieval testimonies of pilgrims.

For a long time, they were considered mere "graffiti" left by the Crusaders themselves. However, more recent studies using 3D scanning technology point to a more organized origin:

- **Professional work:** The depth and precision of the carvings suggest that they were made by **trained stonemasons** and not by the travellers themselves.
- **Votive offerings:** It is now believed that pilgrims paid a stonemason to carve a cross in their name. This was considered a lasting symbol of their journey and a plea for divine assistance.
- **Uniformity:** The consistent style of the crosses – mostly simple **cross patties** – suggests that the Church coordinated this practice in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The place is particularly steeped in history, as the St. Helena Chapel is traditionally associated with Saint Helena finding of the **True Cross**.

8

⁸ Image source : All images are The author 's own photos . The text was generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

Pilgrimage ⁹and penitential practice

Pilgrimage gained new momentum under **Pope Leo IX** (1049–1054), who in 1053 granted pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre the so-called "Indulgence of the Cross." In the Church's discipline at that time, sacramental penance was often associated with years of arduous practice. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was considered such an extraordinary act of penance, which could lead to the reduction or remission of temporal punishment for sins. For serious offenses, the pilgrimage was often imposed as a direct act of atonement.



[↑Image](#) ¹⁰

Given the enormous hardships and dangers of a journey lasting weeks on horseback or on foot through unfamiliar territory, most pilgrims reached Jerusalem in a state of physical exhaustion or illness. This created an urgent need for lodging and care facilities modelled on the ancient xenodochia. In the immediate vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stood the Benedictine monastery of St. Maria Latina, which—in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict—maintained a guesthouse. Due to the pilgrims' precarious situation, this hospice increasingly developed into a hospital. The management of this institution was entrusted to a man named **Gerhard**. It is historically plausible to consider him a monk of the abbey who had been entrusted by his abbot with the care of the guests.

Given the founding of Cava de' Tirreni Abbey ¹¹in 1011 and its proximity to Scala, it is reasonable to assume that Blessed Gérard entered the Benedictine Order there. This would explain how he arrived in Jerusalem after 1032 during the Amalfi Expedition, when the Abbey of Santa Maria Latina was repopulated.

- **Founding of the Abbey:** Cava de' Tirreni Abbey was founded **in 1011** by Alferius (a nobleman from Salerno) and received its official charter from the Princes of Salerno in 1025. ¹²1032, it was already a flourishing Benedictine centre in close proximity to the Duchy of Amalfi.
- **Amalfi influence:** It is historically documented that merchants from Amalfi (including the Mauro family) financed the Monastery of **Santa Maria Latina** in Jerusalem. Since Cava de' Tirreni was the most important Benedictine monastery in the Amalfi/Salerno region, it is likely that the Jerusalem branch was staffed by monks from Cava.
- **Gerhard's origins:** Although his exact origin (Scala or Martigues) is debated, the close trade and religious ties between Amalfi and Jerusalem support the **Italian theory**. Entering Cava de' Tirreni as a novice would have been the logical career step for a young man from Scala.

⁹ See Wienand, Adam: The Order of St. John, the Order of Malta. The Knightly Order of St. John of the Hospital of Jerusalem. Its tasks, its history, 2nd ed., Cologne 1977, p. 37.

¹⁰Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/ce/Leo_IX.png

¹¹ Emanuel Buttigieg speaks of Cassinenian Benedictines who founded a monastery around 1070. They founded a hospice in Jerusalem.

¹² *Il Mattino*: https://www.ilmattino.it/de/die_ursprunge_der_abtei_cava_de_tirreni-8744498.html

Excursus: Scala & Amalfi ¹³

There are two conflicting accounts of Blessed Gérard's origins. One suggests he came from the island of Martigues near Marseille in southern France and gives him the surname "Tenque" or "Tonque." The other theory names Scala, along with Amalfi, as his place of residence and gives him the surname "del Sasso."

I wanted to investigate this further and visited Scala with an Italian friend in 1997.

The current inhabitants of the small village of Scala knew little at the time about their most famous son.



◀However, they named a local church youth group after him: Circolo "Gerardo Sasso".

It took a long time, after following three contradictory instructions, before we arrived at the place where Blessed Gerhard is said to have grown up.

The house, named "Villa Saxo", was presumably the ancestral home of the "del Sasso" family. ➡



Very little remains of what could have withstood the destructive forces of history for more than 900 years.



In fact, the family who lived in the "Villa Saxo" pointed out to us that the columns in the basement of the building were the only remnant of its former splendour.



¹³All images are the author's own photographs.



Historical image of the "Villa Saxo" ¹⁴



In the village's St. Peter's Church there is a stone sculpture donated in 1358 by Paolo de Saxo, which probably depicts Blessed Gérard in the style of Saint Michael.

Another clue is the fact that a fresco was found in the former cathedral of Amalfi (→ Basilica del Crocifisso), now a museum (Museo del Duomo), which is also believed to depict Blessed Gérard as a young knight. We know for certain that during Blessed Gérard's lifetime, the order was exclusively a hospitaller order without



military duties. However, the fresco shows Blessed Gérard with a sword. This attribute may have been bestowed upon him posthumously, since his order later evolved into a chivalric order.

¹⁴Image sources: Top image: Found online, source unknown. The two images below are the author's own photographs.



Regarding the history of the Amalfi or Maltese cross, it is interesting to know that it is part of the coat of arms of Amalfi.

Where does that come from? ¹⁵

←Picture¹⁶

Earliest evidence:

The eight-pointed design can be traced back to the **6th century AD in Byzantine decorations and religious art** . It was probably based on older Syrian or

Armenian cross forms as well as geometric patterns from the eastern Mediterranean.

Transfer to Amalfi:

Historians assume that the symbol reached southern Italy either through Amalfi's direct trade with Byzantium or via the **Normans** . **Amalfi was long under the cultural and political influence of the Byzantine Empire, which facilitated the exchange of such symbols.**

From emblem to insignia:

Coin finds prove that Amalfi already used the eight-pointed cross as a state symbol around **1080**. Since the founders of the Hospitaller Hospital in Jerusalem were merchants from Amalfi, they adopted the familiar Byzantine-Amalfitan cross as the emblem of their order.

Picture¹⁷ →



The symbolism seems somewhat far-fetched to me: the eight-pointed shape of the Amalfi Cross is said to visually resemble a **compass rose** . In Amalfi's maritime tradition, the eight points of the cross were often associated with the eight cardinal directions, which were crucial for compass navigation in the Mediterranean.

←Picture¹⁸

¹⁵ Compare : <https://www.orderofmalta.int/history/the-eight-pointed-cross/>

¹⁶Image source: <https://www.comuni-italiani.it/065/006/stemma.jpg>

¹⁷Image: 1-Tari gold coin from Amalfi. It was minted under King Ruggero II of Sicily, between 1130 and 1154. A **Tari** was a widely circulated gold coin in medieval southern Italy, originally derived from the Arabic quarter-dinar (*Ruba'i*). The coin has a Diameter of **21 mm** and weighs **0.91 g** .

Image source : <https://bertolamifineart.bidinside.com/en/lot/23491/italy-amalfi-ruggero-ii-king-1130-1154-/>

¹⁸ Image source : Author 's own photo , taken in Amalfi as Souvenir bought .



The Influence of the Crusades¹⁹

Although the Order of St. John has its roots in this Benedictine hospitality, its further development was significantly transformed by the Crusades. However, the Crusades were not the reason for its founding, but rather the catalyst for the structural evolution of the Order.

The political situation in the Holy Land had steadily deteriorated since the Saracen conquest of Jerusalem (637/638).

While oppression and fiscal burdens increased under the Fatimids from 969 onwards, the Seljuk advance from 1071 onwards led to massive destruction of Christian infrastructure in Jerusalem²⁰.



← Image²¹

In response to these circumstances, **Pope Urban II** convened the Council of Clermont on November 27, 1095, where he called for a crusade²² to reclaim the holy sites from non-Christian rule. Fulcher of Chartres, who attended the council, provides the following account of Pope Urban's address²³:

¹⁹Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b1/The_Rider_on_a_White_Horse_-_Queen_Mary_Apocalypse_%28early_14th_C%29%2C_f.37_-_BL_Royal_MS_19_B_XV.jpg

²⁰See Wienand (1977), pp. 37 f.

²¹Image source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Urbanus_II_\(Saint_Paul_Outside_the_Walls\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Urbanus_II_(Saint_Paul_Outside_the_Walls).png)

²²A detailed presentation of the topic is provided by: Erdmann, Carl: The Origin of the Crusade Idea, Stuttgart 1955.

²³ Text quoted from: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/urban2-fulcher.asp>

Most beloved brethren:

Urged by necessity, I, Urban, by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world, have come into these parts as an ambassador with a divine admonition to you, the servants of God. I hoped to find you as faithful and as zealous in the service of God as I had supposed you to be. But if there is in you any deformity or crookedness contrary to God's law, with divine help I will do my best to remove it. For God has put you as stewards over his family to minister to it. Happy indeed will you be if he finds you faithful in your stewardship. You are called shepherds; see that you do not act as hirelings. But be true shepherds, with your crooks always in your hands. Do not go to sleep, but guard on



all sides the flock committed to you. For if through your carelessness or negligence a wolf carries away one of your sheep, you will surely lose the reward laid up for you with God. And after you have been bitterly scourged with remorse for your faults-, you will be fiercely overwhelmed in hell, the abode of death. For according to the gospel you are the salt of the earth [Matt. 5: 13]. But if you fall short in your duty, how, it may be asked, can it be salted? O how great the need of salting! It is indeed necessary for you to correct with the salt of wisdom this foolish people which is so devoted to the pleasures of this - world, lest the Lord, when He may wish to speak to them, find them putrefied by their sins unsalted and stinking. For if He, shall find worms, that is, sins, In them, because you have been negligent in your duty, He will command them as worthless to be thrown into the abyss of unclean things. And because you cannot restore to Him His great loss, He will surely condemn you and drive you from His loving presence. But the man who applies this salt should be prudent, provident, modest, learned, peaceable, watchful, pious, just, equitable, and pure. For how can the ignorant teach others? How can the licentious make others modest? And how can the impure make others pure? If anyone hates peace, how can he make others peaceable? Or if anyone has soiled his hands with baseness, how can he cleanse the impurities of another? We read also that if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch [Matt. 15: 14]. But first correct yourselves, in order that, free from blame, you may be able to correct

²⁴Image: Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, depicted in this illumination from the Livre des Passages d'Outre-mer of c. 1474 (Bibliothèque nationale) in a late Gothic style. Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/9a/Passages_d%27outremer_Fr5594%2C_fol.19r%2C_Concile_de_Clermont.jpg/1024px-Passages_d%27outremer_Fr5594%2C_fol.19r%2C_Concile_de_Clermont.jpg

those who are subject to you. If you wish to be the friends of God, gladly do the things which you know will please Him. You must especially let all matters that pertain to the church be controlled by the law of the church. And be careful that simony does not take root among you, lest both those who buy and those who sell [church offices] be beaten with the scourges of the Lord through narrow streets and driven into the place of destruction and confusion. Keep the church and the clergy in all its grades entirely free from the secular power. See that the tithes that belong to God are faithfully paid from all the produce of the land; let them not be sold or withheld. If anyone seizes a bishop let him be treated as an outlaw. If anyone seizes or robs monks, or clergymen, or nuns, or their servants, or pilgrims, or merchants, let him be anathema [that is, cursed]. Let robbers and incendiaries and all their accomplices be expelled from the church and anathematized. If a man who does not give a part of his goods as alms is punished with the damnation of hell, how should he be punished who robs another of his goods? For thus it happened to the rich man in the gospel [Luke 16: 19]; he was not punished because he had stolen the goods of another, but because he had not used well the things which were his.

"You have seen for a long time the great disorder in the world caused by these crimes. It is so bad in some of your provinces, I am told, and you are so weak in the administration of justice, that one can hardly go along the road by day or night without being attacked by robbers; and whether at home or abroad one is in danger of being despoiled either by force or fraud. Therefore it is necessary to reenact the truce, as it is commonly called, which was proclaimed a long time ago by our holy fathers. I exhort and demand that you, each, try hard to have the truce kept in your diocese. And if anyone shall be led by his cupidity or arrogance to break this truce, by the authority of God and with the sanction of this council he shall be anathematized."

After these and various other matters had been attended to, all who were present, clergy and people, gave thanks to God and agreed to the pope's proposition. They all faithfully promised to keep the decrees. Then the pope said that in another part of the world Christianity was suffering from a state of affairs that was worse than the one just mentioned. He continued:

"Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for a while with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them.



On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. **Moreover, Christ commands it.**

"All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ!

With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion! Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honour. Behold! on this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends. Let those who go not put off the journey but rent their lands and collect money for their expenses; and as soon as winter is over and spring comes, let them eagerly set out on the way with God as their guide."²⁶

²⁵The image shows a miniature relating to the Council of Clermont in 1095. It depicts Pope Urban II's sermon on the First Crusade. The excommunication of Philip I, King of France, and Bertrande of Montfort by Pope Urban II in the same year is also illustrated. The miniature is presumably by the Maître François. Image source: https://www.meisterdrucke.de/kunstwerke/1000px/Matre_Francois_-_Representation_of_the_Council_of_Clermont_in_1095_presided_by_Pope_Urbain_II_%2810_-_%28MeisterDrucke-1030363%29.jpg

²⁶ From Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 382 f., trans in Oliver J. Thatcher, and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds., *A Source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905), 513-17

Later, **Bernard of Clairvaux** became a key advocate for the concept of the Crusades. In Chapter 3 of his work, "In Praise of the New Knighthood (*Liber ad milites Templi: De laude novae militiae*)," he writes:

ON THE NEW KNIGHTHOOD



²⁷BUT THE KNIGHTS OF CHRIST may safely fight the battles of their Lord, fearing neither sin if they smite the enemy, nor danger at their own death; since to inflict death or to die for Christ is no sin, but rather, an abundant claim to glory. In the first case one gains for Christ, and in the second one gains Christ himself. The Lord freely accepts the death of the foe who has offended him, and yet more freely gives himself for the consolation of his fallen knight.

The knight of Christ, I say, may strike with confidence and die yet more confidently, for he serves Christ when he strikes, and serves himself when he falls. Neither does he bear the sword in vain, for he is God's minister, for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of the good. If he kills an evildoer, he is not a mankiller, but, if I may so put it, a killer of evil. He is evidently the avenger of Christ towards evildoers, and he is rightly considered a defender of Christians. Should he be killed himself, we know that he has not perished but has come safely into port. When he inflicts death it is to Christ's profit, and when he suffers death, it is for his own gain. The Christian glories in the death of the pagan, because Christ is glorified, while the death of the Christian gives occasion for the King to show his liberality in the rewarding of his knight. In the one case the just shall rejoice when he sees justice done, and in the other man shall say, truly there is a reward for the just; truly it is God who judges the earth.

I do not mean to say that the pagans are to be slaughtered when there is any other way to prevent them from harassing and persecuting the faithful, but only that it now seems better to destroy them than that the rod of sinners be lifted over the lot of the just, and the righteous perhaps put forth their hands unto iniquity.

5. What then? If it is never permissible for a Christian to strike with the sword, why did the Savior's precursor bid the soldiers to be content with their pay, and not rather forbid them to follow this calling? But if it is permitted to all those so

²⁷ Image: Bernard's sermon on the Second Crusade. Image Source: https://www.kloster-thyrenau.de/PDF/Bernhard_von_Clairvaux_in_der_Ikonographie.pdf

destined by God, as is indeed the case provided they have not embraced a higher calling, to whom, I ask, may it be allowed more rightly than to those whose hands and hearts hold for us Sion, the city of our strength?

Thus when the transgressors of divine law have been expelled, the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in security. Certainly it is proper that the nations who love war should be scattered, that those who trouble us should be cut off, and that all the workers of iniquity should be dispersed from the city of the Lord. They busy themselves to carry away the incalculable riches placed in Jerusalem by the Christian peoples, to profane the holy things and to possess the sanctuary of God as their heritage. Let both swords of the faithful fall upon the necks of the foe, in order to destroy every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God, which is the Christian faith, lest the Gentiles should then say, "Where is their God?"

6. Once they have been cast out, he shall return to his heritage and to his house, which aroused his anger in the Gospel, "Behold," he said, "your house is left to you desolate." He had complained through the Prophet: "I have left my house, I have forsaken my heritage," and he will fulfil that other prophecy: "The Lord has ransomed his people and delivered them. They shall come and exult on Mount Sion and rejoice in the good things of the Lord."

Rejoice Jerusalem and recognize now the time in which you are visited! Be glad and give praise together, wastes of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people. He has ransomed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm in the sight of all peoples. O virgin of Israel, you were fallen and there was none to raise you up. Arise now and shake off the dust, O virgin, captive daughter of Sion. Arise, I say, and stand on high. See the happiness which comes to you from your God. You will no longer be referred to as the forsaken one, nor your land any more termed a wilderness; for the Lord takes his delight in you, and your land shall be peopled. Raise your eyes, look about you and see; all these are gathered together and come to you. Here is the help sent to you from the Holy One! Through them is already fulfilled the ancient promise, "I will make you the pride of the ages, a joy from generation to generation. You will suck the milk of the nations and be nourished at the breasts of their sovereignty." And again, "As a mother consoles her children, so will I console you, and in Jerusalem you will be comforted."

Do you not see how frequently these ancient witnesses foreshadowed the new knighthood? Truly, as we have heard, so we have now seen in the city of the Lord of armies. Of course we must not let these literal fulfilments blind us to the spiritual meaning of the texts, for we must live in eternal hope in spite of such temporal realizations of prophetic utterances. Otherwise the tangible would supplant the intangible, material poverty would threaten spiritual wealth, and present possessions would forestall future fulfilment. Furthermore, the temporal glory of the earthly city does not eclipse the glory of its heavenly counterpart, but rather prepares for it, at least so long as we remember that the one is the figure of the other, and that it is the heavenly one which is our mother.²⁸

²⁸ **Source:** Copyright (C) 1996, Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, prologue-chapter five, translated by Conrad Greenia oco, from *Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatises Three*, Cistercian Fathers Series, Number Nineteen, © Cistercian Publications, 1977, pages 127-145 (without notes). Quoted from: <https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/source/Bernard-praiseofnewknighthood.asp>

The spiritual justification: The idea of a just war

Although modern legal and moral understanding fundamentally evaluates armed conflicts differently today, in the High Middle Ages the prevailing conviction was that a "holy war" against those who threatened the holy sites or suppressed the Christian faith was morally justified.



This view was rooted in ancient and early medieval theology. Even the holy **Augustine of Hippo** ^{22F} developed the concept of ²⁹*bellum iustum* (just war) in his debate with the Donatists .

Saint **Thomas Aquinas** ^{23F³⁰} ➔

He later systematized this doctrine and defined the strict criteria for ethical justification:

- *iusta causa* (just cause),
- *recta intentio* (right intention),
- *legitima potestas* or *auctoritas principis* (legitimate state or church authority),
- *debitus modus* (appropriate manner of warfare) and the principle of weighing goods and services.
-



Western knighthood viewed the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre and the restoration of God's honour as a sacred duty. Eleventh-century chivalry offered ideal conditions for this:

The philosophy of **chivalry** ³¹ fused service to the Church with personal loyalty to one's liege lord and the protection of the weak (embodied in the ideal of women's honour). Within this self-understanding, armed service in the Holy Land was interpreted as an act of faith and a form of following Christ in service to the Church.

²⁹Image: Saint Augustine in the [Nuremberg Chronicle](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=490607) , Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=490607>

³⁰By Carlo Crivelli - The National Gallery: Saint Thomas Aquinas, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=528367>

³¹Johanna Maria van Winter's "Knighthood: Ideal and Reality" analyzes the transformation of the warrior class and the ethical foundations of knighthood. The text, a translation of "Ridderschap: Ideaal en werkelijkheid" (Bussum 1965), addresses the sacral integration of the knighthood on pages 25–57.

2. Background to the founding of the order and legendary origins

Although the year 1099 is generally accepted today as the founding year of the Order of St. John, written sources for its early period are scarce, which has given rise to numerous legends. The spectrum of these accounts ranges from the construction of a pre-Christian continuity to the assumption of a spontaneous new foundation in 1099.³²

The anchoring in salvation history

The French historian **William of St. Stephen**³³ recounts a legend according to which the origins of the hospital date back to the time of King Antiochus and the Jewish high priest **Melchior**. Melchior, acting on divine inspiration, is said to have built a hospice with a treasure on the very spot that would later be sanctified by the crucifixion of Christ. The management of this institution later passed to **Zechariah**, the father of John the Baptist. Even a visit **from Christ** himself, as well as the leadership of Saint **Stephen**—as the first deacon of the Church, predestined for charitable service—are part of this narrative.

This legend-building can be traced back to the 12th and 13th centuries. In 1291, the prevailing belief in Rome was that the hospital in Jerusalem had been the site of key events in the New Testament. As early as 1260³⁴, a hospital master of the Order of St. John suggested that St. Stephen had been one of his predecessors³⁵. However, William of St. Stephen was sceptical of this authenticity and suspected that any ancient institution would have been lost at the latest with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

The Maccabean tradition and archaeological references

Other authors, such as **Louis Beurrier**, trace the founding back to **John Hyrcanus I** (r. 134–104 BC) of the Maccabean dynasty. The aim, they suggest, was to receive pilgrims at Solomon's Temple. This theory is supported by the mention of Hyrcanus in 2 Maccabees 3: 11 and by the historically attested "Hyrcanus Monument," which is said to have stood on the site where the hospital's Church of St. John, dedicated to the patron saint of the Order of St. John, was later built.

William Caoursin³⁶ further exaggerated this tradition in 1496: He claimed that **Judas Maccabeus** himself had founded the hospital. He asserted that in this sacred space the Apostle **Peter had** received his primacy, that the first Council of Jerusalem had taken place there, and that Saint **Stephen** had chosen John the Baptist as the permanent patron saint of the house.

³² See Hiestand, *Beginnings*, p. 32.

³³ William of St. Stephen: *Comment la sainte maison de l'Hospital de S. Johan de Jérusalem commença*. In: Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph (ed.): *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100–1310)*, Vol. 1, Paris: Leroux 1894, pp. CCXVIII–CCXXI.

³⁴ See Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph (ed.): *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de St. Jean de Jérusalem*, 4 vols., Paris 1894–1906 (reprint: Munich 1980) [hereinafter quoted as: Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire*], No. 911 and 2674.

³⁵ See *ibid.*, no. 3002

³⁶ *Primordium et origo sacri xenodochii atque ordinis militie sancti Joannis Baptiste Hospitaliariorum Hierosolymitani*. In: Caoursin, Guillaume: *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum militum*, Ulm: Johann Reger 1496, fol. b VIIIr–c Iv; see also Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Philippe de: *op. cit.*, fol. 5.

These legends illustrate the high ideal value that was attributed to the site of the hospital – it was understood as the centre of salvation history's continuity.

The late antique and early medieval forerunners

Besides the purely legendary origins, there are reports of early institutional foundations by the Christian Empire.

Thus, the historian **A. v. Winterfeld**³⁷1859 held the view that Emperor **Constantine** and his mother **Helena** had already founded hospitals along the pilgrimage routes as well as in Jerusalem itself.

Masson³⁸elaborates on this Byzantine tradition and locates the “birthplace” of the later Order of St. John in the hospital that Emperor **Justinian I** (r. 527–565) had built in Jerusalem.

Pope Gregory the Great³⁹ ➔ is historically documented, who at the end of the 6th century sent **Abbot Probus** to Jerusalem to establish⁴⁰ a *Xenodochium*⁴¹.

According to **Breycha-Vauthier de Baillamont**, this complex comprised a hospital, a hospice, and a church dedicated to the **Virgin Mary**.⁴²To distinguish it from the Greek Orthodox tradition, it was named *St. Maria Latina*. This institution was completed in 603 but was probably destroyed as early as 614 during the Persian invasion.



³⁷Winterfeld, Adolf von: History of the Knightly Order of St. John of the Hospital of Jerusalem. With special consideration of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg or the Mastership of Sonnenburg, (Reprint) Osnabrück 1966, pp. 10 ff.

³⁸Masson, Henri: L'Ordre souverain de Malte: son passé, son présent, Paris: Éditions de la Pensée Moderne 1982.

³⁹Image: Francisco Goya: Pope Gregory the Great:

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/08/Goya_Gregory.jpg

⁴⁰See Jaffé, Philipp: Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab condita Ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Leipzig: Veit 1885–1888. (JL), No. 1515; and Joannis Diaconi: Vita Gregorii Magni, lib. 2, c. 52. In: Acta Sanctorum, Martii, t. 2, p. 150 and ibid., lib. 1, c. 7, p. 157 (also p. 132 a), quoted from: Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph: De prima origine Hospitalarium Hierosolymitanorum, Diss. Paris 1885 [hereinafter quoted as: Delaville Le Roulx, De prima origine], p. 134; See also Hiestand, Beginnings, p. 32, note 7.

⁴¹The Greek word ξενοδοκεο (xenodokeo) literally translates to: showing hospitality.

⁴²Breycha-Vauthier de Baillamont, Arthur Baron: The Sovereign Military Order of Malta. In: Rank List and Personnel Status of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in the Grand Priory of Bohemia and Austria as of February 28, 1936, with a Historical Introduction, Vienna 1937, p. 5.



Towards the end of the 8th century, this charitable infrastructure was restored by ◀ **Charlemagne** ⁴³. With the diplomatic permission of Caliph Harun al-Rashid, he renewed the Gregorian foundation and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Benedictine monastery at the Church of *St. Maria Latina* ⁴⁴. This connection to the Benedictine tradition laid the foundation for those hospital structures from which the **Order of St. John** would later emerge.

The Destruction of 1009 and the Amalfi Restoration

The monk **Bernard**⁴⁵ reported around 870 on the existence of the aforementioned hospital. However, this hospital, along with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was destroyed around 1009 by the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, despite the fact that his mother was a Christian.

After protracted negotiations with Caliph **al-Zahir** (r. 1021–1036), merchants from Amalfi, led by **Mauro di Pantaleone**, succeeded ⁴⁶in obtaining permission to rebuild in 1023. The work, completed under Caliph **al-Mustansir**, led to the establishment of three separate institutions:

⁴³ See Delaville Le Roulx, *De prima origine*, pp. 134 ff. | Image: *Grandes Chroniques de France*, 14th century: The coronation of Charlemagne. Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7a/Karls-I.-Kaiserkroneung-Grandes-Chroniques-de-France_1-314x314.jpg

⁴⁴ Breycha-Vauthier de Baillamont, Arthur Baron: *The Sovereign Military Order of Malta*. In: *Rank List and Personnel Status of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in the Grand Priory of Bohemia and Austria as of February 28, 1937, with a Historical Introduction*, Vienna 1937, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *Bernardi monachi franci: Itinerarium*, c. 10. In: Tobler, Titus (ed.): *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae ex saeculo VIII. IX. XII. et XV.*, Leipzig 1874, pp. 91 f.;

cf. also Bertouch, Ernst von: *Kurzgefasste Geschichte der geistlichen Genossenschaften und der davon erstgegangenen Ritterorden*, Wiesbaden 1887, pp. 69 f.

⁴⁶ Mauro di Pantaleone retired to Monte Cassino and died there. He must have been very wealthy, as he donated large bronze doors for the cathedral in Amalfi and the Abbey of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. Cf. Preston, Thomas Jex: *The Bronze Doors Of The Abbey Of Monte Cassino And Of Saint Paul's Rome*, Princeton: University Press 1915, p. 28: "The Basilica of San Paulo in Rome, through the generosity of the Pantaleone family of Amalfi, as well as the churches in Amalfi, Atrani, Monte Cassino and Monte Sant'Angelo, acquired in 1070 AD a pair of bronze doors which closed off the main entrance on the west facade of the church."

1. The reconstruction of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Maria Latina.
2. A hospice for female pilgrims, dedicated to Saint **Mary Magdalene** .
3. A hospice for male pilgrims, whose chapel was originally dedicated **to John the Almsgiver**⁴⁷ ➔ but at the latest by 1113 received the patronage of **St. John the Baptist**⁴⁸



The management of these hospices was the responsibility of rectors who were either Benedictines themselves, or at least closely associated with the Benedictine Order.

Historical sources mention a **Magister Anzelinus**⁴⁹ and later a superior **Geraldus**⁵⁰ (Brother Gérard) as head of the John's Hospice.

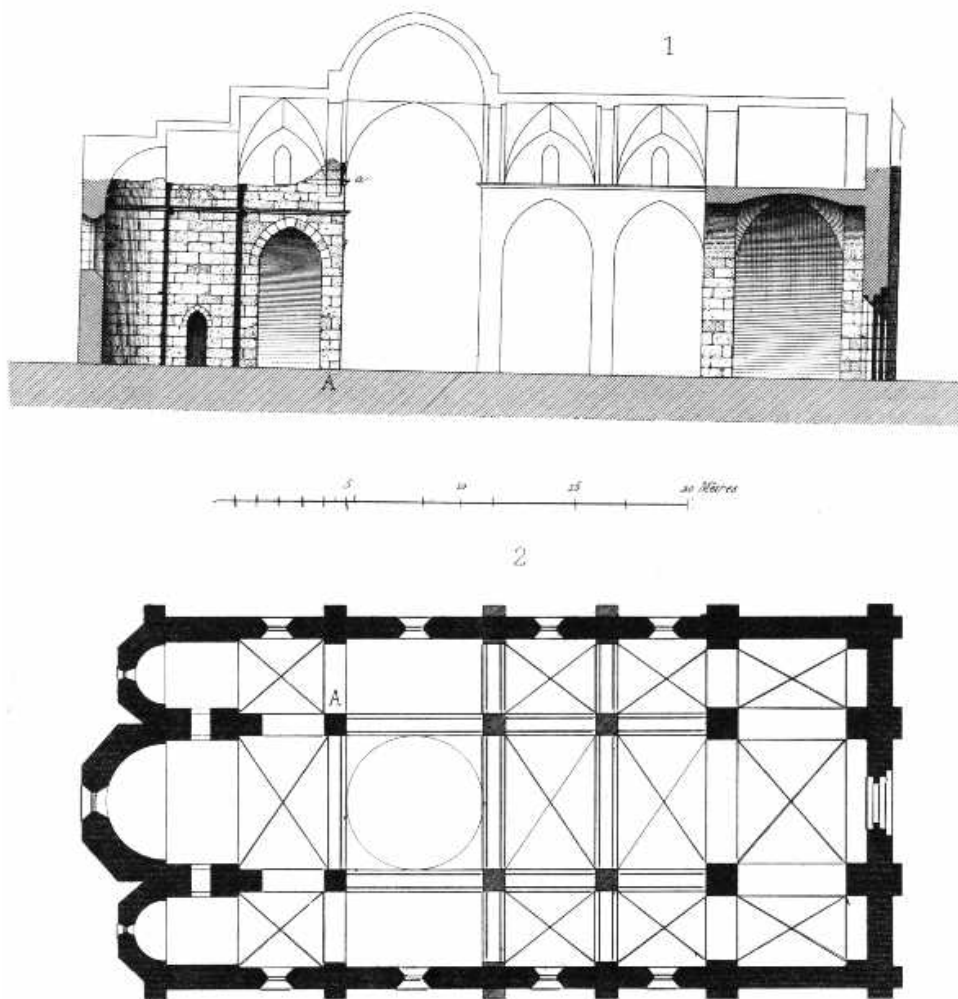
⁴⁷John the Almsgiver is also called John the Almsman, Eleymon, Elemosina, Limosinario, Eleemon, Eleemosinarius. | Image source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/bf/Saint-johnthealmoner.jpg/800px-Saintjohnthealmoner.jpg> John the Almsgiver painted by Titian in the church of San Giovanni Elemosinario in Venice

⁴⁸Image: The St. John's Church in Jerusalem. Source: Vincent, Louis-Hugues / Abel, Félix-Marie: Jérusalem. Research in topography, archaeology and history. Tome 2: Jérusalem nouvelle, Fasc. 3: La Sainte-Sion and the sanctuaries of the second order, Paris: Gabalda 1922.

⁴⁹See Uhlhorn, Gerhard: The beginnings of the Order of St. John. In: Journal of Church History (ZKG) 6 (1884), p. 51.

⁵⁰*Geraudus* and *Giraldus* are also mentioned, and the surnames *Tum*, *Tom*, *Tenc*, *Tunc*, *Tonq*, *Tanque*, *Tenque*, or *Tonque*, all originating from Martigues (Provence). See Hélyot, Pierre: Ausführliche Geschichte aller geistlichen und weltlichen Kloster- und Ritterorden für beyderley Geschlecht, Vol. 3, Leipzig 1753, p. 87; Ortenburg, Heinrich von: Der Ritterorden des Hl. Johannes von Jerusalem. In seiner Verfassung und Geschichtedarstellung, Regensburg 1866, p. 5; Winterfeld, *ibid.*, pp. 18 f.; and Rödel, Walter Gerd: Das Großpriorat Deutschland des Johanniterordens im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Reformation, Mainz 1974, p. 5. Alternatively, *del Sasso* is said to have originated in Scala near Amalfi; see Wienand, *ibid.*

The hospice of St. Mary Magdalene is said to have been run by a noble Roman woman named Agnes⁵¹. The hospice was probably affiliated with the Benedictine convent of St. Mary Major⁵² ↓.



53

⁵¹ I am following here, in broad outline, the account given by **William of Tyre**: *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, in: *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, Vol. 1, Paris 1844, edited in: **Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux**, Vol. 1, Paris 1844. This account also forms the basis of the work by **Abbé de Vertot**: *Histoire des Chevaliers de Rhodes, et aujourd'hui des Chevaliers de Malte*, 4 vols., Paris 1726 (hereinafter cited as: Vertot, *Histoire*). It also formed the basis for **Bottarelli, Gottardo / Monterisi, Mario**: *Storia politica e militare del Sovrano Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme detto di Malta*, 2 vols., Milano 1940 (= Biblioteca di Scienze moderne 121–122) and for **Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph**: *Les Hospitaliers en Terre Sainte et à Chypre (1100–1310)*, Paris 1904 (hereinafter cited as: Delaville Le Roulx, *Les Hospitaliers*).

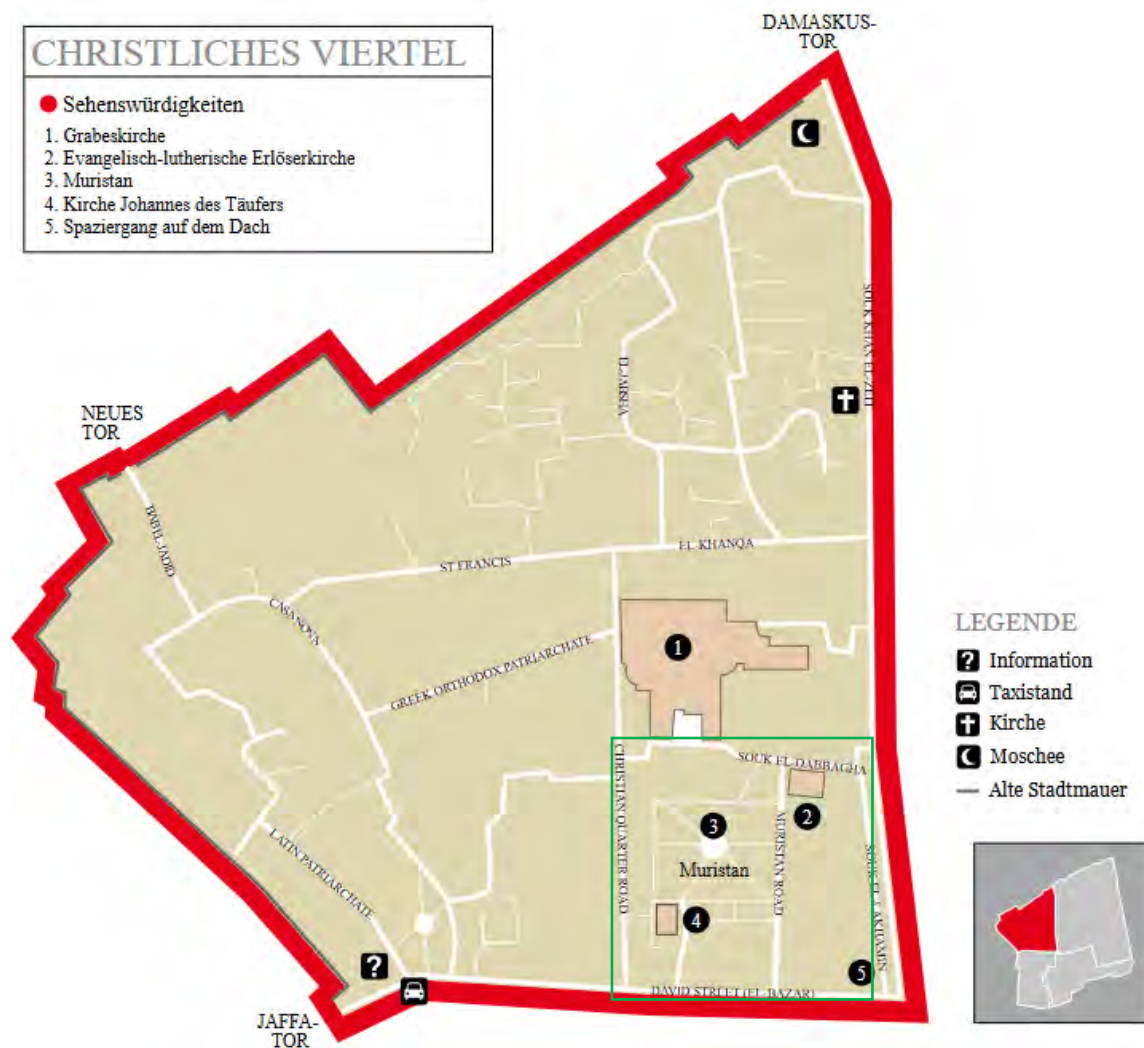
⁵²In the 12th century, the church of Santa Maria la Grande (also known as Santa Maria Maggiore) was an important Benedictine convent and church in the heart of the Muristan district of Jerusalem, south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It served as a convent for nuns and was similar to the nearby monastery of Santa Maria Latina (Santa Maria Minor), a men's monastery. The Romanesque basilica had a nave and two side aisles. Contemporary accounts from the 12th and 13th centuries describe it as lavishly decorated with carved capitals and marble columns.

⁵³Image source: **Sandoli, Sabino de (ed.)**: *Itinera Hierosolymitana Crucesignatorum (saec. XII–XIII)*, Vol. 2, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press 1980, p. 111.

Archaeological findings⁵⁴ confirm the existence of this early triple facility.

Methodological classification of continuity

It would be presumptuous, in the interest of a complete history of the religious orders, to assert a direct institutional continuity between the Gregorian, Carolingian, and Amalfi foundations. The upheavals of the 7th and 11th centuries make a continuous line unlikely. Nevertheless, these initiatives demonstrate the constant need of Western Christendom for a hospital infrastructure. This continuity is corroborated by **archaeological findings in the Muristan district**. Excavations, based on the plans of **Conrad Schick** and continued by the German Protestant Institute (DEI), identified the foundations of St. Maria Latina and the hospitals. This structural evidence supports the accounts of the specialized triple complex and bridges the gap to the most enduring form of this tradition: the **Order of St. John**.



Site plan of the Hospital of St. John (in the green rectangle). [Image⁵⁵](#) ↑

⁵⁴See Riley-Smith, Jonathan: *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus c. 1050–1310*, London 1967 (= A History of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, Vol. 1), p. 34.

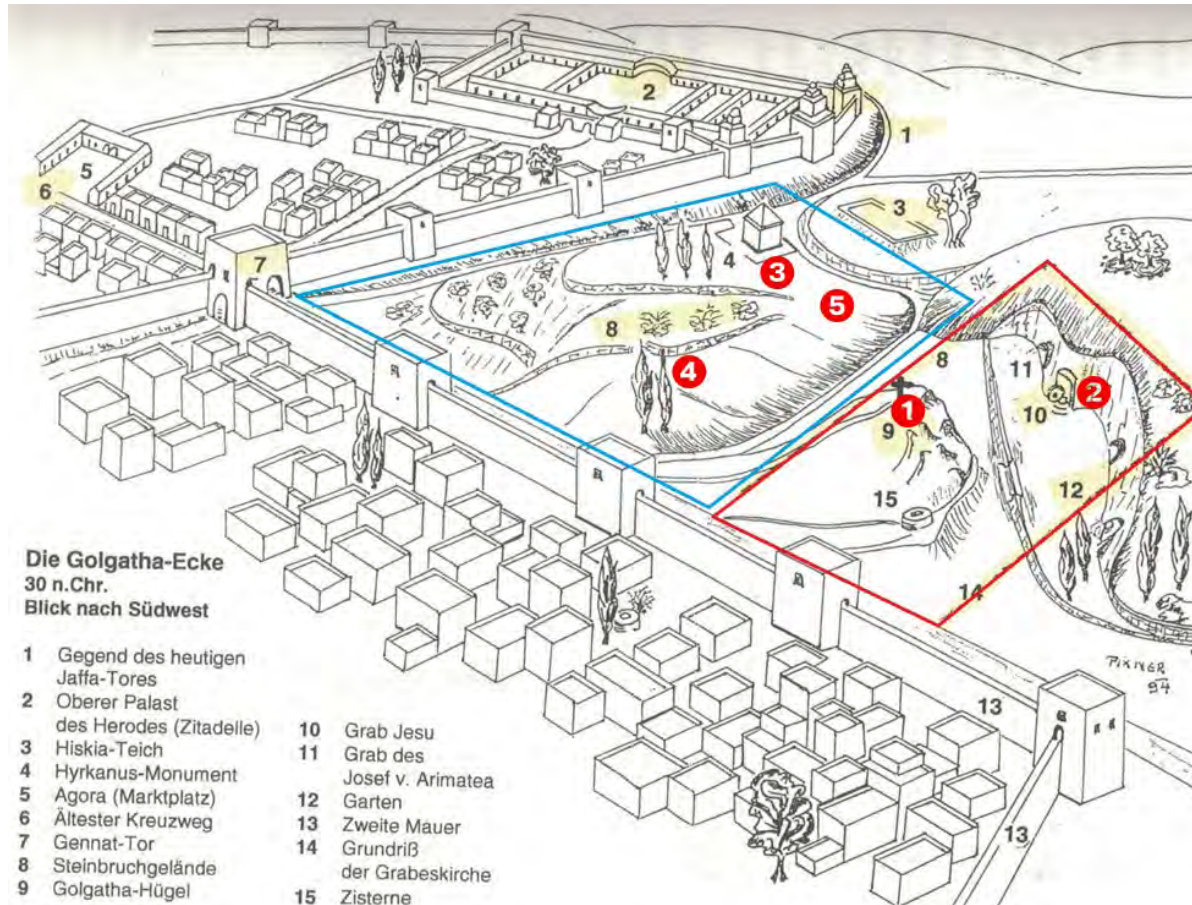
⁵⁵ Image source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muristan#/media/Datei:Jerusalem_Christian_Quar-ter_de.svg

Excursus: Santa Maria Latina

Today: The (Protestant) **Church of the Redeemer**
 the **Church of St. John the Baptist**
 and the **Muristan** in Jerusalem
 The cradle of the
 Order of St. John of Jerusalem



The Seal of Santa Maria Latina →



Sketch of the **"Golgotha Corner"** in Jerusalem, 30 AD (by Fr. Bargil Pixner O.S.B.)

The area outlined in **red** is now covered by the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**. The area outlined in **blue** is now called Muristan. This is the site where St. Mary Latina and the **Hospital of Jerusalem** were located.

1 **Golgotha**, the place where Jesus Christ died on the cross.

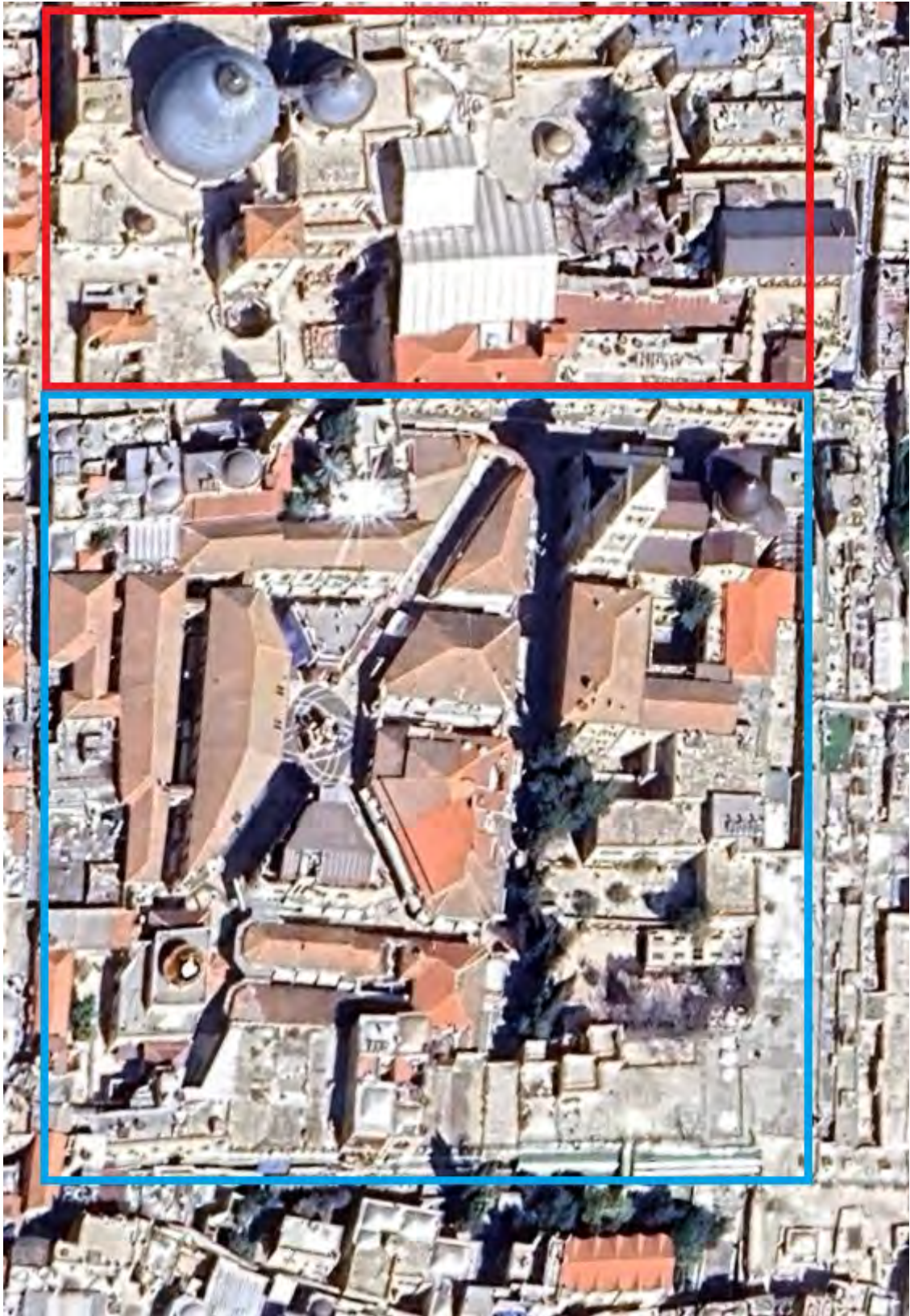
2 The **Holy Sepulchre**, the place, on which Jesus Christ was buried and rose from the dead.

3 The Hyrcanus Monument, the place, where the **Church of St. John** the Baptist is located today.

4 The site where **St. Maria Latina** was located is now the Church of the Redeemer.

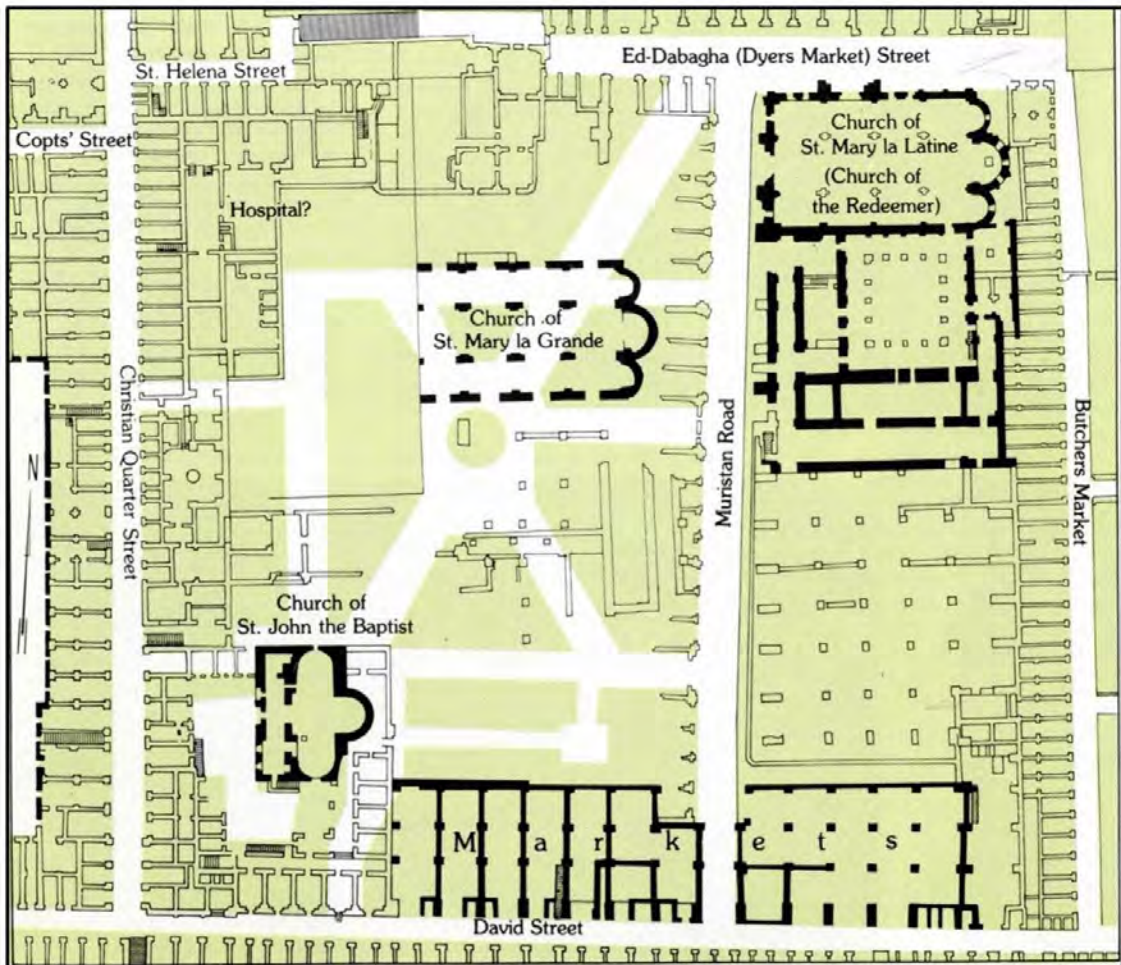
5 The place where the **hospital of Jerusalem** was located.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Muristan today



Holy Sepulchre is framed in red ,
the Muristan area in blue. ⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Image source : Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/E1b7enFZ2wptXxma8>



Map⁵⁷ of the area that belonged to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the 12th century.

The superimposed white lines show the present-day streets of Muristan. The green dot in the centre indicates the present-day Muristan fountain.

⁵⁷From: BAHAT, Dan: The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem, Carta, Jerusalem 1990, page 96 · Image source: <https://sbf.custodia.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/CABT%202022%20Terza%20visita%20-%20Area%20del%20Muristan%20-%20S.Giovanni%20-%20Redentore%20-%20Ospizio%20S.Alessandro.pdf>



The distribution of functions in Muristan⁵⁸

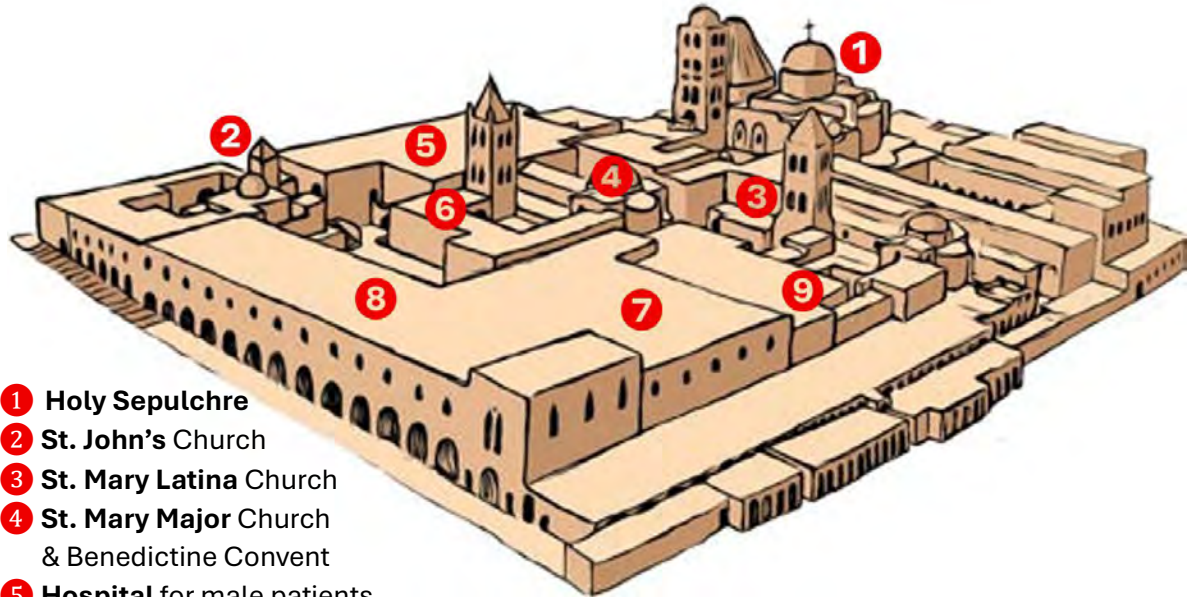
Highly interesting 3D reconstructions of the Muristan district can be found at:

Heinzelmann, Dorothee / Heinzelmann, Michael / Krüger, Jürgen / Wacker, Marc:

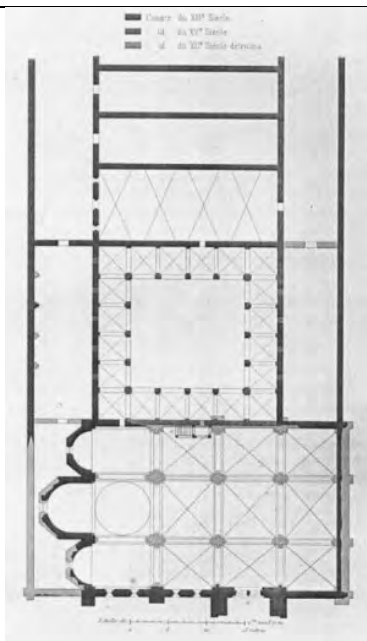
[The Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem – from the Architectural Remains to a 3D Reconstruction](#). In: Vieweger, Dieter / Gibson, Shimon (eds.): *The Archaeology and History of the Church of the Redeemer and the Muristan in Jerusalem*. Oxford: Archaeopteris 2016, pp. 307–321.

⁵⁸**Heinzelmann, Dorothee / Krüger, Jürgen:** “The beginnings of the Order of Saint John in Jerusalem, or: Muristan revisited”. In: *Medievalista* 30 (2021), pp. 68–89. DOI: 10.4000/medievalista.4494., page 81. Plan: The distribution of functions in Muristan according to the authors' research, as of May 2020 (based on Conrad Schick's plan as Fig. 9, with markings by Jürgen Krüger, 2020).

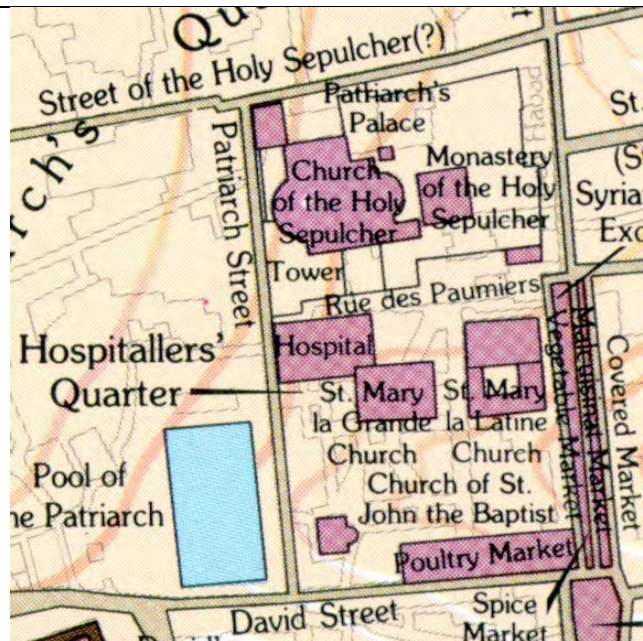
According to the aforementioned research results, the hospital grounds must have looked like this ⁵⁹:



- ① Holy Sepulchre
- ② St. John's Church
- ③ St. Mary Latina Church
- ④ St. Mary Major Church & Benedictine Convent
- ⑤ Hospital for male patients
- ⑥ St. Mary Magdalen's Hospice for female patients
- ⑦ Kitchen, Refectory etc.
- ⑧ Storerooms, Stables, Dormitory (1st floor)?
- ⑨ Benedictine Abbey St. Mary (Latina)



The floor plan of St. Maria Latina ⁶⁰



Map of the "Hospitaliter Quarter" of Jerusalem ⁶¹

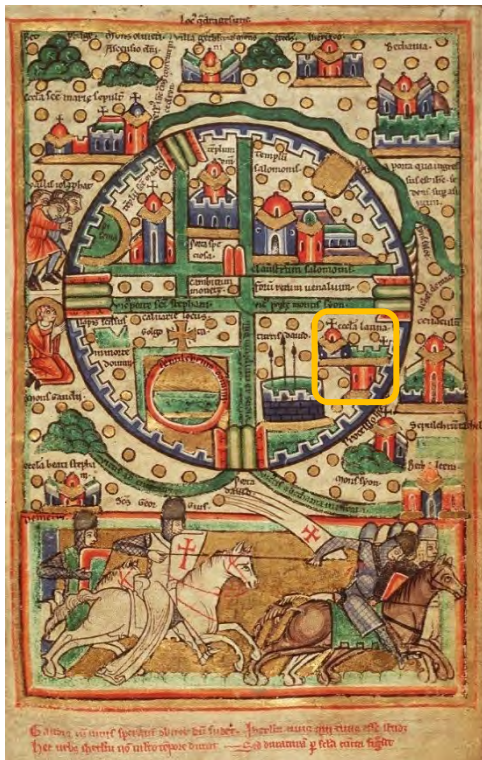
⁵⁹ Image source : **Reudenbach , Greta / Chedor , Loreen: Brother Gerhard. A story of knights and rescuers .** Neunkirchen- Seelscheid : [Edition Noack] 2020, p. 141

⁶⁰Image source: <https://www.academia.edu/figures/13021903/figure-2-plan-of-the-church-of-st-mary-latin-and-adjacent>

⁶¹From: Bahat, Dan: The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem, Jerusalem: Carta 1990, p. 91.

Image source: <https://pneumatiko.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/5.jpg>

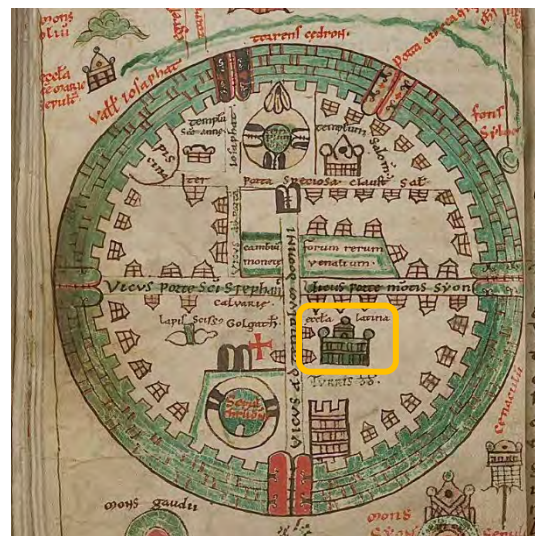
St. Maria Latina in contemporary "city maps"



Idealized city plan of Jerusalem based on an ancient model, showing the city wall and main street intersection. 12th century, Crusader period. ⁶²



The "St. Omar Plan" of Jerusalem from the 13th century



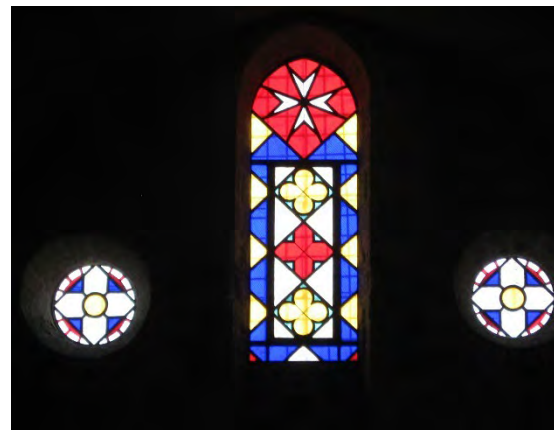
⁶²Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7b/Plan_of_Jerusalem%2C_12th_Century._ca._1200.jpg/960px-Plan_of_Jerusalem%2C_12th_Century._ca._1200.jpg

The Church of Santa Maria Latina⁶³
(Today the Evangelical Church of the Redeemer)



The north portal of St. Maria Latina
/ Church of the Redeemer today

The former monastery building



The chapel

⁶³ All images on this page are the author's own photos.



The former refectory (dining hall) of St. Maria Latina is now a conference room of the Church of the Redeemer.



The cloister of St. Maria Latina / Church of the Redeemer.



The column dates back to the former monastery.

[All images on this page are the author's own photos.](#)

Entrance to the hospice of the Order of St. John
and minaret of the Omar Mosque



64



65



66

Portal of the Hospital
of the Order of St. John from the North



67



68



69



70

⁶⁴ Image source : Ebers, Georg / Guthe, Hermann: Palestine in Picture and Word, Stuttgart/Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1883, page 33

⁶⁵ Image source: Author's own photograph

⁶⁶ Image source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a024.jpg>

⁶⁷ Image: Photo (1895) from Jetowicki , Aleksander: Walks in Jerusalem and its surroundings , n.p. 1887. Image source : <https://picryl.com/media/wejscie-do-murystanu-fd0894>

⁶⁸ Image source : https://byzantium-blogger.blog/2020/08/27/around-the-world-in-the-byzantine-era-part2-1000-1461/facts-early-knights-hospitaller_1-min/

⁶⁹ Image of Friedrich Adolf Strauss : Sinai and Golgotha. Journey to the Orient, Berlin: Allgemeine Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1847 (a German priest and professor in Berlin who published the book "Sinai and Golgotha" with a description of the Holy Land in 1847. He visited Jerusalem at Easter 1846). Image source : <https://picryl.com/media/johanniter-hospital-by-strauss-circa-1900-325336>

⁷⁰ Image by Ermete Pierotti. Image source : <https://iiif.nypl.org/iiif/3/1639693/full/max/0/default.jpg>



71



72



73



The foundation stone for the Church of the Redeemer was laid on October 31, 1893, in the ruins of St. Maria Latina.⁷⁴



A 3D model of Jerusalem around 1930 shows an empty space on the site of the former Hospital of Jerusalem.

[Left: the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, centre: the minaret of the Omar Mosque, right: the dome of the Church of St. John the Baptist. The space between the mosque and the Church of St. John the Baptist is empty. The tree in the gap stands exactly where the Hospital of Jerusalem once stood.]

⁷¹ Image source : <https://picryl.com/media/s-15-het-oude-hospitaal-van-den-h-johannes-jezuzalem-b09f20>

⁷² Image by Ermete Pierotti. Image source : <https://picryl.com/media/ruins-of-the-church-of-s-mary-the-great-8c8e4e>

⁷³The Morristan , 1870. Photo by Giacomo Brogi. Image source: <https://picryl.com/media/pikiwiki-israel-72477-the-morristan-a8a4fa>

⁷⁴ Image source : https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRN_C8-QWTx5EG4GGRTcwUGhAOVCFlaYqvZwi5NEq5fchoCA5UA

The Church of St. John the Baptist then and now



Stairs leading to St. John's Church.
A Greek priest
is descending the stairs.⁷⁵



"House sign" of St. John's Church⁷⁶



77



78

⁷⁵ Image source : Ebers, Georg / Guthe, Hermann: Palestine in Picture and Word, Stuttgart/Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1883, page 35

⁷⁶Image source: Author's own photograph

⁷⁷Image source: Author's own photograph

⁷⁸Image source: Author's own photograph



The interior of the Church of St. John the Baptist

Images ⁷⁹



⁷⁹Image source: All images are the author's own photographs.



80



⁸⁰Image source: All images are the author's own photographs.

The Muristan

The grounds of the former hospital are called "Muristan."

The name derives from the Persian word *bīmārestān*⁸¹, meaning "place of the sick" or "hospital." In Arabic, بیمارستان The prefix "Bi-" was dropped, resulting in **Muristan** (or *Maristan*).



The dome in the background is the Church of St. John the Baptist.



Images⁸²

⁸¹ *bīmār* = sick, *stān* = place / location

⁸²Image source: All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

The emancipation of the hospital under Blessed Gérard



83

After the capture of Jerusalem on July 15, 1099—the culmination of the First Crusade—**Godfrey of Bouillon** and his companions found the hospital already fully operational. The comprehensive care provided there for the wounded crusaders impressed Godfrey so profoundly that he bestowed generous donations upon the brotherhood⁸⁴ These endowments laid the financial foundation for its institutional independence. Subsequently, Gérard severed the connection with the mother abbey of *St. Maria Latina* in order to manage the hospital independently. Indeed, separate donations to the hospital adjacent to the monastery are documented as early as 1099.

⁸³Image: Blessed Gerard receives Gottfried of Bouillon, painted by the French artist Antoine de Favray in 1757. Gottfried is received by Blessed Gerard in the hospital in Jerusalem.

Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antoine_de_Favray_-_The_Blessed_Gerard_Receiving_Godfrey_de_Bouillon.jpg

⁸⁴See HIESTAND, *Beginnings*, p. 38



Godfrey of Bouillon , Duke of Lower Lorraine since 1076, was one of the principal leaders of the First Crusade. He commanded the troops that victoriously entered Jerusalem in 1099. Although offered the royal crown, he declined the title and instead chose to serve as "Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre" (*Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*). However, he died after a reign of only one year. ⁸⁵

↑ Miniature from the book "Chronicle of Geoffroy de Bouillon" ⁸⁶ (Cod.Reg.Lat.737)

"The Siege of Jerusalem during the First Crusade" Stamp of the Order of Malta ⁸⁷ →



←The French contingent of crusaders elected Godfrey as their leader in 1096 ⁸⁸.

⁸⁵from: Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (1989)

⁸⁶Image: Godfrey of Bouillon leads his men. From: William of Tyre: *History d'Outremer* , French, 13th century. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Fr. 9081, f.20v, Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Godefroi_of_Bouillon_leads_the_army.jpg

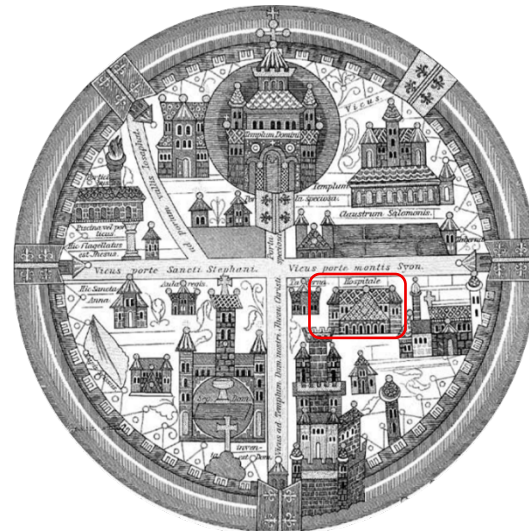
⁸⁷Latin Codex Reginensis 737 "Chronicle of Godfrey of Bouillon". Image source: https://www.ibolli.it/cat/smom/smom87/269_big.jpg

⁸⁸Image source: https://www.meisterdrucke.at/kunstwerke/1000px/Unbekannt_-_Crusaders_Proclaiming_Godfrey_of_Bouillon_King_of_Jerusalem_1890_-_MeisterDrucke-752991%29.jpg

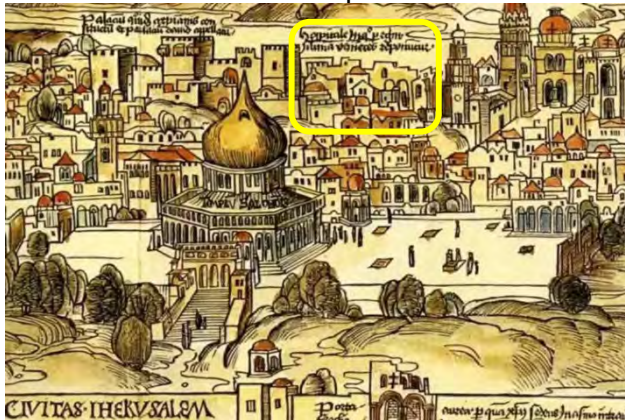
The Hospital of Jerusalem on historical city maps



The "Cambrai map" of Jerusalem around 1130 ⁸⁹



Map of Jerusalem in the year 1180 ⁹⁰



The woodcut by Erhard Reuwich of the Civitas Iherusalem in 1483 in Bernhard von Breydenbach's "Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam" shows the "hospitale in quo peregrini hierosolyma venientes deponuntur" (The hospital where pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem are accommodated.) ⁹¹

⁸⁹Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/4e/Cambrai_map.jpg/1280px-Cambrai_map.jpg

⁹⁰Image source: <https://www.megalim.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/המערה-של-פיארוטי-לפרשת-החלל-התת-קרקעי-מתחת-לקבר-דוד.pdf>

⁹¹Image source: Author's own photo (of a poster). The image is also available online at: https://www.rheinpfalz.de/cms_media/module_img/12665/6332857_1_article_detail_breitenbach_reuwich_1483.webp



The Comminelli map by Pietro del Massaio 1472 shows the hospital as "Hospicium Peregrinorum"⁹³



⁹²
Jerusalem



Engraving by Claudio Buschetti (1554-1597)

⁹²Image source: Author's own photo (of a poster)

⁹³Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/cf/1472_map_of_Jerusalem_by_Hugo_Comminelli_and_Pietro_del_Massaio_01.jpg/250px-1472_map_of_Jerusalem_by_Hugo_Comminelli_and_Pietro_del_Massaio_01.jpg

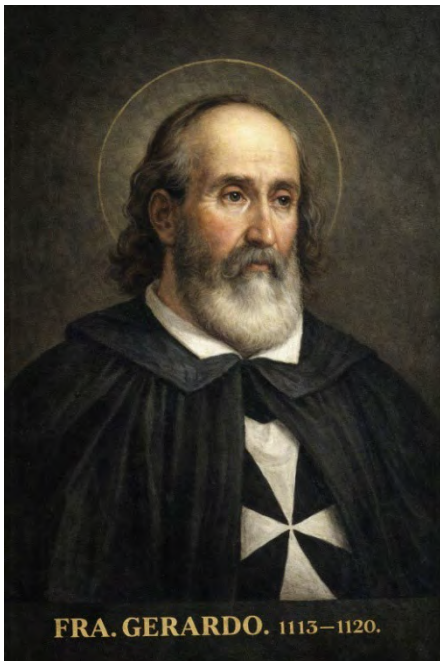
3. Blessed Gérard Founder of the Order



94



95



96



97

⁹⁴Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

⁹⁵Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/bb/Gravure_de_Fra_Gerard_fondateur_des_Hospitaliers_de_Saint-Jean.jpg/960px-Gravure_de_Fra_Gerard_fondateur_des_Hospitaliers_de_Saint-Jean.jpg

⁹⁶Image: Chapter Room of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome.
Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

⁹⁷Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986.

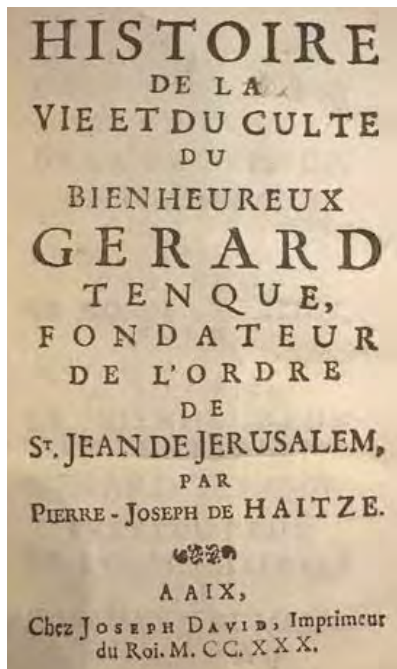
Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>



98

Gérard, the first rector of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, was born in Amalfi according to some sources, and in Provenca according to others. When Jerusalem was besieged by Godfrey, the barbarians imprisoned him in a dark jail, suspecting that, as a man of the utmost intelligence and great bravery, he might secretly smuggle the Christian army into the city. However, he was freed soon after the victor's entry. With profound piety, he served in the aforementioned hospital, and his reputation for charity and his noble order as a Hospitaler spread. Buglione and his captains honoured him with rich gifts, and thus the hospital's wealth and income grew, leading to the establishment of branches in various European provinces. Pope Paschal II, in a papal bull addressed to him, referred to Gérard as the founder and president of the Hospital of Jerusalem. He lived a life of piety and died at an advanced age in 1118 or 1120. He likely assumed leadership of the hospital as rector around the year 1099. He lived a devout life and maintained an impeccable character, which is why he is counted among the Blessed by the Holy Order of Jerusalem.

⁹⁸Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated September 25, 2020. Image source: <https://postemagis-trali.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2022/08/Beato-Gerardo-2020.png>



Regarding the origin and history of Gérard, two main positions are opposed in historical scholarship:

←Image ⁹⁹

Image ¹⁰⁰ →:

Commemorative plaque in Martigue/Provence:



In the year of the Holy Christ 1040 in our town of Martigues, the blessed **Gérard Tenque**, founder of the monks of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, was born, and on the 11th of August 1891, the cicadas and the Félibres honoured the memory of the great, pious Provençal with this marble.

1. The Provençal Hypothesis ¹⁰¹:

This tradition assumes an independent foundation and places Gérard's ¹⁰²in Provence (southern France), more precisely on the island of Martigues near Marseille. Following this tradition, ¹⁰³is given the nickname "Tonque" ¹⁰⁴(in variations such as Tum, Tunc or Tenque).

⁹⁹Image: [The Malta Study Centre, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library](#) : While researching early printed books at the Museum of the Knights Hospitaller in London, we were delighted to discover this story of Blessed Gerard, printed in Aix-en-Provence by Joseph David in 1730. [Image source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTRlZJDvWSaKj_NUs6yHTtL9Sl_Kla7rf1WbrO2BjsK4aCIQ0cD (Facebook)]

¹⁰⁰Image source: Author's own photograph

¹⁰¹See, for example, Uhlhorn, op. cit., pp. 48 ff.; Grunsky, Eberhard: Double-Story Johanniter Churches and Related Buildings. Studies on the Typological History of Medieval Hospital Architecture, Diss. Düsseldorf 1970, p. 13; and Prutz, Hans: The Religious Orders of Knights. Their Position on the Ecclesiastical, Political, Social and Economic Development of the Middle Ages, Berlin 1908 (reprint: Berlin 1977), p. 14. The latter refers to the document in Delaville Le Roux, Cartulaire, No. 48, in which Gerhard is described as the founder (*institutor*).

¹⁰²Uhlhorn, op.cit., p. 51. He reports that the "hospitale Iherosolymitanum" was already run as an independent institution under a Master Anzelinus around 1083; in 1099 Gerhard took over its management and reorganized the hospital.

¹⁰³Bosio, Giacomo: Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano, 3 vols., Rome 1594–1602. Quoted here from: Vol. 1 in the expanded and illustrated new edition, Venice ³1695, p. 17; cf. also Hélyot, *ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: "According to current research, the epithet 'Tonque' (or also 'Tum', 'Thom', or 'Tunc') of Blessed Gerard, the founder of the Order of Malta, is based on a **translation or reading error** In the 18th century (around 1730), the historian Pierre-Joseph de Haitze misread a Latin manuscript. He mistook the Latin word '**tunc**' (**meaning 'then' or 'then'**) for a **surname or place of origin**. **From this misreading, variants such as Tum , Tunc , or Tonque** developed As early as 1885, the historian Ferdinand de Hellwald identified this error. There are no contemporary sources from the 11th or 12th centuries that refer to Gerard by this name."

2. **The Amalfi Hypothesis** ¹⁰⁵: This represents the continuity of the hospital tradition and sees Gérard as a descendant of the "del Sasso" family. ¹⁰⁶ ➔ from Scala near Amalfi (southern Italy). ¹⁰⁷

It is not the aim of this study to definitively discuss the biographical details or the various versions of these hypotheses, although the probability that Gérard originated from Scala near Amalfi is very high. Regardless of which of these traditions is chosen, it remains clear that neither would proof of direct continuity increase the significance of the foundation, nor would the assumption of a spontaneous new foundation diminish it.

Image ¹⁰⁸ ➔

The Hospice of St. John remains, in any case, the historical cradle of the sovereign order known today as the Order of Malta. ¹⁰⁹



Regarding the institutional beginnings of the Order of St. John, differing research positions exist in historiography. One group of historians maintains that the original hospital was destroyed during the Seljuk attack between 1070 and 1078 and promptly rebuilt ¹¹⁰In contrast, another view holds that the hospital withstood the Seljuk attacks, allowing its head to be personally present in Jerusalem during the decisive siege of 1099.

The figure of Blessed Gérard and the legend of the bread miracle

The historical identity of Blessed Gérard is inextricably linked to the events of the siege of Jerusalem in 1099. Contemporary chroniclers and later legends paint a picture of a man whose actions lie somewhere between historically documented steadfastness and miraculous divine intervention.

¹⁰⁵ Hiestand, aa O., p. 41. He defines the term "institutor" as someone who first establishes and manages the hospital.

¹⁰⁶ See also Guerritore, Antonio: Fra Gerardo fondatore dell'Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme e l'arma gentilizia di Sasso di Scala. In: Rivista del Collegio Araldico 17 (1919), pp. 285–287; and Hiestand, op. cit., p. 42 f.

¹⁰⁷ Marble half-relief of Blessed Gerard by Francesco Mangieri in Amalfi. Photo by the author.

¹⁰⁸ Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fra_Gerardo_Sasso.JPG

¹⁰⁹ Truszczynski, Georg von: Order of Malta – Maltese Relief Service. 900 years of service to our neighbors worldwide, unpublished manuscript, Cologne 1976, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ See e.g. B. Winterfeld, loc. cit., p. 15.



◀ **William of Tyre**¹¹¹ (~1130-1186) was Chancellor of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. He died in 1190. Born around 1130 in Jerusalem, he studied in Europe from about 1145. After returning to his homeland in 1165, he was appointed Archdeacon of Tyre in 1167. In 1170, he

was appointed tutor to the future King Baldwin IV, who appointed him Chancellor upon his accession to the throne. He wrote his widely acclaimed *History of the Crusader States* between 1169 and 1173 and became Archbishop of Tyre in 1175.¹¹²

In his chronicle of the Crusades, "*Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*" (*History of Deeds Abroad*), William of Tyre writes that Gérard was a man of "honourable conduct" who had long before humbly dedicated himself to serving the poor. He praises Gérard as a God-fearing man who led the hospital and, during the siege of Jerusalem in the First Crusade (1099), remained within the city walls and distinguished himself through exceptional charity. In summary, William of Tyre portrays Gérard as a **humble servant of God** whose organisational talent and profound charity laid the foundation for one of the most important orders of knighthood in the Middleages.¹¹³

Blessed Gérard¹¹⁴ ➔



¹¹¹The image shows a medieval manuscript illustration, possibly a self-portrait of **William of Tyre** (c. 1130–1186), writing his history at his desk. From: William of Tyre: *Histoire d'Outremer*, French, 13th century, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS 2631, f.1r

¹¹²out of: Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (1989), supplemented with information from Wikipedia: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_von_Tyrus

¹¹³Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

¹¹⁴Stained glass window by Guido van Besouw in the Blessed Gérard's Chapel in Mandeni/South Africa. Image source: Author's own photograph.

Crusaders ➔
 from William of Tyre's
 "History of Deeds Beyond the Sea" ¹¹⁵

During the siege of Jerusalem by the Christian army, Gérard fell under suspicion by the Muslim Fatimids of supporting the besiegers. William reports that Gérard was captured, tortured, and severely mistreated.

This historical hardship forms the backdrop for the so-called "Legend of the Bread Miracle." It is found in the **Miracles**, a collection of hospital legends that, from the late 12th century onward, were placed before the statutes of the Order of St. John as a spiritual introduction. While the first four legends construct biblical origins for the hospital, the story of the Bread Miracle, as the fifth legend, concludes the collection and transitions to the immediate history of the Order.

According to this account, Gérard administered the hospital under Saracen rule and served the poor with alms granted to him even by the rulers. When the Christian army lay before the walls suffering from severe famine, Gérard hid loaves of bread in his lap daily and threw them down from the city wall to the starving besiegers. Accused of treason by the Sultan's guards, Gérard was caught red-handed with the hidden loaves of bread and brought before the ruler. But when the accusers tried to present the evidence, they found, by the power of God, only stones in his garment. The Sultan, believing Gérard to be the victim of a malicious slander by his own servants, allowed the hospital administrator to leave in peace. Freed from suspicion, Gérard continued his work even more zealously, providing for the Christians until the city's capture on July 15, 1099.

This spiritual tradition has found a firm place in iconography:



◀A fresco ¹¹⁶in the Chapel of the Grand Magistry in Rome depicts "Beato Gherardo" in chains, just as a representation in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta immortalizes the miracle of the loaves turning to stone. Modern research (cf. *Oratores et Bellatores* ¹¹⁷) sees in these accounts the core of the historical truth: that Gérard supported the crusaders with both physical food and strategic information, and immediately after the victory took in the wounded at the *Xenodochium*.



¹¹⁵Text from the Internet Medieval Sourcebook.

Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/1099_Siege_of_Jerusalem.jpg

¹¹⁶Image source: Author's own photograph.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/003.html>



Fresco in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta ¹¹⁸

Blessed Gérard throws bread to the Crusaders from the city walls of Jerusalem. Detail of a copper engraving ¹¹⁹, probably from around 1740.



← Icon of Blessed Gérard ¹²⁰

Blessed Gérard ¹²¹. →



¹¹⁸Image source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a023.jpg>

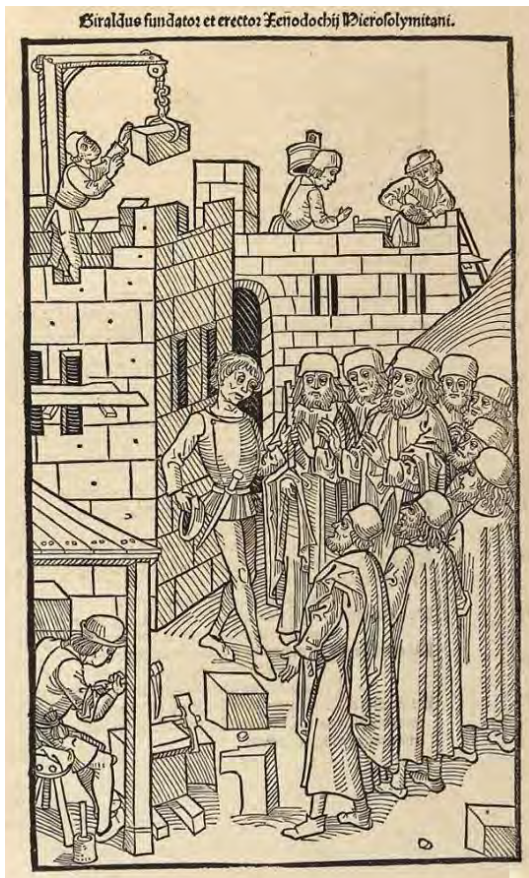
¹¹⁹See page 67

¹²⁰Image source: https://cm-oleiros.pt/ficheiros/2018/10/1518628150ordem_de_malta.jpg

¹²¹Image: Stained glass window in Vancouver, Canada. Image source: <https://www.magyarurir.hu/hirek/kanadaban-is-terjed-boldog-batthyany-strattmann-laszlo-tisztelete>

The reorganisation of 1099 as the founding act

The historical significance of Blessed Gérard is manifested in his role as a reformer and benefactor.



◀William Caoursin¹²² aptly describes him as the "founder and builder of the Jerusalem Xenodochium." Immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, Gérard subjected the existing hospice to a fundamental reorganisation. This measure was a logistical necessity in view of the massively increasing number of patients—resulting from wounded Crusaders and the throngs of pilgrims who followed them.

In historical research, the year 1099 is rightly considered the founding year of the community¹²³, which developed into the Order of St. John¹²⁴. For the sake of institutional continuity, it is secondary whether this act represented a formal separation from the mother monastery of *St. Maria Latina* and a modification of the Rule of St. Benedict, or whether the hospital brotherhood gradually adopted the structure of an independent order. In any case, it is historically legitimate to designate Gérard as the founder of the Order of St. John.

Under his leadership, the brothers began to live according to the evangelical counsels—poverty, chastity, and obedience. As an outward sign of their profession, they wore a black habit¹²⁵) marked on the left side with a white cross¹²⁶).

¹²² Caoursin, *ibid.* The same motif is described by Vantin, Nicolas: *Rhodes et l'Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem*, as "The Admiral who founded and built the Jerusalem Hospital." This mention suggests that it refers to the Hospice of Saint Catherine, founded at the end of the 14th century by Admiral Domenico d'Allemaña, which served to house important pilgrims. It was under the supervision of the admirals, the commanders of the Italian language (*lingua*). Image source: <http://143.50.26.142/digbib/inkunabeln/II/9968/index.html>

¹²³ See Waldstein-Wartenberg, Berthold: *Donaten – Confratres – Pfründner. Die Bruderschaften des Ordens.* In: *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain de Malte* 31 (1973) [hereinafter cited as: Waldstein-Wartenberg, *Bruderschaften*], p. 9.

¹²⁴ In early documents, Gerhard is explicitly referred to as "institutor"; cf. Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire*, No. 30 (Bull of Pope Paschal II of 15 February 1113) and No. 48 (Confirmation of King Baldwin I of 20 June 1112).

¹²⁵ Delaville Le Roulx, *Les Hospitaliers*, p. 12, speaks of the Benedictine habit; also Camera, Matteo: *Memorie storico-diplomatiche dell'antica città e ducato di Amalfi*, Vol. 2, Salerno 1881, p. XLVIII, quoted from: Delaville Le Roulx, *De prima origine*, p. 147.

¹²⁶ Vertôt, René-Aubert de: *Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem*, Paris 1726, p. 48. He reports that the brothers took their vows of the Order in the hands of the Patriarch of Jerusalem and were clothed by him. Cf. Niethammer, Friedrich Immanuel (ed.): *Geschichte des Malteserordens nach Vertôt. Mit einer Vorrede von Friedrich Schiller*, Jena 1792, p. 62; similarly Winterfeld, *ibid.*, p. 20.

Although the original statutes from Gerhard's time have been lost, it can be assumed, analogous to the later rule of his successor Raymond du Puy, that they represented a blend¹²⁷ of Benedictine and Augustinian elements, supplemented by specific hospital provisions.

The assumption that the community under Gérard was merely a loose association of like-minded individuals must therefore be firmly rejected. Even though the **Order of St. John**, in the strict sense of canon law, only achieved its full independence between 1135 and 1153, the purposeful organisation under Blessed Gérard had already laid the firm foundation for this development in 1099.

Blessed Gérard
in the Hospital of Jerusalem ¹²⁸ ➔



¹²⁷"It is in the nature of a monastic community to live according to an order designed by the founder and corresponding to the community's objectives." Wienand, *ibid.*, p. 43; cf. also Bottarelli, *ibid.*, p. 28; Zwehl, Hans Karl von: *Über die Caritas im Johanniter-Malteser-Orden seit seiner Gründung*, Essen 1928, p. 12; and Ballestrem, Carl Wolfgang Graf von: *La spiritualité de l'Ordre de Malte*, Tiberias 1964, p. 4.

¹²⁸Stained glass window by Guido van Besouw in the Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni/South Africa. Image source: Author's own photograph.

Excursus: Baldwin I (1100–1118):

Consolidation and expansion of the Latin Kingdom



The coronation of Baldwin I on Christmas Day 1100 ¹²⁹

Baldwin I (originally Baldwin of Boulogne, c. 1058–1118), the younger brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, is considered the true architect of Latin rule in the Near East. After accompanying Godfrey on the First Crusade from 1096 onward, he separated from the main army after the siege of Nicaea. He advanced through Cilicia into Mesopotamia, where in 1098 he founded the first Crusader state, the County of Edessa.

Seal of the Kings of Jerusalem ¹³⁰ ➔

After his brother's death in 1100, Baldwin was elected King of Jerusalem; his coronation took place on December 25, 1100. This election was significant in church politics, as it marked the victory of the military-secular faction over the theocratic ambitions of the Church. Under his rule, state authority over the clergy was considerably strengthened.

Baldwin's reign was characterized by an aggressive policy of expansion and the securing of borders.

Through strategic concessions to the maritime republics of Genoa and Venice, he secured the necessary naval support to conquer the key port cities of Palestine. This was essential for supplies from the West and the economic

stability of the Latin states. In addition to repelling Egyptian incursions, Baldwin acted as protector of the other Crusader states (Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli). He died in 1118 during a campaign against Egypt, whereupon his cousin Baldwin II succeeded him.



◀ Seal of Baldwin, King of Jerusalem ¹³¹



In 1110, King Baldwin I of Jerusalem confirmed the Order of St. John's possessions and granted them lands.¹³²

In the name of the holy and undivided Trinity. Let it be known to all men that **I, Baldwin, by the grace of God King of Jerusalem, praise and confirm through this writing all gifts and alms which have been made to the Hospital of Jerusalem in all my kingdom until this present day**, as well of villages as of peasants, or of houses and lands, and of all things that pertain to the utility of men; therefore let no man or woman from this day forward dare to disturb them or take them away from the Hospital of Jerusalem and Christ's poor. In the first place, **I praise and confirm the gift** which the Duke, my brother [Godfrey of Bouillon], made to the Hospital of Jerusalem, namely of a certain village called Hessilia and of two ovens in Jerusalem. And I confirm my own gift of two villages, namely Bethtafava and Montana, and of lands and houses in various places in Jerusalem, and of a certain garden of Anfred the priest, and of one wealthy peasant who dwells in Neapolis, and of the houses which are in the same town, and of one mill which is there, and of one good oven in Jaffa, and of lands and houses in various places in the same city and in Acre. Furthermore, **I praise and confirm to the aforesaid Hospital** a certain village which Walter Baffumeth gave to it, called Sus-sia, and another which the Viscount gave, called Bethtamis, and that which Hugh of Puiset gave in the land of Ascalon, called Casale Melius, and that which Anselm of David's Tower gave in the land of Azotus near the mills, and another which Eustace gave in the land of Caesarea, and also the lands which he himself gave near Caecho, and the peasants whom his knights gave with his counsel. Also the village which Peter of Lens gave in the land of Soeth, which is called Dirberham, and another which Arnulf Loferencus gave, called Capharmazre, **I likewise praise and confirm to the aforesaid Hospital**. Moreover, also the peasants and lands which Hugh and Gervase gave in Tiberias, and three peasants whom the Bishop of Nazareth gave, and one William of Tenches, and another Pagan Vacca, and another Drogo, and another Dominic, and Guibert of Salinas another, and Pagan of Haifa another with lands and houses in Haifa and in Capernaum, and another peasant whom Roman of Le Puy gave, and another whom Baldwin gave with lands and houses in the city of Ramla, and the lands and houses which the Bishop of Ramla gave in St. George to the Hospital of Jerusalem. All this, as written above, **I praise and confirm to the aforesaid Hospital**. Finally, that God may have mercy on me and on the souls of my father and brother, and of all my parents or of all the faithful departed, **I praise and confirm** by all means in my power **to the Hospital of Jerusalem all things which it has acquired** up to this day, and today holds and possesses, and I will that they always be for the sustenance and needs of the poor. But if anyone should attempt to take them away or diminish them, may God bind him with his scourges until he returns to penance. Also two peasants, whom Gaudemar Carpinel gave with all things pertaining to them, one in St. Abraham [Hebron] and the other in Jericho, and a third whom Hugh gave in Bethany, and a fourth whom Bovus gave in Ramla, and a fifth whom Azio of Cirsed gave to the aforesaid Hospital. These five peasants with all things pertaining to them **I praise and confirm to the Hospital of Jerusalem**. This charter of corroboration or confirmation was made on the third day before the Kalends of October [September 29], in the year 1110 from the Incarnation of the Lord. The witnesses of this writing were: Hugh of Puiset, and Eustace Grenier, and the Viscount of Jerusalem; and Anselm of David's Tower, and Walter Baffumeth; and Guy of Milly, and Gotman, and many other noble and good men who saw and heard. + Baldwin, King + (*Autograph signature*).“

¹²⁹From: William of Tyre: History d'Outremer , French, 13th century, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Fr. 9081, f.99v. Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Baldwin_1_of_Jerusalem.jpg

¹³⁰Image source: Author's own image

¹³¹ Image source : Sandoli , Sabino de: op. cit., p. 131.

¹³²Paoli, Codex Diplomatico , I, No. 83, Delaville, Cartulaire, I, No. 20. (Translation: Google AI on 1 March 2026)

Excursus: Baldwin II (1118–1131)

Expansion and feudal hegemony

Baldwin II (Balduin of Bourcq, † 1131), a cousin of his predecessor Baldwin I and also a participant in the First Crusade, consistently continued the expansion and consolidation policy of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. His reign was marked by an intense military conflict with the Seljuk forces in northern Syria. Under his rule, Jerusalem achieved a hegemonic position within the Latin states: The principality of Antioch became effectively dependent on the crown of Jerusalem, and the conquest of the important port city of Tyre further secured maritime control over the Levant. Baldwin II was succeeded by his son-in-law Fulk of Anjou, whose son Baldwin III (r. 1143–1162) was ultimately confronted with the beginning signs of the erosion of Latin power.

Excursus: Baldwin III (1143–1162)

and the crisis of the Latin states

Baldwin III, son and successor of Fulk of Anjou, assumed power in the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1143, with his mother Melisende serving as regent until 1152. His reign was marked by a significant weakening of the Latin presence in the Near East. Key turning points included the loss of the County of Edessa to the Muslims in 1144 and the failure of the Second Crusade. Furthermore, in 1154, the Syrian ruler Nur ad-Din succeeded in annexing Damascus and large parts of northern Syria, which significantly increased the pressure on the Crusader states.

After Baldwin's death in 1162, his brother Amalric I succeeded him to the throne. In the following generation, his nephew, Baldwin IV (known as "the Leper," reigned 1174–1185), attempted to defend the territory against Saladin's expansion. Due to his worsening leprosy, Baldwin IV arranged his succession as early as 1183 by crowning his young nephew, Baldwin V (died 1186).¹³³

¹³³The chronological sequences and political developments are based on the accounts in Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (1989) as well as the historical entries of Encyclopedia.com (Columbia University Press).

Expansion and logistical networking of the hospitality

Already under the leadership of Blessed Gérard, the newly founded community experienced a massive increase in membership through pilgrims who joined the hospital as helpers or professed brothers. This consolidation of personnel was accompanied by significant donations¹³⁴ including one from Godfrey of Bouillon.



←Image ¹³⁵

In this context, a widespread, albeit idealistic, misinterpretation needs to be corrected: The legend that King Baldwin I presented Blessed Gérard with the sword of a Grandmaster does not stand up to historical scrutiny, as the chivalric component only fully developed later. Nevertheless, the generous endowments of Baldwin I

(from 1108 onward) enabled Blessed Gérard to strategically expand his charitable network.

Even before formal papal confirmation in 1113, important branch hospitals were established in the European Mediterranean ports, including at the castle of Saint-Gilles, France, and in the Italian port cities.



Asti ¹³⁶,

Pisa, Bari, Otranto (Ydrontum), Taranto and Messina.

This wave of hospital foundations followed a clear logistical rationale: once passage to Jerusalem was secured again and the flow of pilgrims increased dramatically, these hospitals functioned as preventative care stations. By providing early

¹³⁴See Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 20.

¹³⁵Image source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a009.jpg>

¹³⁶Image: Asti, the Rotonda and the Knights of Malta.

Image source: <https://iltorinese.it/2021/08/25/asti-la-rotonda-ei-cavalieri-di-malta/>

treatment for sick pilgrims in Europe, the main hospital of the **Order of St. John** in Jerusalem was to be prevented from becoming overwhelmed. This maritime infrastructure thus formed the backbone of an organized, cross-border healthcare system.



137

The papal constitution through “Pie postulatio voluntatis” (1113)
The birth of legal independence

The decisive act of canonical consolidation was carried out by **Pope Paschal II** on February 15, 1113. With the solemn bull "Pie postulatio voluntatis," he confirmed the hospital community as an independent institution within the Church. Through this groundbreaking decree, the Holy See assumed direct protectorate over the hospital in Jerusalem. The Pope not only confirmed the existing acquisitions and donations of the Order of St. John in Europe and Asia but also granted the community the privilege of exemption. This removed the hospital from episcopal jurisdiction and placed it directly under the Pope's authority. This bull formed the international legal foundation for the sovereignty of the Order of St. John and sealed the vision of Blessed Gérard: the transformation of a local

brotherhood into a universal, papal-recognized order whose sphere of influence now extended beyond the borders of the Holy Land.

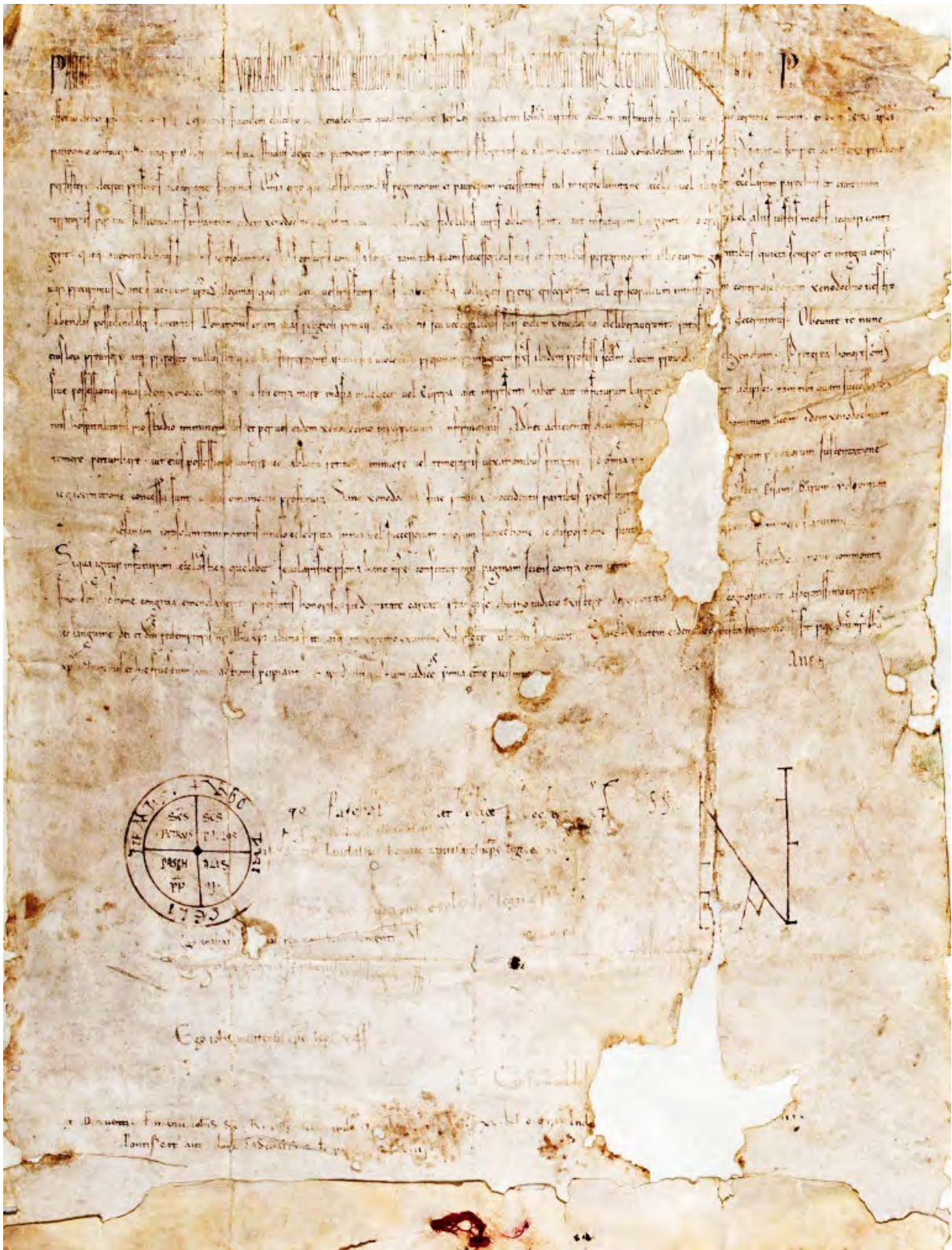
←(Image ¹³⁸)



¹³⁷Image: The Malta Post commemorates the 900th anniversary of the papal bull of Pope Paschal II. Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/de/nachrichten/die-malta-post-gedenkt-der-900-jahre-der-bulle-von-papst-paschalis-ii/>

¹³⁸Image: Meeting between Pope Paschal II and King Philip I, 1107. Illuminated manuscript of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (1461). Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b8/Filip1Frr.jpg/250px-Filip1Frr.jpg>

PAPAL BULL "Pie postulatio voluntatis"
of February 15, 1113 ¹³⁹



¹³⁹Image source: Order of Malta, also available online at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pie_Postulatio_Voluntatis.jpg

The text (in English translation ¹⁴⁰) reads as follows:

141

**POPE PASCHAL II
TO HIS VENERABLE SON GERARD**

Paschal, bishop, and servant of such as are the servants of God, to his venerable son Gerard, founder and Master of the Hospital at Jerusalem, and to his lawful successors for evermore.

*The **requests of a devout desire** ought to meet with a corresponding fulfilment. Inasmuch, as of your affection thou hast requested, with regard to the **Hospital** which thou hast founded in the city of Jerusalem, in proximity to the Church of the Blessed John the Baptist, that it **should be supported by the authority of the Apostolic See**, and fostered by the patronage of the blessed Apostle Peter: We, therefore, much pleased with the pious earnestness of your hospitality, do receive the petition with our paternal favour, and do ordain and establish, by the authority of this our present decree, that that house of God, your Hospital, shall now be placed, and shall for ever remain, under the protection of the Apostolic See, and under that of the Blessed Peter.*



*All things whatsoever, therefore, which by your preserving care and solicitude have been collected for the benefit of the said Hospital, for the support and maintenance of pilgrims, or for relieving the necessities of the poor, whether in the churches of Jerusalem, or in those of parishes within the limits of other cities; and whatsoever goods may have been offered already by the faithful, or for the future may through God's grace be so offered, or collected by other lawful means; and **whatsoever goods have been, or shall be granted to thee, or to thy successors, or to the brethren who are occupied in the care and support of pilgrims**, by the venerable brethren the bishops of the diocese of Jerusalem; we hereby decree **shall be retained by you and undiminished**.*

Moreover, as to the tithes of your revenues, which you collect everywhere at your own charge, and by your own toil, we do hereby fix and decree, that they shall be retained by your own Hospital, all opposition on the part of the bishops and their clergy notwithstanding.

We also decree as valid all donations which have been made to your Hospital by pious princes, either of their tribute moneys or other donations.

*We ordain furthermore, that at your death no man shall be appointed in your place, as **chief and master**, by any underhand subtlety, or by violence; but him only who shall, by the inspiration of God, have been **duly elected by the professed brethren of the Institution**.*

Furthermore, all dignities or possessions which your Hospital at present holds either on this side of the water, in Asia, or in Europe, as also those which hereafter by God's bounty it may obtain; we confirm them to you and to your

¹⁴⁰Quoted from: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/history/1113-the-bull-pie-postulatio-voluntatis/>

¹⁴¹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paschalis_II.png?uselang=de

successors, who shall devote themselves with pious zeal to the cares of hospitality, and through you to the said Hospital in perpetuity.

We further decree that it shall be unlawful for any man whatsoever rashly to disturb your Hospital, or to carry off any of its property, or if carried off to retain possession of it, or to diminish anything from its revenues, or to harass it with audacious annoyances. But let all its property remain intact, for the sole use and enjoyment of those for whose maintenance and support it has been granted. As to the Hospitals or Poor Houses in the Western provinces, in the Borgo of St. Egidio, Asti, Pisa, Bari, Otranto, Taranto and Messina, which are distinguished by the title of Hospitals of Jerusalem, we decree that they shall for ever remain, as they are this day, under the subjection and disposal of yourself and your successors.

If, therefore, at a future time, any person, whether ecclesiastical or secular, knowing this paragraph of our constitution, shall attempt to oppose its provisions, and if, after having received a second or third warning, he shall not make a suitable satisfaction and restitution, let him be deprived of all his dignities and honours, and let him know that he stands exposed to the judgment of God, for the iniquity he has perpetrated; and let him be deprived of the Sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ, and of the benefits of the redemption of our Lord, and at the last judgment let him meet with the severest vengeance. But to all who deal justly and rightly with the same, on them be the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that not only here below they may receive the rewards of good actions, but also before the Judge of all mankind, they may enjoy the blessing of peace eternal.

I Paschal, bishop of the Catholic Church, have signed

I Richard Bishop of Albano, have signed

I Landulphus Archbishop of Benevento, have read and signed

I Canon Bishop of the Church of Preneste, have read and signed

I Anastasio Cardinal priest with the title of Blessed Clement, have signed

I Gregory Bishop of Terracina, have read and signed

I John Bishop of Mellito, have read and signed

I Romuald Cardinal Deacon of the Roman Church, have signed

I Gregorio Cardinal priest of San Crisogono, have read and signed

Given at Benevento, by the hand of John, Cardinal and librarian of the Roman Church, on the 15th day of February, in the 6th cycle of indiction of the incarnation of our Lord, in the year 1113, and in the 14th year of the Pontificate of Pope Paschal II.



Picture¹⁴² ➔

¹⁴²Grandmaster Frà Matthew Festing admires the original papal bull “Pie postulatio voluntatis”.
Image source: Author's own photograph



The ecclesiastical significance of the bull "Pie postulatio voluntatis" can hardly be overestimated. In this document, the Xenodochium in Jerusalem, along with its constituent communities, is explicitly mentioned for the first time in a papal letter. Of particular importance is the mention of Gérard by name, who is solemnly confirmed in his roles as leader, head, provost, and head of the community.

Beyond merely recognizing the personnel structure, the Pope granted the community crucial institutional privileges:

- **Active suffrage:** The community was granted the sovereign right to freely elect and install its superiors from among its own members after Gerhard's death. This ensured the internal autonomy of the Order of St. John against external influences.
- **Legal personality:** For the first time, the Hospital Brotherhood was recognized as an independent, autonomous community and thus as a legal person.
- **Asset capacity:** As a result of this legal personality, the Order of St. John received the authority to legally own and independently dispose of goods, real estate and income.

With this papal constitution, the process of emancipation was completed: what had once been a monastic branch had grown into a universal, independent institution of canon law.

¹⁴³Stamps issued by the Order of Malta commemorating the above "Founding Bull" of March 8, 1993. Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-182-commemorazione-della-bolla-di-fondazione-dellospedale-di-san-giovanni-in-gerusalemme/>



Pope Calixtus II (1119 - 13 November 1124) confirmed the privileges and possessions of the hospital, and in particular the bull "*Pie postulatio voluntatis*" of **Pope Paschal II**, through his bull "*Ad hoc nos*" ...¹⁴⁴

←Image ¹⁴⁵

Calixtus, etc., to his venerable son Gérard, founder and provost of the Hospital of Jerusalem, and to his legitimate successors forever.

For this purpose we recognize that we have been promoted, by the Lord's disposition, to the service of the Apostolic See: that we ought to effectively come to the aid of his sons who implore help, and to protect the venerable places, as the Lord has granted. Wherefore, beloved son in Christ, Provost Gerard, incited by the pious efforts of your hospitality, we receive your petition with due kindness, and we fortify the Hospital established by you in the city of Jerusalem, near the church of St. John the Baptist, under the protection of the Apostolic See, after the example of our predecessor of holy memory, Pope Paschal.

Furthermore, by the page of this present decree, **we confirm the concession** of our brother Pons, Bishop of Tripoli, which he—following his predecessor Herbert—**bestowed upon your Hospital** and established by a signed document. He indeed granted to the same Hospital, and to you and your legitimate successors, by the counsel and favor of Berengar, Bishop of Orange, then legate of the Apostolic See in those parts, all the tithes of the whole land which William Rostagni held, and after him Pons de Mezenes possessed, from the castle named Gaucefredus de Agolt to Calamo; as well as the parochial church, having a baptistry, a cemetery, the offerings of the living and the deceased, and all other things that belong to a parochial church, and all other churches that are within the borders of that aforementioned land, which belonged to Pons de Medenes, and whatever else should be of the right of the church of Tripoli, saving, however, the reverence and obedience of the bishop in those priests whom the prior of the aforementioned Hospital shall establish in the prenamed churches. Furthermore, he gave to the same Hospital the church of St. John the Baptist on Mount Pilgrim, with all that it ought to have, and with the tithes of the mills of William Beraldi, and also with the tithes of all possessions and things which the aforementioned house then holds in its entirety from the Bishopric of Tripoli. **Therefore, this concession, just as it was made by the same bishop, was confirmed by our predecessor of holy memory, Pope Paschal.** And all things that serve to sustain the needs of pilgrims and the poor, etc.

(R) I, Calixtus, Bishop of the Catholic Church, have signed. (M).

Given at Saint-Gilles, by the hand of **Chrysogonus**, cardinal-deacon of the Holy Roman Church and librarian, on the **19th of June**, in the year **1120** of the Incarnation of the Lord, and in the 1st year of the pontificate of the Lord Calixtus II.

¹⁴⁴Delaville Le Roulx , Cartulaire, No. 48. Translation of the Latin text using Google Translate . The charter of June 20, 1112, is a key moment, as King Baldwin I of Jerusalem confirms the hospital's possessions in it. Furthermore, Gerhard is officially referred to as the " institutor " (founder) of the hospital for the first time in this document .

¹⁴⁵Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paschalis_II.png?uselang=de

Excursus: Burial site and relics of Blessed Gérard

Blessed Gérard died on September 3, 1120.
The French historian of religious orders,



146

René Aubert Vertôt paid tribute to him in his writings¹⁴⁷ as follows:
"The Hospitallers lost in him the father of the poor and of pilgrims [...]"

This virtuous man, who had reached a great age,
died in the arms of his brothers, almost without prior illness:
one can say he fell away like a fruit ripe for eternity."



148

¹⁴⁶Portrait of the Abbé de Vertôt (1727) in the [Museum of the Order of St John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_the_Order_of_Saint_John) :

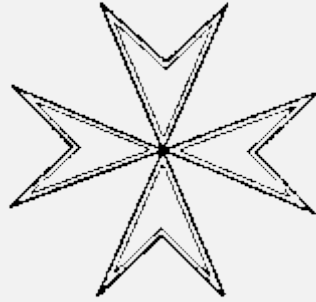
Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9-Aubert_Vertot

¹⁴⁷ *History of the Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem. Paris 1726. Book 1*

¹⁴⁸Copper engraving, probably from around 1740.

Image source: <https://www.facebook.com/orderofmalta.auxiliary/posts/o-god-who-exalted-blessed-gerard-because-of-his-care-for-the-poor-and-the-sick-a/811793254832328/>

According to Fulcher of Chartres, his epitaph reads:



*Here rests Gérard,
the humblest man among the inhabitants of the East;
a servant of the poor and a hospitable friend to strangers.
Of modest appearance, yet noble in heart.
The extent of his kindness is evident within these walls.
In his actions, he was far-sighted and conscientious.
He undertook many tasks of various kinds;
he diligently extended his reach to distant lands and gathered from
everywhere the means to feed his people.*

(Quoted and translated from HJA Sire:
The Knights of Malta, reprint New Haven and London 1994)

The original burial site in Jerusalem

The grave of Blessed Gérard was located on the grounds of the hospital, most likely inside the church there.

First transfer of the mortal remains to Manosque (France)

Period: after 1187, but before 1283

The remains of Blessed Gérard appear to have been transferred to Europe after the fall of Jerusalem in 1187. The exact circumstances of how the relics arrived in Manosque have not yet been definitively clarified historically.

Theodore Andrea Cook writes in "Old Provence":

"In 1080, a citizen from Martigues named Gérard Tenque founded the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem [...]; Gilbert the Good, husband of Countess Gerberge of Provence, brought numerous relics from the Holy Land, which were later kept in the churches of Arles and the surrounding area."

It is possible that Gilbert the Good brought the relics of Blessed Gérard to Manosque. In 1283, the body was interred in a precious silver reliquary adorned with precious stones in the Hospitaller chapel of Manosque, where it remained until the French Revolution.

Msgr. François Ducaud-Bourget explains this in "The Spiritual Heritage of The Sovereign Military Order of Malta" (Vatican 1958):

"Without a doubt, his relics were in Manosque from 1283 – from the time of the capture of Acre by the Mamluks and the reorganisation of the Hospitallers in Cyprus – until their destruction during the French Revolution."

Transfer of the skull to Valletta (Malta)

By order of **Grandmaster Emmanuel Pinto**, the head of Blessed Gérard was transferred to Valletta in Malta in 1749.

Destruction of the relics during the French Revolution (1789–1799)

Several sources confirm that the relics remaining in Manosque were destroyed during the turmoil of the revolution. Apparently, only an **upper arm bone** and a **vertebra** were salvaged.

Securing the remaining relics in Martigues

After the recovery, the humerus and vertebrae were kept in the church of Martigues. For a time, these remains were on display in the town hall there, following an official inventory.

Current locations of the relics

According to the author's current knowledge, the relics of Blessed Gérard are venerated in the following places:

1. **Martigues** (France):
 - a. Parish Church of St. Madelaine (L'Île district):
Here you will find the relic of the humerus as well as another reliquary (contents presumably a vertebra).
 - b. Church of Saint Louis d'Anjou (Ferrières district):
repository of a vertebral relic.
2. **Vitrolles** (France): Relics in the Church of Saint-Gérard.
3. **Rome** (Italy): Part of the humerus from Martigues was handed over to the **Grand Magistry of the Order of Malta** and is kept in the chapel there.
4. **Mandeni** (South Africa): On September 3, 1996, the Grand Magistry presented a fragment of the humerus to the **Blessed Gérard's Church**. The presentation was made by the then Grand Commander, Frà Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein.
5. **Ehreshoven** (Germany): Another fragment of the humerus is located in the chapel of the Malteser Commandery.
6. **Valletta** (Malta): The skull is kept in the convent of the Sisters of St. Ursula.
7. **London** (Great Britain): A skull fragment is kept in the Grand Priory of England.
8. **Sicily** (Italy): Further skull fragments are located in the Church of St. Odigitria (Caronia) and in the Church of St. Francis and St. Agatha (Militello).
9. **Pisa** (Italy): A relic is venerated in the Church of St. Dominic.
10. **Cologne** (Germany): Another (skull?) fragment is there.

Pictures:

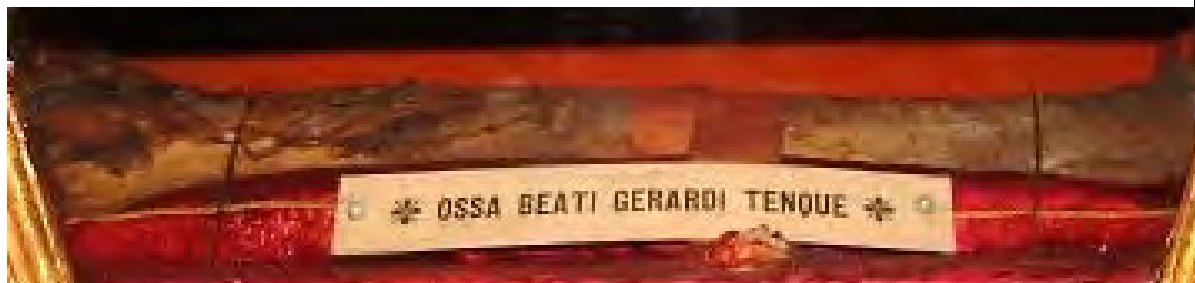


The author visited Martigues on March 12 and 13, 2015, with Knights and Dames of Malta from France. ¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹Image source: Author's own photograph

The remaining humerus (or part of it)
and vertebrae in **Martigues**.

Upper arm relic of Blessed Gérard in the parish church of Martigues
(St. Magdalene Church, L'Île district):



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

Another reliquary in the same church (contents unknown – vertebrae?)



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

Vertebral relic of Blessed Gérard
in the church of Saint Louis d'Anjou (Ferrières district)



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

Another reliquary in the same church
(contents unknown – appears empty)



More pictures:
LES MARTEGAUX ETAIENT A SAINT MAXIMIN
AVEC LES RELIQUES DU BIENHEUREUX GÉRARD TENQUE
<https://youtu.be/xe9Tbvd8B8s>

Relics in the Church of **Saint-Gérard in Vitrolles /France**



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.



Part of the humerus from Martigues was handed over to the **Grand Magistry of the Order of Malta in Rome** and is kept there in the chapel.



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

On September 3, 1996, the Grand Magistry presented a portion of his humerus fragment to **Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni, South Africa** .



The then Grand Commander of the Order of Malta, Frà Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein, presented the relic.



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

The Grand Magistry has donated another part of its humerus fragment to the chapel of the **Malteser Commandery in Ehreshoven**, Germany.



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

The skull in **St. Ursula's Convent in Valletta/Malta**

Current reliquary Former reliquary



150



152



151



Contact relic:
Linen fabric that was touched on the skull relic of Blessed Gerard in the St. Ursula Monastery in Valletta/Malta. ➔



BEATO GERARDO
Fondatore dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano di San Giovanni

Linea toccata con la reliquia del Cranio del Beato, venerato nella Chiesa del monastero di Sant'Ursola - Valletta, Malta

¹⁵⁰Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/vxvrzkmr>

¹⁵¹Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/3zr6vxbj>

¹⁵²Image source for all images in the right column: Author's own photos

A skull fragment of Blessed Gérard
is kept at the Grand Priory of England of the Order of Malta
in **London/Great Britain**.



All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

Another skull fragment of Blessed Gérard
is kept in **Sicily, Italy** .

Further information can be found at

<http://www.carlomarullodicondojanni.net/Beato%20Gerardo.htm>



CHURCH OF ST. ODIGITRIA CARONIA




AD PERPETVAM REI MEMORIAM

Illud profecto egregie pietatis opus est, ut orthodoxae fidei cultores eius, qui per nos, cantare nosi tamnummodo Deum in sacris suis confessionibus admirabilem, sed singulat quoque patriam ac parentes observantia prosecuantur, ita ut, quocumque ab eodem sine patina vel dicta feruntur in terra, hinc merito etiam ad superne civitatis laudem et honorem referantur videantur. Considerans ergo oram Nos ducere a pensabili urbe Messanenae, que inde a primordiis incliti Ordinis S. Iovannis Hierosolymitani secundum loco Domini Hospitalium inter septem antiquissimas, etque adhaerens Primatum, meritis suis, multis quodammodo hospitio, accepere; itaque perdati Nos accendi pietate in S. Gerardo, institutum ac primam praepositum eiusdem Ordinis, sub cuius signo Nos, ex honestissimo praepositorum Nostorum more extinguae religione, septimo tantipidem hunc praepositorum, honorabilis primam Praefecti Constantinii Episcopi, deinde Magni Cancellarii functi, nunc vero libera legatione fungentes, pauperum Iesu Christi obsequio fideique catholice tuncque militamus; insipientem pietatis Novitate huius memoriam potentius prodere cupientes, B. Gerardi ex omnibus indagata Messanenae templo S. Iovannis Hierosolymitani, Rev. mo D. Nino Caminiti, eiusdem templi praeposito, de manibus Nostre accipiente, concedimus; ac in terra feruida membris exceptamus, ut omnia ac singula membra Ordinis S. Iovannis Hierosolymitani, etiamque cunctis viciis ac conditionibus Claustralibus, qui forte huius B. Gerardi reliquias debita religione coluntur, tam gloriosi Confessionis exemplo ruberent, atque deprecationibus summoque coacti, cito in transitu progressi sanctitate, etque ad optata premia viderent cum gaudio pervenire.

Datum Messanae, apud S. Iovannem Hierosolymitanum, die XIII mensis Octobris, Anno MDLV, in Forno B. Gerardi, instituti ac primi praepositi Ordinis S. Iovannis Hierosolymitani.

D. Carolina Manalini, Comes Coadiuvantis
 Princeps Novocastellae






CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS AND ST. AGATHA DI MILITELLO

A relic of Blessed Gérard in the
Dominic's Church in Pisa/Italy



¹⁵³Image source: Author's own photograph

¹⁵⁴Image source: <https://www.comendadorasdemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DSC02298.jpg>

¹⁵⁵Image source: <https://lucabattini.blogspot.com/2012/02/busto-reliquiario-in-bronzo-del-beato.html>

Another relic of Blessed Gérard is in Cologne.



Since the inscription on the reliquary capsule is similar to that on the two Italian relics, and these are fragments of the Maltese skull relic, I assume that this one is also a skull relic of Blessed Gérard.

4. Blessed Raymond du Puy, author of the monastic rule

Grandmaster from 1120 to 1158



156



157



158



159

¹⁵⁶Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

¹⁵⁷Copper engraving by Laurent Cars (1699-1771)

¹⁵⁸Image source: Author's own photo, optimised with ChatGPT.

¹⁵⁹Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated October 5, 1969.

Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/de/stamps/emissione-8-gran-maestri-1a/>



160

Translation: "RAIMUND DE PUY,
FIRST GRANDMASTER OF THE HOLY ORDER OF JERUSALEM

Raymond, from the ancient and noble Puy family of the Dauphiné, was elected rector and first master in 1131¹⁶¹. He was the first to hold a general chapter in Jerusalem, where he formalized the assembly of the Hospitaller Brothers into a truly religious order, later confirmed by Gelasius and Callixtus II. He divided the brothers into three classes: knights, chaplains, and servants. After prescribing the form of their mantle, which was black with a white eight-pointed cross, he established the militia so that his knights would not only commendably care for the sick but also participate in expeditions to the Holy Land against the infidels, winning many notable victories. He received special privileges from King Roger of Sicily and had the honour of having his order bequeathed to him by King Alfonso of Aragon, who died without an heir, as his inheritance from that kingdom. He was a very brave captain and the clearest and most famous master his order ever had. He died in Jerusalem in 1160 after 29 years as master and is counted among the blessed of the order, alongside Gérard the Rector.

¹⁶⁰Copper engraving circa 1600-1700. Austrian National Library

¹⁶¹1120, not 1131!

In 1120, the Order of St. John elected **Raymond of Puy** (Raimundus Puteanus) as the successor to Blessed Gérard.

Raymond's lasting achievement is the codification of the Order's rule, which serves as the primary source for this study. Under his leadership, the Order of St. John was transformed into a military order, modelled on the Knights Templar. Thus, it assumed military duties in addition to its charitable work. This is not surprising, as many knights were already members of the Order. Ensuring the safety of pilgrims on their journeys to and from Jerusalem and in the hospitals was a natural consequence of their goal of providing comprehensive care for their lords in every respect.



Defence of Coele-Syria by Raymond du Puy, painting by Édouard Cibot (1799–1877), 1844, commissioned by Louis-Philippe for the Historical Museum of Versailles ¹⁶²

¹⁶²Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Defense_de_la_Celesyrie_par_Raymond_du_Puy_-_Edouard_Cibot_1844.jpg



The King of Jerusalem, **Fulk V of Anjou**
 (the picture shows him at his wedding to Queen Melisende on June 2, 1129 ¹⁶³),

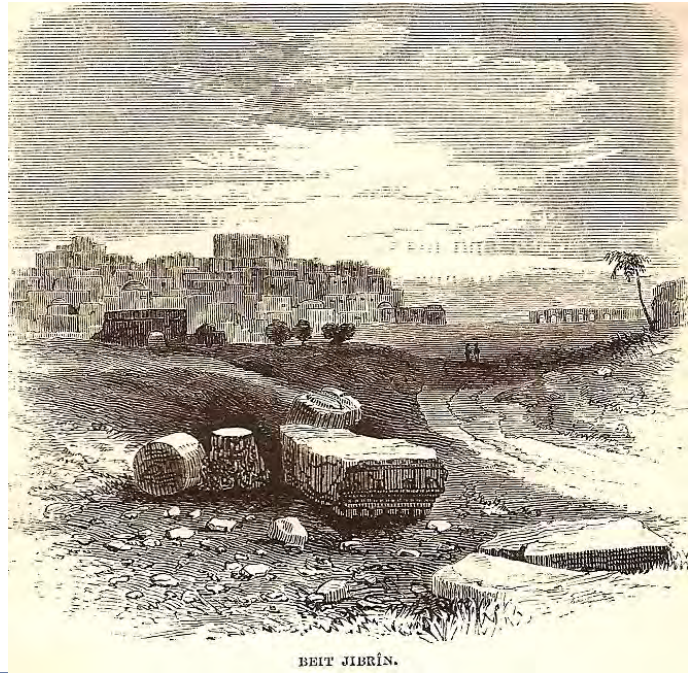


with the defense of the city of Beersheba in
¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶³ **Queen Melisende marries Fulk of Anjou** , miniature from a manuscript by **William of Tyre** , *Histoire d'Outremer* (13th century). In: **Georges Tate** : *The Crusaders. Warriors of God* . London: Thames and Hudson 1996, p. 71. Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Melisende_and_Fulk_of_Jerusalem.jpg

¹⁶⁴Image of a fresco in the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta, Malta.
 Photo: Source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a035.jpg>

with the border castle
Beit Gibelin ¹⁶⁵
(today: Beit Guvrin / Bayt Jibrin)
in 1136



166



167

and the castle Krak des Chevaliers in 1142.

¹⁶⁵Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/46/Beit_Jibrin%2C_Palestine%2C_1859-cropped.jpg

¹⁶⁶Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5a/Crac_des_chevaliers_syria.jpeg/1600px-Crac_des_chevaliers_syria.jpeg

¹⁶⁷Chapel: Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c7/Chapel_of_Krak_des_Chevaliers_01.jpg/2560px-Chapel_of_Krak_des_Chevaliers_01.jpg



Raymond du Puy offers his services to King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. (Fresco in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta) ¹⁶⁸



The image shows a copper engraving by **Raimund** (Raymundus) of the Order of St. John.

Identity: The Latin inscription in the upper left identifies him as "Raymundus ordinis Iohannitarum Magister electus" (Raimundus, elected Master of the Order of St. John). The signature in the lower right is "Iohanser Naister," a historical spelling of **Johannes Naister**, which also points to the Order of St. John.

- **Historical context:** The accompanying text describes the regulations and military attire of the Order under King Baldwin (presumably Baldwin II of Jerusalem). It mentions that the knights vowed to defend the Holy Land and Christians against infidels with arms.
- **Clothing of the Order:** The description in the text states that the knights wore military red clothing with a white cross over it. In war, they wore a red vest with a white cross.
- **Order's habit:** On the sleeve of the man depicted in the engraving is an octagonal white cross (the Maltese cross) on a dark background, which corresponds to the description in the text. ¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸Photo: Source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a013.jpg>

¹⁶⁹Image analysis generated by Google AI on January 22, 2026



170

[↑Image](#)

The dual role of the Order of St. John as a knightly and hospitaller order is first documented in a

papal appeal for donations

dated **February 20, 1131**,

the circular letter .

“Quam amabilis Deo” ¹⁷¹

by **Pope Innocent II**

(1130 – 1143):

To Bishop Innocent, the venerable brothers, the archbishops, bishops (*etc.*)

Greetings and apostolic blessing. **How pleasing** and highly esteemed the Hospital of Jerusalem (*Xenodochium*) is, what pleasant and valuable accommodation it offers poor pilgrims, has been amply experienced by those who, driven by inner piety and facing dangers at sea and on land, visit the holy city of Jerusalem and the Lord's tomb. There (*in the Hospital of Jerusalem*) the poor and destitute are restored to strength, countless acts of charity are performed for the sick, and those weakened by manifold hardships and dangers regain their former vigour. And so that they themselves may travel to the places sanctified by the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the brothers of this house, ever ready to lay down their lives for their brothers (*the pilgrims*) , undertake to protect the pilgrims from attacks by unbelievers, both on their way there and on their return, with the squires and mounts specially chosen and maintained for this purpose. These are the people through whom God cleanses the Eastern Church of the defilement of unbelievers and combats the enemies of the Christian name.** And since their own resources are insufficient for such a pious and God-pleasing work, we appeal to your charity through this bull, that you may use your abundance to alleviate their need and earnestly exhort the flock entrusted to you to join their fraternity and to organize collections for the support of pilgrims and the needy, thereby also obtaining the forgiveness of sins. You should know that we have placed this house of hospitality, with all its appurtenances, under the protection of St. Peter and Our Lord, and have issued him a written testament to this. Therefore, whoever, from the wealth bestowed upon him by God, assists these brothers and **enters their fraternity as a member** , and also pays them a certain amount annually, to him we grant, from the treasury of grace of the Apostles Peter and Paul, a one-week indulgence. By virtue of our apostolic authority, we further decree, out of deep respect for this venerable house, that those who have accepted its fraternity, should the churches to which they belong be under interdict at the time of their death, shall enjoy a church burial, provided that they are not themselves excommunicated and personally excommunicated. Furthermore, members of the fraternity whom the prelates refuse to permit burial at their churches shall, if they are not personally excommunicated, be allowed to offer gifts at the graves of the deceased without any objection, just as those offered for others buried there. Moreover, those who admit new members into the

¹⁷⁰Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Innocentius_II.png?uselang=de

¹⁷¹Translated from: Wienand, *ibid.*, p. 606, no. 3.

fraternity and collect the offerings shall be placed under the special protection of St. Peter and Our Lord, irrespective of the rights of their superiors. When the brothers entrusted with this collection arrive in any town, castle, or village, perhaps under interdict, the churches are to be opened once a year to celebrate their joyful arrival, and divine service is to be celebrated with the exclusion of the excommunicated. To increase their merit, we command you to communicate this statute to your parishioners by special letter; we also decree that if some of your clergy wish to serve the brothers of the aforementioned hospital voluntarily and without compensation for one or two years, with the permission of their spiritual superior, they shall not be prevented from doing so, nor shall they forfeit their benefices and incomes.

Given at Chalons on February 20, in the eighth indiction, in the first year of the pontificate of Pope Innocent II

The Pope's call to join the fraternity/confraternity does not refer to the Order itself or the Confraternity of St. John, from which the Order originated, but to a new institute, similar to the contemporary Third Order of St. Francis or the Benedictine Oblates. This fraternity is a community of all who wish to support the Order through prayers and financial donations, essentially as supporting members. Shortly after his election as Grandmaster, Raymond du Puy wrote about this fraternity around 1121:

" To all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, counts and all the faithful, both present and future: Raymond, the servant of the poor of Christ, sends greetings."

*Since I was appointed a Servant of the Poor of Christ after the death of Mr. Gérard, I earnestly beg your love that you **do not diminish your alms and support for this holy hospital in Jerusalem** but rather increase them. We do this so that you may share in the blessings and prayers offered in Jerusalem for all Christendom.*

For those who have joined our brotherhood, or who will join it in the future, should be as assured of God's mercy as if they themselves had fought in Jerusalem. They will receive the crown of righteousness .¹⁷²

¹⁷²The Latin text of this letter can be found in Delaville Le Roulx: Cartulaire. Document No. 70 (Volume 1), dated to the period between 1121 and 1123.

Pope Innocent II confirmed in 1135
the privileges granted to the Order by his predecessors ¹⁷³:

Innocent II (etc.) (wishes) his beloved son Raymund in Christ, at the Pilgrim House in Jerusalem, and his successors, who will be appointed according to canon law, (salvation) forever. We confess that by the Lord's providence we have been appointed to the service of the Holy See, that we should effectively support His sons when they implore help, and protect the holy places as the Lord has given them. Therefore, beloved son in the Lord, Provost Raymund, inspired by your pious zeal for the hospitals, we accept your request with due benevolence and place the Pilgrim House, which was established by your predecessors in the city of Jerusalem next to the Church of Blessed John the Baptist, under the secure protection of the Apostolic See, following the example of our predecessors of holy memory, the Roman Popes Paschal, Calixtus, and Honorius. **We decree that everything acquired** for the needs of pilgrims and the poor in the parishes of the Church of Jerusalem, as well as in those of other churches and in the prayer houses of the communities, through the diligent efforts of your predecessor, of blessed memory Gérard, and your own, for this pilgrim house, or donated by any faithful men, everything that may be donated or acquired in the future, God willing, and everything that has been ceded by the venerable brothers of the See of Jerusalem, **shall remain untouched and fully preserved, both for you, beloved son, Provost Raymund, and for your successors and for the brothers who care for the pilgrims there.** We also decree that the donations granted to this pilgrim house by the pious princes from tithes and taxes shall be considered legally valid. We also confirm the pilgrim houses and alms-houses in the West, near the castle of Saint Giles, at Asti, Pisa, Bari, Otranto, Tarentum, and Messina, which are renowned under the name of Jerusalem; furthermore, all the honours and possessions that your Pilgrim House already possesses on both sides of the sea in Asia or in Europe, or that it may acquire in the future with the Lord's help, to you and your successors who distinguish themselves in their efforts on behalf of the hospitals, and through you to this Pilgrim House for all time; and we decree that all this shall remain under the protection and authority of the Roman See. Moreover, we ordain that you may retain and possess for your Pilgrim House the tenth of your fruits, wherever you collect them from your revenues, without objection from bishops or episcopal officials. We establish that no bishop may pronounce the penalty of interdict or excommunication in the churches under your jurisdiction. However, if a general interdict has been proclaimed in a city or other place, you shall be permitted to celebrate the divine mysteries, albeit with the laity excluded, with the doors locked, and without the ringing of *bells*. After your death, you who are now provost of this place, or after the death of any of your successors, no one shall become its head through trickery or force, only the one whom the brothers have designated for election according to God's will. Therefore, we decree that no one shall be permitted to simply disturb this pilgrim house, steal its possessions, withhold stolen possessions, threaten it, or harass it with reckless disturbances, but that everything shall remain untouched by him for whose preservation and management it is intended, in every respect, for all time. If any cleric or layman should dare, knowing this document and our decree, to act against

¹⁷³ Translated from: Wienand, *ibid.*, p. 607, no. 4.

it, he shall be admonished two or three times. If he does not amend his guilt to a satisfactory degree, he shall forfeit the dignity of his office and his honour and acknowledge that, according to divine judgment, he is guilty of a crime. He shall be kept away from the most holy flesh and blood of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and subjected to a final, severe punishment. With all who uphold their rights in this place, may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be, that they may receive here below the fruit of their good deeds and find with the stern Judge the reward of eternal peace. Amen, amen, amen...

On February 7, 1137,
Innocent II confirmed the hospital master Raymond in his duties,
placed the order under his protection and granted it further privileges ¹⁷⁴:

Innocent II (*etc.*) wishes eternal salvation to his beloved son Raymund, master of the pilgrims' house in the holy city of Jerusalem, and to his brothers, both present and future. The religion of the Christian faith piously believes and truly professes that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, although rich in all things, became poor for our sake. Therefore, he also promises those who emulate him the reward of corresponding comfort. 'Blessed,' he says, 'are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' And this same father of orphans and refuge of the poor speaks in the Gospel, in which he exhorts us to hospitality and good works: 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' He also assured us, in order to show the extraordinary goodness of such humanity, that he himself would pay the price for a cup of cold water. And we, to whom it is due by virtue of our office to care with fatherly love for those near and far, regard your sacrifice with due benevolence and, as you request, place the hospital of the holy city of Jerusalem under the protection of St. Peter and secure the persons and property belonging to it by the privilege of the Apostolic See. We decree that all possessions, all goods which this place currently possesses according to secular and canon law, or which may in the future be acquired by donation of popes, generosity of kings and princes, sacrifices of the faithful, or in any other lawful way, God willing, shall be secure and remain undiminished for all eternity.

The following provision stipulates that those who support the hospital will receive the remission of one-seventh of their sins. In the event of an interdict, hospitals have the right to a church burial. They may open interdicted churches once a year, hold services there, and collect donations.

Around 1140, Pope Innocent II called upon the whole Church to assist the Order with its responsibilities¹⁷⁵.

Innocent II (*etc.*) wishes the venerable brothers, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and all the heads of the churches to whom this document has been delivered, good health... (*etc.*). Those who, spurred on by pious devotion and amidst manifold dangers by land and sea, visit the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Lord's Tomb, continually recognize how pleasing to God and worthy of

¹⁷⁴ Translated from: Wienand, *ibid.*, p. 609, no. 5.

¹⁷⁵ Translated from: Wienand, *ibid.*, p. 609, no. 6.

veneration to humankind, what a pleasant and useful lodging the Pilgrim House of Jerusalem is to pilgrims and the poor. For there the needy and the poor are cared for, the sick are shown the services of humanity in manifold ways, and those weary from various hardships and dangers are strengthened to the best of one's ability. There, the servants whom the brothers of the house have specifically assigned for this purpose and, when expediency requires, maintain at their own expense, piously and diligently ensure that those who travel to the holy places, which are entrusted to them by the body of Christ, are well cared for. Those who have been consecrated to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ can be assured of their care. Since the brothers lack the means for such an enormous undertaking, we exhort your charitable love through this apostolic letter in the Lord to compensate for their lack from your abundance and to urge the people entrusted to your care, with frequent exhortations, to accept their brotherhood for the remission of their sins and to organize collections to support the pilgrims, knowing full well that we have placed the hospital, with all that belongs to it, under the protection of Saint Peter and secured it by our written document...

The privileges in case of interdict follow, as in the text of the document of the same Pope to the Master of the Order Raymund of 7.2.1137.

King (an English historian of the Order) reports that the Knights of the Hospital were firmly established in England long before the death of Raymond du Puy and that they were granted Shingay ¹⁷⁶in Cambridgeshire in 1140... In the middle of the 12th century... land was given in Clerkenwell ¹⁷⁷, on which the Grand Priory, the headquarters of the Order in England, was built.

¹⁷⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shingay>

¹⁷⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerkenwell>

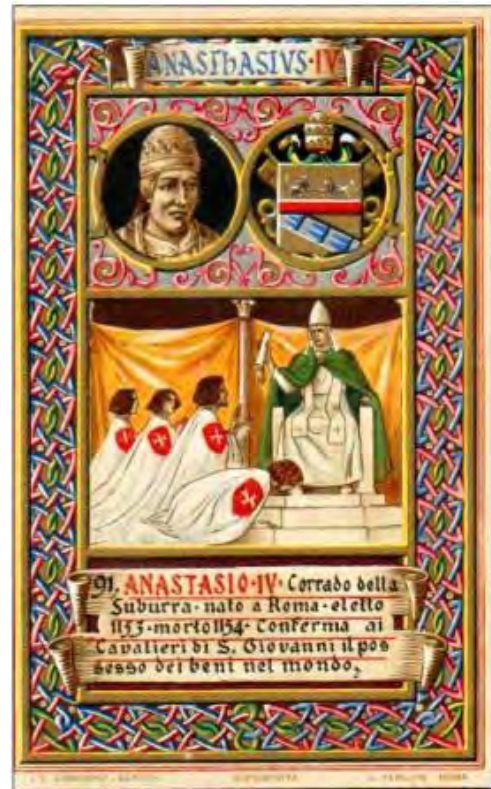
It was **Pope Anastasius IV.** ¹⁷⁸



(1153–1154),
who, in his bull "**Christianae fidei religio**"
¹⁷⁹granted the Order the right to admit priests and to be completely independent of episcopal jurisdiction. This meant that from

then on, the Order was directly subordinate to the Pope. Therefore, the Order members began to be divided into three classes: priests, knights, and "serving brothers."

Image ¹⁸⁰➔



Anastasius, Bishop and Servant of the Lord, to his beloved son Raymond, Rector of the Hospital in Jerusalem, and to his brothers, present and future, who forever receive spiritual life, health, and the papal blessing. The **Christian Church** firmly believes and sincerely professes that Jesus Christ, our Lord, though rich in all things, became poor for our sake. Therefore, he promises those who follow him the reward of consolation: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Like the Father of the Orphans and the Savior of the Poor, who exhorts us to hospitality and generosity, the Gospel says: "Whatever you did for one of the brothers and sisters of mine last over, you did for me." And to further demonstrate the perfection of this virtue, he assures us that he will even reward us for a cup of cold water. We, however, whose duty it is to extend fatherly care to people near and far, accept you in your devotion and grant you our favour in whatever you ask of us. And following the example of our predecessors—Innocent, Celestine, Lucius, Eugenius, and all the Roman Popes of blessed memory—we accept the protection of Saint Peter of the Hospital and refuge in the holy city of Jerusalem, and we protect all property with the privileges of the Holy See.

We decree that all goods and possessions acquired by the Hospital to support the needs of pilgrims and the poor in the parishes of the churches of Jerusalem or other churches, or acquired for the careful care of the poor, or donated by anyone, as well as future gifts from kings and princes granted by the grace of God, or goods acquired in any other way; whatever the venerable brothers of

¹⁷⁸Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anastasius_IV.png?uselang=de

¹⁷⁹Source: http://smhospital.ru/history.php?razdel=hist_1154bull. The same bull quoted from: Wienand, op. cit., p. 610, no. 7 (translation using Google Translate).

¹⁸⁰Illustration from a 19th-century religious map showing Anastasius IV confirming the possession of the Hospitallers' secular property.

Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anastasius_IV_podoba.jpg?uselang=de

the See of Jerusalem have lawfully donated to the priests of the Church for you or your successors, as well as for the brothers who care for pilgrims, We decree that all this (property) be peacefully and completely assigned to the Order.

Should a plot of land have been granted to the Holy House for the glory of God, you may erect buildings there, build churches, and establish cemeteries according to the needs of the people living there, until nearby abbeys can assume this responsibility. Once the lands granted to you have been lawfully distributed, you may found chapels and establish cemeteries there to meet the needs of pilgrims and the brothers who dine at your table. We further decree that the successors of your brotherhood, without prejudice to the Masters, shall remain under Our protection and that of Saint Peter, and wherever they travel on earth, they shall bring peace.

We have also decreed that anyone who has joined your brotherhood, in the event that the church to which he belongs is forbidden to conduct religious services, and in the event of his death, may not be denied a church burial until he has been excommunicated by name.

If one of the brothers you send to receive the aforementioned brotherhood or council arrives in a town or village where religious services are forbidden and that place does not deserve the glory of Almighty God, the church must be opened once a year after the brothers' safe arrival. If the excommunicated turn away, the service must be held.

And until all your wealth has been spent on supporting pilgrims and the poor, or on other purposes, We decree that no layperson or clergyman should even consider extorting church tithes or reaping the fruits of your labour. We decree that even bishops will not be permitted to impose interdicts, suspensions, or excommunications against the churches entrusted to you. However, should a general interdict be imposed on these places, services may be held discreetly, behind closed doors and without the ringing of bells, until the church in question is explicitly excommunicated.

So that you may not lack the fullness of salvation and care for your souls, and so that the sacraments of the Church and divine services may be easily organized for you and the poor of Christ, We decree that you **may receive clergy and priests**, regardless of their origin, provided you can prove their purity and spiritual rank and obtain further information about them through letters and corroborating testimonies. You may keep them both in your principal institutions and in other necessary establishments, as long as they are not bound to any districts or dioceses and do not intend to harm the ministry of the Order.

And should the bishop refuse to assign you a priest, you nevertheless have the right to accept and retain him, irrespective of the authority of the Holy Roman Church. These ministers may not be subject to anyone outside your order, except the Pope.

We are also obliged to endow you with the authority to admit free lay people into your Society for the Poor without objection.

We forbid you to return to the world your brothers who have joined your society, been received into it, taken vows, and donned the religious habit. It would

be wrong for someone, after taking vows, finding the Cross of the Most High, and donning the religious habit, to abandon it.

And no one should move into a large or small monastery without the prior consent of the brothers or the abbot of that monastery. If the brothers do not wish to accept him, the brother should not move, even if he has received permission to do so. Neither a layman nor a clergyman should grant the authority to accept or retain brothers.

The consecration of altars or basilicas (a basilica is a medieval Christian church, usually cruciform – translator's note), the ordination of priests who have been transferred to the holy state, and other ecclesiastical sacraments are the responsibility of the bishop of the diocese. Provided, of course, that he is Catholic, shares the views of the Apostolic See, and is well-disposed toward it, he must grant you the sacraments described without objection. Otherwise, you are free, at your own discretion, to request the fulfilment of your request from another Catholic bishop who is irrefutably supported by our authority.

And in the event of the death of the leader and director, no one shall assume this office through deceit, trickery, or violence, but only someone chosen by the brothers according to God's will.

Furthermore, we guarantee you the offices and property here and overseas, in Asia and Europe, which the hospital lawfully possesses or can lawfully acquire, so that progress may be made in the hospital's operations through your efforts. No one shall be so foolish as to disrupt the aforementioned work, seize hospital property, or retain stolen property from the hospitals in order to weaken or disrupt them by force. And everything given for you and in your support shall be preserved intact and secure, and everything shall continue to be given to you in the future for any purpose whatsoever, with due respect to the authority of the Apostolic See and the ecclesiastical justice of the Bishop of the diocese.

And whoever in the future, whether clergy or laity, knows this law of ours and, after the third admonition, recklessly attempts to violate it, shall, until he has fully made amends, be removed from his power and office and deprived of all self-respect. He shall know that he is subject to divine justice for the crime committed, and he shall be excommunicated from the holy body and blood of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and ultimately subject to personal vengeance. But may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be granted to all who keep this law when they reap the fruits of their good deeds, and may they be granted eternal peace at the heavenly judgment. Amen, amen, amen.

Given in the Lateran by Roland, Priest of the Holy Roman Church, to the Chancellor, on October 21, in the third proclamation, in the year 1154 after the Resurrection of our Lord, in the second year of the pontificate of Pope Anastasius IV.



Raimund du Puy ¹⁸¹

The first settlements and commanderies were established in the second half of the 12th century as a result of donations to the Order after the end of the Second Crusade (1147-1149), in which a large number of German princes and knights had participated, out of gratitude because many had been nursed back to health by the Knights Hospitaller/Maltese after being sick or wounded.

- The first German religious order in **Duisburg** /Rhineland was first documented¹⁸²
- 1156 the first in Austria in **Mailberg**¹⁸³.
- In 1156, Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa confirmed the Order's legacies. all possessions in Austria and throughout the German Reich.
- The first community in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) followed in 1158 in **Prague**¹⁸⁴.
- In 1160 the order received the church and estate in **Werben**¹⁸⁵ on the Elbe in Germany as a gift, which became the mother house of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg.
- In 1165 the order arrived in **Antvorskov**¹⁸⁶ in Denmark.
- At the same time, the communities of **Esztergom** (Hungary) and **Poznań**¹⁸⁷ (Poland) are mentioned.

¹⁸¹Painting in the Grand Magisterium of the Order of Malta: Raymond du Puy before a scene of great historical significance, most likely the **siege of Ascalon** in 1153. Image source: Author's own photograph.

¹⁸² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souver%C3%A4ner_Malteserorden & https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johanniterkommende_Duisburg

¹⁸³ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souver%C3%A4ner_Malteserorden & <https://www.malteserorden.at/ueber-uns/wirtschaftsbetriebe/>

¹⁸⁴ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Maria_unter_der_Kette#:~:text=5%20Einzelnachweise-,Geschichte,somit%20eine%20eigene%20Gerichtsbarkeit%20zustand.

¹⁸⁵ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschichte_des_Johanniterordens

¹⁸⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antvorskov>

¹⁸⁷ <https://regionwielkopolska.pl/de/artykuly-dzieje-wielkopolski/maltanczycy-nad-warta/>



188

Raymond also introduced the Order's Great Seal, the lead bulla, which, with some modifications, remained in use from the 12th century until 1798. Until 1278, when Nicholas de Lorgne introduced a separate Conventual Bulla, there was no distinction between the Grandmaster's seal and that of the Order. The general design of the seal depicted, on the obverse, the Grandmaster kneeling in prayer before the Patriarchal Cross. This image was usually accompanied by the sacred letters Alpha and Omega, alluding to the Second Coming of Christ. The central image was surrounded by a legend bearing the Master's name, followed by the official inscription CVSTOS.¹⁸⁹



Lead seal by Raimund du Puy¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸Image source: https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2015/306/154579194_1446585217.gif

¹⁸⁹Quoted and translated into German from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raimund_du_Puy, which in turn quotes Museum of the Order of St John (14 October 2015). "[Seals of the Grand Masters](#)".

¹⁹⁰This specimen was discovered by Sebastian Freiherr von Bechtolsheim and is now in the possession of the German Association of the Order of Malta. Image source: Sebastian Freiherr von Bechtolsheim's own photograph.



The seal of Raymond of the Puy. It was found beneath the walls of Norwich Castle. On the obverse, the Custos kneels before a patriarchal cross; the inscription reads "+ Raymond of the Custos of the Hospital of Jerusalem." The reverse depicts a church with three domes, undoubtedly representing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The lower half shows the interior with the tomb of Jesus. At the top is a cross, above it a lamp, and at the bottom, presumably, a swinging censur. The inscription reads "+ Hospital of Jerusalem." The "three domes" are actually a simplified representation of Jerusalem from the seal of the Kingdom of Jerusalem; they represent the Dome of the Rock, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Tower of David. ¹⁹¹



¹⁹²

¹⁹¹Text source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_of_Raymond_du_Puy.jpg

Image source: <https://archive.org/details/knightsofmaltaor00port/page/n423/mode/1up> edited.

¹⁹² Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated December 1, 1976.

Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-37-santo-natale-1976/>

When Raymond du Puy died in 1160, he was over eighty years old.

Once again it is **René Aubert de Vertôt**¹⁹³, ➔ praising him with these words:

"The Hospitallers and all the Latin Christians of the East who witnessed his virtues venerated him as one of the blessed even before his canonization, a title that was confirmed by posterity." ¹⁹⁴



Raimund du Puy ¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³Portrait of the Abbé de Vertôt (1727) in the [Museum of the Order of St John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_the_Order_of_Saint_John) :

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9-Aubert_Vertot

¹⁹⁴ **Vertôt, Abbé de** : *Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem, appelez depuis les Chevaliers de Rhodes, and aujourd'hui les Chevaliers de Malte* . Paris: Rollin 1726, Vol. 1, Book I, p. 106. English edition: *The History of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem* . London: Knapton 1728, Vol. 1, Book I, p. 54.

¹⁹⁵Oil painting in the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta. Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/zym6p2yc>

5. Further Development
of the Order of St. John in Jerusalem

a. Grandmaster **Frà Auger de Balben**
(1160 – 1162)



196



197



198



199

¹⁹⁶Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

¹⁹⁷Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/54nmstan>

¹⁹⁸Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome.
Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

¹⁹⁹Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986,
image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>

After the death of Raimund du Puy, **Frà Auger de Balben** (also referred to in the sources as *Otogerius* , *Augerius Balbensis* or *Rogerus Balben*) was elected as his successor by acclamation by the entire General Chapter of the Order.

He presumably came from the **tongue of Provence** and, like his direct successor, was an experienced French knight from the Dauphiné.

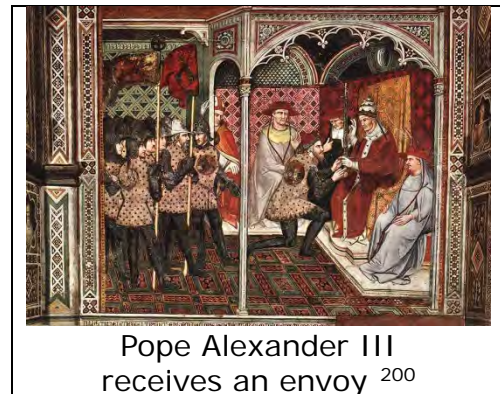
Frà Auger de Balben was extremely successful as a peacemaker in both church and state during his short time in office. His historical merits lie primarily in two diplomatic achievements:



1. Church unity :

He united the clergy in Palestine in support of
◀ **Pope Alexander III** ²⁰¹ against the antipope Victor IV (Octavian) in 1179, thus securing the loyalty of

the Crusader states to the legitimate pontiff.



Pope Alexander III receives an envoy ²⁰⁰

2. State diplomacy : After the childless death of King Baldwin III, he prevented a threatened civil war through his intervention. He stabilized the succession for Baldwin's brother, Amalric I, against the resistance of other claimants to the throne.

The reign of Frà Auger de Balben and his two immediate successors (the period between 1160 and 1170) also saw the significant **expansion of the Order in Spain** .

Frà Auger de Balben died in Jerusalem in 1162 and was buried there. His successor as Grandmaster was **Arnaud de Comps** .

Image ²⁰² →



²⁰⁰Image source: Joachim Schäfer - [Ecumenical Lexicon of Saints](https://www.heiligenlexikon.de/Fotos/Alexander_III.jpg) . https://www.heiligenlexikon.de/Fotos/Alexander_III.jpg

²⁰¹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander_III_Papa.png?uselang=de

²⁰²Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated April 9, 1979. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-46-%E2%80%93-Stemmi-dei-Gran-Maestri-%E2%80%93-1979-1%C2%AA.jpg>

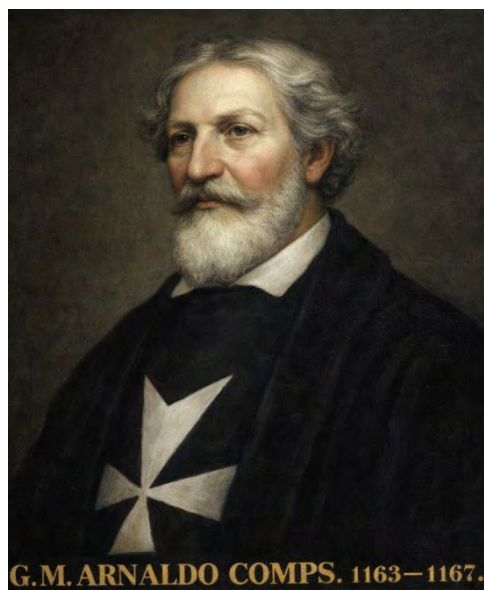
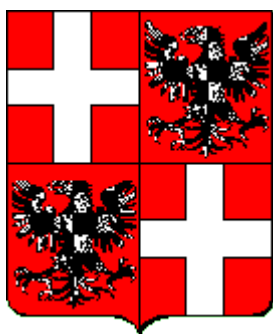
b. Grandmaster **Frà Arnaud de Comps**
(1162 – 1163)



203



204



205



206

After the death of Auger de Balben in 1162, **Frà Arnaud de Comps** (also referred to in the sources as *Arnaldo*, *Arnoldus Compensis* or *Arnoldus Compeniensis*) was elected as the fourth Grandmaster of the Order of the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem.

²⁰³Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

²⁰⁴Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/c9j7zjcd>

²⁰⁵Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome. Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

²⁰⁶Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986.

Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>

Origin and Election:

Arnaud came from the distinguished noble family of **Comps -sur - Artuby** , which wielded considerable influence in Provence and the Dauphiné. Like his predecessor, Arnaud was already of advanced age when he assumed the highest office of the Order. His election underscores the prevailing tendency of the Order's Chapter at that time to appoint experienced and proven knights from the French heartland to its leadership.

Term of Office and Impact:

Due to his short reign, Arnaud de Comps had little opportunity for far-reaching structural reforms within the Order. Nevertheless, he set strategic priorities in defense policy:

- **Securing the borders:** Under his leadership, the presence of the Knights Hospitaller in the vulnerable border regions of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was strengthened.
- **Defense against the Saracens:** He placed particular emphasis on protecting the outposts, which were regularly targeted by Saracen raids.

Death and Succession:

The sources regarding his date of death vary slightly; however, he died shortly after assuming office ²⁰⁷, at the latest in January 1163 (some sources cite January 1164) ²⁰⁸. Despite the brevity of his term, he is listed in the official numbering as the fourth Grandmaster. His successor was Gilbert d'As-sailly.

Image ²⁰⁹ →



²⁰⁷ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnaud_de_Comps

²⁰⁸ <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/011.html>

²⁰⁹ Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated April 9, 1979. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-46-%E2%80%93-Stemmi-dei-Gran-Maestri-%E2%80%93-1979-1%C2%AA.jpg>

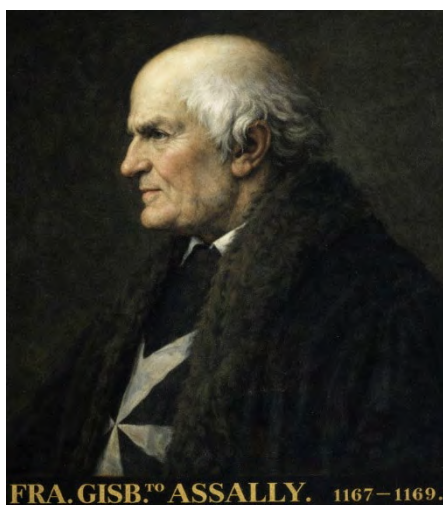
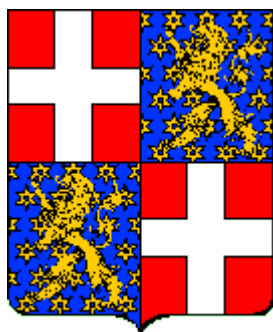
c. Grandmaster **Frà Gilbert d'Assailly**
(1163 – 1170)



210



211



212



213

²¹⁰Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

²¹¹Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/2v2uye8b>

²¹²Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome. Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

²¹³Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>

Origin and Rise:

Frà Gilbert d'Assailly (also *d'Assalit* , *d'Assilan* , or in Latin *Gilbertus Assaliensis*) was elected the fifth Grandmaster of the Order in 1163. He came from a distinguished noble family in **Languedoc** . He had already served as one of the Order's stewards in Syria since 1146 and possessed extensive experience in the Levant. Some sources mistakenly identify him as a native of Tyre (from Tyre), but this is likely due to his decades of service in the East.

The militarization of the Order:

Gilbert is considered the first of the great "military masters." Under his leadership, the transformation of the hospital into a knightly order progressed so rapidly that the Order of St. John was militarily on par with the Templars within a few years. To secure the borders of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Order, under his leadership, acquired strategically important fortresses, including...



the castle **Belvoir**²¹⁴ (**Kawkab al-Hawa**) in 1168 and the stronghold **Bet She'an** .

The Egyptian Campaign and the Financial Debacle:

As a close ally of **King Amalric I of Jerusalem**, Gilbert supported the king's ambitions to conquer Egypt. In 1168, he led the Teutonic Knights' troops in the capture of the city of **Pelusium**. However, the campaign ended in a catastrophic failure in 1169. Besides the loss of prestige, the undertaking left the Order in a precarious financial situation: Gilbert had borrowed enormous sums to finance

²¹⁴Photo: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/Belvoir_fortress.JPG

the campaign (sources mention up to 200,000 ducats²¹⁵), which brought the Order to the brink of ruin. This pressure finally forced him to resign in **1170** (some sources cite 1169).

Contrasting Perspectives: Giacomo Bosio

While many historians critically assess Gilbert's tenure due to the indebtedness, the Order's chronicler **Giacomo Bosio paints a considerably more positive picture**²¹⁶. Bosio emphasizes Gilbert's **spiritual rigor** and interprets the acquisition of fortresses like Belvoir as a far-sighted strategy that ultimately enabled the survival of the Crusader states against Nur ad-Din. For Bosio, Gilbert's resignation was not merely a failure, but an act of **humility** to preserve the Order's internal peace.



←Image²¹⁷

Tragic End:

After leaving office, Gilbert initially withdrew to France as a hermit. In **1183**, he accepted an invitation from the English king.

← **Henry II** met a tragic end during the crossing to England: his ship sank in the English Channel off **Dieppe**, with Gilbert d'Assailly and the entire crew drowning in²¹⁸.

Summary

The era of Gilbert d'Assailly marks the definitive transition of the hospital from a purely charitable brotherhood to a **chivalric order** of European stature. Whether as a lavish visionary or as the strategic architect of the military power of the Order of St. John, he remains one of the most influential figures in its early history.

Image²¹⁹→



²¹⁵"Expressed in today's purchasing power (not just the gold value), this sum would correspond more to a billion, since the extraction and availability of gold was far more difficult in the Middle Ages than it is today." Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

²¹⁶Bosio, op.cit.

²¹⁷Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fa/King_Henry_II_from_NPG.jpg/960px-King_Henry_II_from_NPG.jpg?20120522144832

²¹⁸ <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/012.html>

²¹⁹Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated April 9, 1979. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-46-%E2%80%93-Stemmi-dei-Gran-Maestri-%E2%80%93-1979-1%C2%AA.jpg>

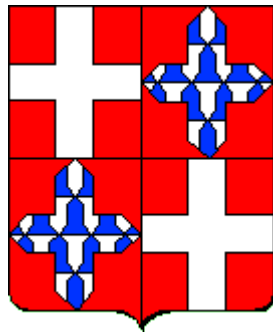
d. Grandmaster **Frà Gaston de Murols** (1170 – 1172)



220



221



222



223

Following the forced resignation of Gilbert d'Assailly, **Frà Gaston de Murols** (also referred to in the sources as *Castus*, *Casto*, or *Gastus*) was elected the sixth Grandmaster in 1170.

Gaston came from a noble family in the **Auvergne** and had previously held the office of **treasurer** of the Order.

²²⁰Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

²²¹Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/48fkb646>

²²²Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986.

Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>

²²³Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome.

Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

His election took place during a turbulent period and was initially recognized only by a portion of the Knights Hospitaller. A faction of dissenters instead aligned themselves with the authority of a certain Rostang . This schism, however, had no lasting consequences, as Gaston died in 1172.²²⁷ Due to his short reign, he was unable to implement any significant reforms within the Order of St. John.



Seal of Grandmaster Murols ²²⁴

A significant account from his time in office comes from the pilgrim **Theoderich von Würzburg** ²²⁸, who visited the hospital in Jerusalem in 1172 ²²⁹. In his travelogue, he describes the institution as a magnificent palace with over a thousand beds, whose dedication to caring for the sick and poor surpassed even the capabilities of powerful kings.

The pilgrim "Theoderich" from Würzburg ²³⁰ reports in 1172 in his "Guide to the Holy Land" in Part I, Chapter XIII, about the Hospital of St. John the Baptist in Jerusalem:

*And here, on the south side of the Church (of the Holy Sepulchre), stands the Church and Hospital of St. John the Baptist. No one can credibly tell another how beautiful its buildings are, how abundantly it is furnished with rooms, beds, and other supplies for the poor and sick, how rich it is in means to refresh the poor, and **how devotedly it cares for the sustenance of the needy** , unless he has the opportunity to see it with his own eyes. Indeed, we passed through this palace and could by no means ascertain how many sick lay there; but we saw that the beds numbered over a thousand. Not every one of the most powerful kings and despots could provide for as many people as this house provides for daily. ²²⁵*



226

²²⁴Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/ym7jfc2>

²²⁵ **Theodericus** : *Theoderic's Description of the Holy Places* (c. 1172) . Translated by Aubrey Stewart. With a Introduction by Charles W. Wilson. 2nd ed ., New York: AMS Press 1986 (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 5).

²²⁶Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated December 3, 1979. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-49-%E2%80%93-Stemmi-dei-Gran-Maestri-%E2%80%93-1979-2%C2%AA.jpg>

²²⁷ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaston_de_Murols)

²²⁸ <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/013.html>

²²⁹ <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/013.html>

²³⁰Theoderich may have been a monk from [Hirsau](#) .

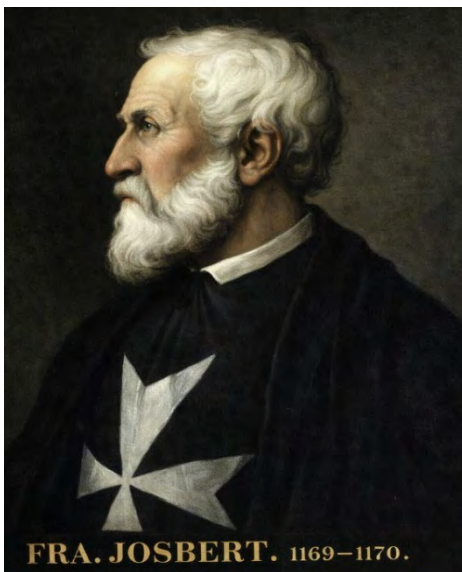
e. Grandmaster **Frà Jobert of Syria**
(1172 – 1177) ²³¹



232



233



234



235

²³¹The text of this article was largely generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026.

²³²Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

²³³Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e2/Jobert_of_Syria%2C_by_Laurent_Cars.jpg

²³⁴Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome. Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

²³⁵Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 17, 1986. Image source: <https://www.orderofmalta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GranMaestri.jpg>

After Gaston's death, Frà Jobert (also Joubert or Josberto) was elected the seventh Grandmaster. His epithet "of Syria" indicates that he was born in the Levant, which gave him a particular familiarity with the local political situation.

He is considered one of the most far-sighted reformers in the early days of the Order of St. John. His work marks the transition from an improvised brotherhood to a tightly organized, financially stable, and spiritually sound institution.

The architect of inner order

Jobert took over the leadership of the Order during a period of deep crisis. His predecessor, Gilbert d'Aissailly, had nearly ruined the Order through costly military expeditions. Jobert proved to be a prudent administrator who consolidated the finances without neglecting the Order's core mission. He is credited with introducing the principle of frugality to ensure the long-term sustainability of its charitable work.

Charitable reforms and statutes

Jobert gained particular historical significance through the further development of the order's own statutes, which emphasized service to one's neighbour:

- **The privilege of white bread** : In the General Chapter of 1176, it was stipulated that patients in the hospital were entitled to high-quality white bread. To ensure production, specific lands (casales) were allocated to the order.
- Religious life: The General Chapter of 1177 issued the "**Customs of the Church of the Hospital**", which specified the religious conduct of the brothers and the commemoration of the deceased.

Statesman and confidant of kings

Jobert enjoyed the highest esteem in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. His integrity was so great that in 1171, even before his election as Grandmaster, King Amalric I appointed him guardian of his son, the future King Baldwin IV, and entrusted him with the affairs of state during his absence.

Strategic Diplomacy in the Holy Land

Militarily, Jobert acted cautiously and strategically. He refused to involve the Order in risky expeditions like the attack on Egypt (1174) when the chances of success were slim. Instead, he concentrated on defending the empire and freeing prisoners, such as Raymond III of Tripoli, for whose release he campaigned vigorously.

Military expansion

, the Order acquired the strategically important **castle of Margat** (Qal'at al - Marqab). The Order of St. John expanded it into such a massive fortress that Saladin refrained from a direct attack.



Stamps of the Order of Malta dated February 26, 1990,²³⁶: The fortress of Margat, after an old copper engraving. It was a stronghold of the Order of St. John in the Holy Land and became its headquarters after the fall of Jerusalem (1190). Sheet: Same motif as the series, with a knight figure on the left and Blessed Raymond on the right.

²³⁶Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-145-antiche-fortezze-dellordine/>



The fortress of Margat today ²³⁷

Jobert of Syria was not a conqueror in the classical sense, but rather the **architect of the Order's foundations** . He saved the Knights Hospitaller from bankruptcy and gave them the legal and moral basis on which they could survive for centuries.

Jobert of Syria died in October 1177.

"The Order of St. John bid farewell to a man who not only administered the Order's heritage but also strengthened it at its very core. **Jobert of Syria** was the guiding hand in a time of upheaval."

His life's work was the unity of spirit and action: with wisdom and discipline, he restored the Order's finances, yet his heart always beat for the most vulnerable. His concern that the bread of the poor must never disappear remains unforgettable—a promise he enshrined in stone and law. As guardian of the liturgy, he gave the Order its spiritual home; as a statesman, he earned the trust of kings. He left behind an Order steadfast in faith and unwavering in its service to others. His legacy is our mission . ²³⁸

His successor was **Roger de Moulins** .

Image ²³⁹ →



²³⁷By Shayno - Own work , CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10838331>

²³⁸Fictional eulogy, generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

²³⁹Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated December 3, 1979. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-49-%E2%80%93-Stemmi-dei-Gran-Maestri-%E2%80%93-1979-2%C2%AA.jpg>

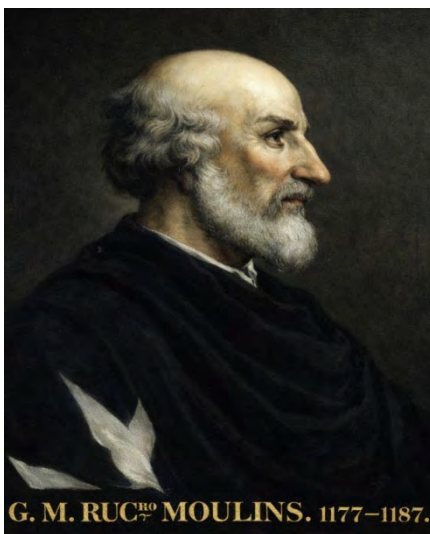
f. Grandmaster
Frà Roger de Moulins
 (1177 – 1187)



240



241



242



243

²⁴⁰Image source: <https://tinyurl.com/48pp6cra>

²⁴¹Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

²⁴²Image: Chapter House of the Villa Malta on the Aventine Hill in Rome.
 Author's own photograph, optimised by ChatGPT on February 14, 2026.

²⁴³Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated February 26, 1987. Image source: <https://www.orderof-malta.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emissione-106-%E2%80%93-Gran-Maestri-6%C2%AA.jpg>

After Jobert's death, **Frà Roger de Moulins** (also *Desmoulins* or *Rugerio Moulins*), another experienced Norman knight, was elected as the eighth Grandmaster. His term of office marks the final transformation of the Hospital into a military order of knights, but also the painful loss of Jerusalem.

Between military duty and hospital tradition



Under Roger's leadership, the militarization of the order increased to such an extent that
◀ **Pope Alexander III**²⁴⁴ issued the bull "*Piam admodum*" between 1178 and 1180. In it, he admonished the Grandmaster..

*...to preserve with all his might the sacred customs and traditions of his deceased predecessor... The brothers shall only take up their weapons when a general call is made for the defense of the country or for the siege of an infidel's castle under the sign of the cross. **This shall in no way diminish their care for the poor.***²⁴⁵



Emperor Frederick Barbarossa submits to **Pope Alexander III** in Venice in 1177.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander_III_Papa.png?uselang=de

²⁴⁵ *Cartulaire general de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem*, ed. by **Joseph Delaville Le Roulx**, Vol. 1, Paris 1894, p. 360, **No. 527**.

²⁴⁶Fresco by **Spinello Aretino**, around 1400,

image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0a/B_alexander_III2.jpg

Excursus

Frederick I Barbarossa Holy Roman Emperor 1155– 1190 ²⁴⁷

Image ²⁴⁸ →

Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa played a crucial role in the legal and financial consolidation of the **Order of St. John** in the Holy Roman Empire.

His connection to the order can be divided into the following points:

- **Imperial protection and confirmation of possession (1156):**
In 1156, Frederick Barbarossa confirmed all of the Order's possessions in Austria and throughout the Holy Roman Empire. He placed the Order under his imperial protection, which formed the basis for its later expansion in Central Europe.
- **De facto imperial status (1185):**
Under his rule, the Order of St. John received a form of de facto imperial status in 1185. This meant a significant legal upgrade, placing the order directly under the emperor's authority and granting it a special position within the imperial structure.
- **Personal connection and charity:**
Barbarossa had a personal connection to the Order since his participation in the Second Crusade (1148–1149). **He praised the "invaluable works of mercy" at the hospital in Jerusalem**, which he claimed to have witnessed firsthand. Based on this experience, he decreed that the Order's hospitals throughout his empire should receive special support.
- **Promotion of knighthood:** Since German knighthood experienced a golden age under Barbarossa and he massively



²⁴⁷The text of this digression was largely generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026.

²⁴⁸Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2c/Barbarossa_%281%29.jpg?20080922065157

²⁴⁹Image source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/53/Barbarossa.jpg/250px-Barbarossa.jpg>

promoted knightly virtues, religious orders of knights such as the Order of St. John indirectly benefited from social recognition and financial support from the state.

In summary, Barbarossa elevated the Order from a purely charitable brotherhood in the Holy Land to a **privileged and protected institution** within the European power structure.

In 1188 he decided to lead the Third Crusade, but drowned in the [Saleph River](#) (now the Göksu) near Silifke in present-day Turkey before reaching Palestine.

²⁵⁰



Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and Henry the Lion in Chiavenna 1176 (Philipp Foltz) ²⁵¹

²⁵⁰From: Hallam, Elizabeth (ed.): Chronicles of the Crusades . London 1989

Image: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/53/Barbarossa.jpg>

²⁵¹Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1b/Philipp_Foltz_Barbarossa_und_Heinrich_der_L%C3%B6we_in_Chiavenna.jpg

The statutes of 1182: A legal turning point

On March 14, 1182, the General Chapter under Roger de Moulins issued new statutes that formally established the Order as **a religious-military order** :

- **Medical innovation:** For the first time, permanently employed doctors and surgeons were included in the staff of the order.
- **Military anchoring:** The “brothers in arms” were first explicitly mentioned in a normative text.
- **Charitable codification:** The statutes obligated the order to provide daily care for thirty poor people, weekly alms, and to take in pregnant women and orphaned children.
- **Liturgy:** It was established that the coffins of deceased brothers would be covered with a **red cloth bearing a white cross** – a symbol that has endured to this day.

Diplomacy and Expansion:

In 1184, Roger, along with Patriarch Heraclius and the Templar Grandmaster Arnold of Toroga , travelled through Europe to seek support for the beleaguered Kingdom of Jerusalem. During this time, he consolidated the Hospitallers' presence in England, France, and Germany. The papal bull **Quanto per Gratian Dei** (August 22, 1185) emphasized the order's status as a universal charitable institution.

The Fall and Battle of Hattin

The political situation became increasingly tense under the rule of Guy of Lusignan. Roger de Moulins fell on May 1, 1187, at the **Battle of Cresson**²⁵² ➔, when he confronted a Muslim force under Saladin's son al-Afdal.

Shortly afterwards, on July 4, 1187, the Christian army was annihilated at the **Battle of Hattin** . Among the prisoners were 230 Hospitaller and Templar knights. Because they refused to renounce their faith, they suffered martyrdom on the slopes of the Horns of Hattin.



²⁵²Image source: Bibliothèque Nationale FR. 5594 Fol. 197, Sebastian Mamerot, Les Passages fait Outremer, vers 1490, circa 1474. Jean Colombe (1430–1493). The artwork comes from the Chroniques de France ou de St Denis, a French manuscript from the late 15th century. Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/76/Battle_of_Cresson.jpg/330px-Battle_of_Cresson.jpg

The painting ²⁵³depicts the King of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan (reign 1186–1192), surrendering to Saladin after his defeat at the Battle of Hattin on July 4, 1187.

Saladin's victory at the Battle of Hattin was of crucial importance, as it led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem three months later.

The End of the Jerusalem Era

After the fall of the Holy City on October 2, 1187, the Order had to leave Jerusalem.



The period of our study ends with Saladin's entry into Jerusalem on October 2, 1187.



◀1187: *Exodus of the Christians and the Order of St. John from Jerusalem* (fresco in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta) ²⁵⁴

Saladin, who respected the charitable work of the Order of St. John, allowed them to continue operating the hospital for another year. The hospital grounds have since been known as **Muristan** (Kurdish/Persian for "hospital"). The order initially relocated its headquarters to **Margat**. Thus ended the first glorious chapter of the Order of St. John in its founding city.

²⁵³Image source: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a116.jpg>

²⁵⁴Image: <http://www.teutonic.altervista.org/G/img/a032.jpg>

The ruins of Santa Maria Latina in Jerusalem were silent witnesses to this era for a long time.



255



256

The hospital was later destroyed. Only a few ruins of Santa Maria Latina remained as sad witnesses to a grand past.

²⁵⁵The photograph, taken by Francis Frith in April 1860, shows the northern end of Christian Street from the roof of the Mediterranean Hotel. Shimon Gibson uses this image in his analysis of the Church of the Redeemer, which documents the Omariah Mosque under construction without a dome in front of Sidna Omar's minaret. This historical photograph is part of the Gibson Picture Archives and illustrates the topography of Jerusalem in the 19th century.

²⁵⁶The vaults uncovered in 1873–74 on the east side of the Muristan, south of the building complex containing the Church of St. Maria Latina and its southern cloister. (Cecil V. Shadbolt, 1888 (Source: Gibson Picture Archive))



The official homepage of the Order of Malta reported on August 13, 2013, ²⁵⁷:

Remnants of the Order of St. John first hospital come to light in Jerusalem

A recent finding in the Old City of Jerusalem has unearthed the ruins of what is now considered to be the Order of St. John's first hospital, dating back more than 900 years.

"This was where the members of the St. John's Hospital order lived. This is where it started. This was the first place where they used an ambulatory service to bring in sick and wounded people to the hospital. They had riders on camels and horses" said Amit Re'em, excavation co-director for the Israel Antiquities Authority. The hospital is the largest of its era to be discovered in the Middle East region.

The important analysis carried out has revealed details of the probable size of the building, a busy hospital dating back to the period between 1099 and 1291. The building is situated in the heart of the Christian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem, near its principal road, King David Street.

The works, authorized by the Israel Antiquities Authority, expose parts of a structure which seems to extend across a large area. It is more than six meters high and reveals a great hall composed of pillars and ribbed vaults, rooms and smaller halls.

Contemporary historical documents, most of which are in Latin, mention a sophisticated hospital that was as large and as organized as a modern hospital. The Israeli Authority, in



²⁵⁷ <https://www.orderofmalta.int/de/nachrichten/uberreste-des-ersten-hospitals-des-hl-johannes-des-taufers-in-jerusalem-entdeckt/>

presenting the exciting findings, commented that: “The hospital was established and constructed by the Order of St. John of the Hospital in Jerusalem and known by its Latin name the Hospitallers (from the word hospital). They took an oath to care for and watch over pilgrims, and when necessary they joined the ranks of the fighters as an elite protective unit.”

The creation of a tradition: care for all



The findings and the early sources provide considerable detail, much of which we already know: the hospital was dedicated to John the Baptist, and treated people of all faiths passing through Jerusalem. It had different wings and departments depending on the nature of the illness and the condition of the patient – similar to the arrangements in a modern hospital. In an emergency the hospital

could accept as many as 2.000 patients. Our Hospitallers treated sick men and women of different religions with respect, no matter who they were nor from where they came from. The Muslim Arab population was pivotal in assisting the knights of St. John in establishing the hospital and teaching them medical science. Arab culture has always held the medical profession in high regard and Arab physicians were famous far and wide.

The sources also note that, in addition to the medical departments, the hospital also functioned as an orphanage where abandoned newborns were brought.

The edifice collapses in the 15th century

In the Middle Ages parts of the structure were used as a stable and the bones of horses and camels have been found in the excavations, alongside a great deal of metal used for shoeing the animals. In 1457, the building collapsed in an earthquake and was buried.

The archeological project was prompted by a planning permission request by the Grand Bazaar Company of East Jerusalem to create a restaurant. They worked in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority to carry out the excavations prior to the start of the new works. Building project manager Monser Shwieki said developers intend to incorporate the building into the planned restaurant. The site will be open to the public sometime in 2014.



[Photograph credit: Yoli Shwartz, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.]

An interesting video about this is available online at:

<https://cmc-terrasanta.com/en/media/news/4830/the-crusader-hospital>



Inspired by these images of the excavated part of the hospital, Christopher Santner created this image depicting Blessed Gérard in the Hospital of Jerusalem ²⁵⁸.



◀ A postage stamp issued by Monaco to commemorate the 900th anniversary of the Order of Malta in 1999. Blessed Gérard is depicted on the left.

Blessed Gérard ▶
In the hospital.
Painting in the embassy of the Order of Malta in Valletta / Malta ²⁵⁹.



²⁵⁸ Image: Blessed Gerard, 91 x 122 cm, acrylic and charcoal on canvas by Christopher Santner. The painting is based on photographs of the recently excavated 12th-century building of the Knights Hospitaller in Jerusalem. The building is located south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, whose 12th-century silhouette is recognizable through the large arched window in the painting. Source:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/christopher-santer-6458326_blessedgerard-blgerard-orderofmalta-activity-6901547638941171712-iJSc

²⁵⁹ Image source : <https://anomismi.wordpress.com/2012/11/18/despre-ordinul-cavalerilor-sf-ioan-bo-tezatorul-al-cavalerilor-de-malta/>

6. The revival of hospitality in the Holy Land

The Order of St. John is present again today through

a. The **Hospital of the Holy Family** in Bethlehem ²⁶⁰



261

Hôpital de la Sainte Famille Bethlehem



262

<https://www.malteser.de/spenden-helfen/krankenhaus-bethlehem/ueber-das-krankenhaus.html>

²⁶⁰ [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krankenhaus_der_Heiligen_Familie_\(Bethlehem\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krankenhaus_der_Heiligen_Familie_(Bethlehem))

²⁶¹ Image source: Author's own photograph

²⁶² Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated September 16, 2022. Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/le-attivita-ospedaliere-dellordine-lospedale-della-sacra-famiglia-in-betlemme/>



The hospital was opened in 1882 by the Sisters of Mercy (Rue du Bac) and operated until 1985, when they approached Count Pierredon of the Order of Malta to request that he take over or close the hospital. The Order of Malta assumed management, administration, and finances, but converted it into a maternity hospital. The first baby was born on February 26, 1990. Mr. Mohan told the author of this paper during a visit there in 1994 that it had taken the Order of Malta five years to complete the 28-bed hospital. It opened on February 26, 1990, and since then, over 6,000 babies have been born there. Mothers pay a fee of 550 shekels per delivery and stay for three days after giving birth. The cost per delivery is 1,500 shekels. The patients come mainly from Bethlehem, Bejara, and the Hebron area. In addition to inpatient care, the hospital offers six outpatient clinics per week, and patients pay 20-25 shekels per visit. Op-

erating costs (1994) amounted to 1.2 million shekels, with a deficit of 600,000 shekels, which is covered equally by the French Association of the Order of Malta and various other national associations of the Order. For comparison, Medical Aid pays 3,000 shekels for childbirth in an Israeli hospital.

Plans include expanding the hospital by five single rooms, an intensive care unit and a second operating room.



The laboratory↑

All images on this page are the author's own photographs.

Image ²⁶³ →

Wikipedia ²⁶⁴ writes:

"The hospital has been run by the Order of Malta since 1990. Located above the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the clinic provides medical care for the local population.

Above all, with approximately 3,500 births annually, it is the largest obstetrics and gynaecology

clinic in the region and is open to pregnant women of all nationalities and faiths.

A mobile unit also provides medical care for pregnant women in the desert villages of the West Bank. The hospital's capacity has been expanded to 63 beds, and a new floor with a delivery room and a larger neonatal intensive care unit has been inaugurated. A diabetes clinic for pregnant women, offering free care, has also been opened. Furthermore, a new paediatric and neonatal unit has been established with a donation from the Belgian government.

Since 2016, there has been a cooperation agreement with the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital of the Holy See in Rome.



265

²⁶³Image source: Author's own photograph

²⁶⁴ [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krankenhaus_der_Heiligen_Familie_\(Bethlehem\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krankenhaus_der_Heiligen_Familie_(Bethlehem))

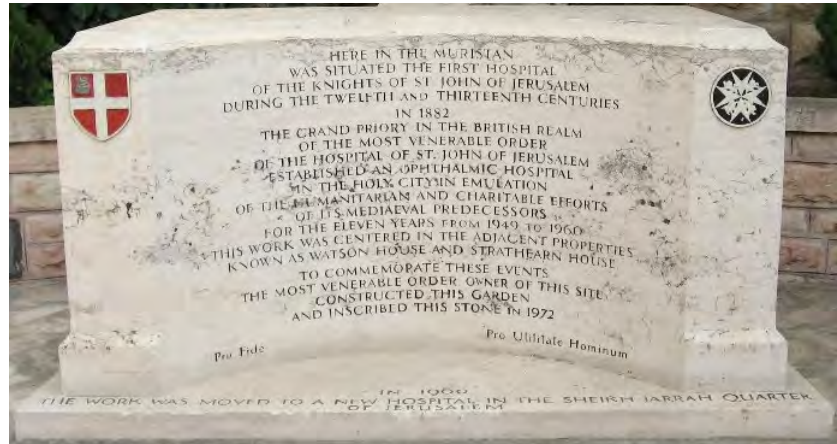
²⁶⁵Image source: [Vatican News: Order of Malta: Distress and fear for the future in Bethlehem](#)

b. The **St. John Eye Clinic** in Jerusalem ²⁶⁶

The hospitality of the Order of St. John was revived in Jerusalem in 1882, when the Most Venerable Order of St. John ²⁶⁷ established an eye hospital in Jerusalem.

In Muristan, where the original hospital of the Order of St. John stood in the 12th century, stands this memorial stone:

“Here in the Muristan was situated the first hospital of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in 1882 the Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem established an ophthalmic hospital in the Holy City in emulation of the humanitarian and charitable efforts of its mediaeval predecessors for the eleven years from 1949 to 1960 this work was centered in the adjacent properties known as Watson House and Strathearn House to commemorate these events the most venerable order owner of this site constructed this garden and inscribed this stone in 1972.



IN 1960 THE WORK WAS MOVED TO A NEW HOSPITAL IN THE SHEIKH JARRAH QUARTER OF JERUSALEM.

Pro Fide Pro Utilitate Hominum

In 1960 the work was moved to a new hospital in the Sheikh Jarrah Quarter of Jerusalem.”



The “St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group” in 1930 ²⁶⁹

←Image ²⁶⁸

It was initially located on Bethlehem Road south of the Old City of Jerusalem but was destroyed in 1917.



²⁶⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_John_Eye_Hospital_Group

²⁶⁷ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_John

²⁶⁸Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/08/Mount_Zion_Hotel_IMG_1636.JPG/1920px-Mount_Zion_Hotel_IMG_1636.JPG

²⁶⁹Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/St_Andrews%2C_Jerusalem.jpg



270

It was re-established in 1960 in a new building at Hebron Rd 17, Jerusalem, which now houses the "Mount Zion Boutique Hotel & Suites".



The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group's Jerusalem Hospital is now located at Sheikh Jarrah ...²⁷¹



272



Wikipedia ²⁷³writes:

"The main Jerusalem hospital is an [ISO](#) and [Joint Commission International](#) accredited, general eye hospital. It has a 49-bed capacity and is staffed by both foreign and local specialist surgeons, doctors, paramedics, overseas medical volunteers and nurses. There is a large Outpatients Department and specialist [retinal](#), [corneal](#) and [pediatric](#) services. The hospital also has a research unit.^[4]

²⁷⁰Image source: Author's own photos

²⁷¹ <https://www.stjohnehospital.org/>

²⁷²Image source: These three images are the author's own photographs.

²⁷³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_John_Eye_Hospital_Group

The hospital attracts a substantial number of volunteer doctors from around the world who not only help care for the patients but also help in the teaching and training of the local doctors.^[51]"

Current information about the St. John Eye Clinic in Jerusalem²⁷⁴

The **St. John Eye Hospital Group** will remain active in **2026** and will be the only non-profit provider of specialized eye care in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. The hospital group has reaffirmed its mission to help regardless of ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay.

Current information (as of January 2026)

- **Operations:** The main office in East Jerusalem is operational and serves as a central point of contact for patients from the entire region.
- **Patient numbers:** In 2025, over **232,000 patients** were treated and **4,550 major operations** were performed, with almost half of the patients being children.
- **Expansion:** In March 2025, a new, fully equipped hospital was opened in **Nablus** to improve access to medical care in the northern West Bank.
- **Situation in Gaza:** The situation in Gaza remains difficult. The hospital there had to be evacuated for security reasons, but the teams are continuing their work at two temporary sites/field clinics in Deir al-Balah and Nuseirat, as well as via mobile clinics. Plans for the renovation of operating rooms at the Gaza hospital have been postponed indefinitely due to the ongoing conflict.
- **Education:** The clinic is also a leading institution for education and research in the Palestinian territories, offering, among other things, a nine-month program in partnership with Al-Quds University.



Photo: [Saint John Eye Hospital Group](#)

²⁷⁴ Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

c. The **Johanniter Order's Hospice** in Jerusalem

German Hospice of the Johanniter Order

on **St. Francis Street in Jerusalem**

– **Via dolorosa**

JOHANNITER HOSPITZ



275



Story:

On December 11, 1866, the Protestant Johanniter Order acquired the Es Schurefa house on the Via Dolorosa. It had 18 beds and served as a rest stop and guesthouse for travellers to the Orient and missionaries. From 1866 to 1870, the Sunday service of the small German congregation was held there in the dining hall.

The Johanniter Order's newsletter of July 1936 states: "The hospice is used rather regularly by strangers; Knights Hospitaller have rarely requested accommodation there... Pilgrimage traffic to Palestine was interrupted during the First World War. The Kaiserswerth deaconess, Sister Theodore Barkhausen, represented the Order's interests in an exemplary manner. Only after the war was the Order able to re-establish contact with the hospice. Since then, it has been administered by a local committee... Work at the Johanniter Hospice in

²⁷⁵Image source: Author's own photos

Jerusalem is currently light. This has several reasons. There are many tourists who want to be driven directly to their hotels with their luggage. This is much easier nowadays, as all hotels except the Austrian hospice and ours are located outside the Old City and are accessible by car. There are also a number of tourists who dare to walk through the Old City alone in the evening. We will hardly be able to attract these tourists to our hospice. – However, there are also travellers who find it interesting to stay directly in the Old City for a few days and enjoy the view of to enjoy the temple grounds on the Mount of Olives and the panoramic view over the rooftops of the old city with its unique charm, especially by moonlight. ..."

An old brochure [year?] **advertises** : "Since about the middle of the last [18th] century, when the [Protestant] Johanniter Order was re-established, it has maintained, true to its ancient principles, the Johanniter Order's Hospice in Jerusalem, very close to its original location. Given its central location in the Old City (only a 5-minute walk from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and 8 minutes from the Temple Mount), its antique architectural style, yet its modern amenities (electric light, telephone, running water, and a bathroom), its Christian and friendly, family-like atmosphere (accommodation for 18 people), and the option of offering only accommodation or full board at moderate prices, this hospice can be warmly recommended to travellers to the Orient and missionaries as a place to stay and rest. The hospice manager organizes affordable domestic travel and, whenever possible, is willing to act as a personal and free guide for excursions in or outside Jerusalem. Details and prices are available upon request from the manager."

Sister Renate Sopp of the Jesus Brotherhood explains in an article entitled "St. John's Hospice in Jerusalem – In the Bustle of the Old City": "...The venerable building of the St. John's Hospice has been the home of the sisterhood of the Jesus Brotherhood in Jerusalem since 1985. ... The Brotherhood is affiliated with the Diaconal Service of the Evangelical Church. Its centre is in Gnadenthal, Germany. ... We are also delighted with the St. John's Hospice because we gladly and conscientiously continue the tradition of this house. It was founded in the middle of the last century to take in pilgrims and the homeless and to give them practical help and inner guidance. Our service today takes place on a much smaller scale but is in keeping with the past. One of the largest and most beautiful rooms in the hospice is the former dining hall. Evangelical services and Bible studies were held there in Jerusalem when the German congregation consisted of only a handful of people. We have transformed this room into a chapel where we celebrate our Liturgy of the Hours and where there is space for private prayer." There is space available – also for guests. It gives us courage and joy that prayers were offered here 100 years ago. The Hospitaller Hospice is located in the heart of Jerusalem's bustling Old City. During the Second World War, it lost its function as a hospice and became accommodation for Arab refugees of the Israeli War of Independence. Three families of these refugees still live in the rooms assigned to them back then. Others have since passed away, moved out, or been purchased by the Johanniter Order. We now live in the vacated rooms. "Live" is only partially accurate, as not all of them are habitable. Much renovation work is still needed. We are happy to be able to undertake this work ourselves as tenants of the Johanniter Order, with their support, and thus experience firsthand how old, dilapidated rooms are once again becoming beautiful and usable. Our Latroun brothers are helping us with this. Many volunteers are also lending a hand. We are all delighted by the rebirth of the Hospitaller Hospice in the heart

of Jerusalem. A symbol of this is the new carved sign above our entrance, which – as in old ones – Times – now announced again: Johanniter Hospice."

In an article entitled "New Paths – Open Doors in Jerusalem" in Kreuz & Quer No. 13 (1993), Roland Werner writes in a letter to the friends of the Christ Meeting and the Jesus Community: "A life centre of the Community of Jesus in Jerusalem at the Johanniter Hospice on the Via Dolorosa. ... In June 1992, ... the Brotherhood of Jesus asked our community to continue the work at the Johanniter Hospice in accordance with their principles. ... [The takeover was completed in March 1993. The goals of the house can be summarized as follows:] It is to become an open house for many people, supported by a community that plans and works in close connection with the Community of Jesus and the Christ Community in Marburg..."



Current information about the Johanniter Order Hospice in Jerusalem²⁷⁶

The **Johanniter Hospice** in Jerusalem (Johanniter Ordens-Hospiz) will continue to operate as an active Christian pilgrim hostel and meeting place for the year **2026** .

Current situation and operations 2026

- **Operation:** The hospice is regularly open to pilgrims and visitors. It offers approximately **20 rooms** with 14 to 18 guest beds in Jerusalem's Old City, directly at the 8th Station of the **Via Dolorosa** .
- **Community:** Since 1993, the house has been enlivened by the **Christus-Treff Marburg** , which maintains an ecumenical community there as a tenant and seeks contact with Jews, Arabs and international guests.

²⁷⁶ Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

Part II

A. The **spirituality** of the Order of St. John

Let us reflect on the spirituality of the Order of St. John, the main topic of this work. Alongside all other elements, the spiritual has been the main pillar of the Order of St. John since its founding.

1. Sources : The Order's Rule and Statutes



Citation of the order's rule in Verdala, Hugues Loubenx de (ed.):
Statuta Hospitalis Hierusalem. Rome: [Tipografia Apostolica Vaticana] 1588.

The spiritual element in the early days of the Order will be described here based on the Order's Rule and the statutes that were added to it at the time ²⁷⁷when the Order's centre was in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the originals of these sources were lost ²⁷⁸).

The oldest surviving versions of the rule are

- a handwritten copy (referred to in the archive as "**Die Johanniterregel in lateinischer Sprache**") dated October 7, 1253 ²⁷⁹and
- A codex from the late 13th century (1278-1283) ²⁸⁰, which, among other things, contains not only the Rule of Raymond but also the statutes of Jobert and Roger de Moulins in medieval French. This is Codex membr. in the Vatican Library No. 4852, which is listed in the Index of Codices Vat. lat. of the Library as "**Regulae Hospitalis S. Joannis Hierosolymitani in Lingua Gallica**" ²⁸¹.
 - He begins with the French translation of the bull "Quanto per gratiam Dei" by **Pope Lucius III** of August 22, 1185 (folios 1 to 3R, 15R to 18R),
 - which quotes the Rule of the Order by **Raymond du Puy** (folios 3V to 15R). These folios have handwritten additions noting the passages of the Rule modified by the General Chapter of Margat 1204-1206 under Grandmaster **Alphonsus of Portugal** .
 - The following are the two statutes of **Jobert**.
 - Bread Ordinance "White Bread Privilege of the Sick" of 1176 (pages 18V to 20R),
 - Church ordinance "The Church Customs" before 1177 (pages 20R to 24R),
 - the statutes of **Roger de Moulins**
 - Hospital regulations "That the churches should be subject to the prior" dated 14.2.1181 (pages 24R to 29R),
 - Hospital regulations "Concerning the duties of the house" before March 1181? (pages 29R to 32V) ²⁸²
 - The customary law established by the General Chapter of Margat 1204-1206 under **Alfonso of Portugal** (folios 32V to 49V),

²⁷⁷These are the General Chapter resolutions, which were adopted as statutes under Master Jobert in 1176 and between 1177 and 1181, and under Master Roger de Moulins on March 14, 1182.

²⁷⁸The original Rule of Raymond du Puy was lost during the conquest of Acre in 1291. This prompted the papal bull "Culminis apostolici solio" of Pope Boniface VIII, issued on April 7, 1300, which confirmed the Rule and included its text. A copy can be found in Bosio, I storia [or similar], vol. 1, pp. 68–71, and in Holstenius, Lucas: Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canoniarum, vol. 2, Augsburg 1759 (reprint Graz 1957), pp. 445–448. The authoritative critical edition is offered by Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 4496. See also this: "Les statuts de l'ordre de l'Hôpital de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem", in: Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes 48 (1887), pp. 341–356 (here p. 349) [hereafter quoted as: Delaville Le Roulx, Les statuts].

²⁷⁹Aarau, Aargau State Archives, Leuggern Branch, Document No. 7

²⁸⁰For the dating, see Klement, Katja: Gottes Gastgeber. Die Ritter des Hospitals von Jerusalem. Die vatikanische Handschrift Vat. lat. 4852, Norderstedt 2010, p. 265.

²⁸¹See Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph: *Les statuts de l'Ordre de l'Hôpital de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, Paris 1887, pp. 248 ff. In addition to this printed edition, the manuscript Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Cod. Vat. lat. 3136 (14th century) under the title "Regula Ordinis Hierosolymitani", was consulted, which largely agrees with Cod. Vat. lat. 4852 in terms of both text and content.

²⁸²The self-chosen timeframe of my research for this work ends with the expulsion of the Order of St. John from Jerusalem by the entry of Saladin on October 2, 1187.

- the four statutes of **Hugo de Revel** 1162-1178 (folios 50R to 79V),
- the statutes of **Nicholas Lorgne** (pages 79V to 82V),
- the Statute of **Jean de Villiers** 28.10.1287 (folios 83R to 88V) ²⁸³,
- Legal provisions **Roger de Moulins** ? 1177(81?)-1183 (pages 89R to 104R) ²⁸⁴,
- Parts of the "**Usances**" (=customary law) 1198- end of the 12th century (folio 105R to 111V),
- "**Esgars**" (=penal laws) end of the 12th century (folio 111V to 140V).

Historical scholarship used ²⁸⁵and uses²⁸⁶this codex as the most important source for its research.

- The older versions of the rule in German (late Middle High German) are
 - a manuscript in the Cologne City Archives (HASTH, Geistl. Abt. 129 a) from around 1380 and
 - another manuscript from the 14th century in the Bavarian State Library (Clm 4620 – see Part III of this work).

The text of the Rule from the Aargau State Archives and the one from the Vatican Library is edited in Delaville's *Cartulaire* (No. 70), the Middle High German manuscript from the Bavarian State Library in my book "[Die Ordensregel der Johanniter/Malteser](#)". St. Ottilien 1983".

Waldstein-Wartenberg ²⁸⁷concludes that Raymond adopted the Rule of St. Augustine and supplemented and explained it with a statute that reflected the decisions of the general chapters. Although this seems plausible, since the Rule of the Order of St. John appears incomplete compared to the content and structure of the Rules of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, it is uncertain, and there is no documentary evidence to support this hypothesis. As I will explain later, the Rule of the Order of St. John contains numerous quotations from the Rule of St. Augustine, which would not have been necessary if it had merely been a statement on how to implement the Rule of St. Augustine. At the beginning of the 13th century, according to Waldstein-Wartenberg, the dependence on the Rule of St. Augustine had been forgotten, and this statute was therefore considered the order's rule.

²⁸³ Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph: *Les statuts de l'Ordre de l'Hôpital de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, Paris 1887, p. 349. The index there is incorrect; the information refers to the statutes of Jean de Villiers (fol. 83r–122v), supplemented by the "Esgarts" and "Usances" from around 1239 (fol. 122v–140v).

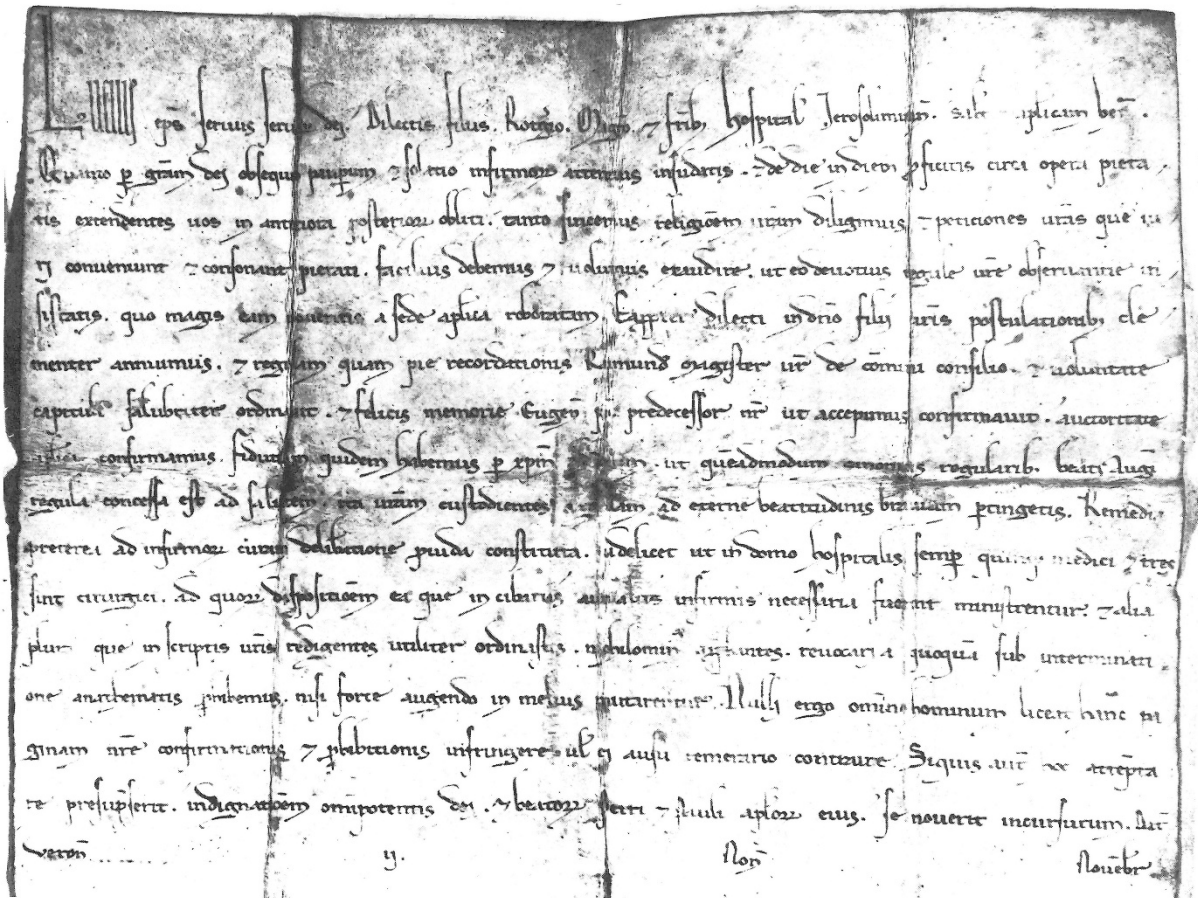
²⁸⁴It is thanks to Klement, in "*Gottes Gastgeber*" (p. 265), that this previously unpublished section of *Codex Vat. lat. 4852* has been reproduced, transcribed, translated, and commented upon for the first time in facsimile. Because these legal provisions are not arranged chronologically in the manuscript but inserted as a later addition, they remained largely unnoticed in earlier scholarship and in superficial examinations of the first quires (up to folio 32v). The systematic analysis of this section was only made possible by Katja Klement's research.

²⁸⁵ Winterfeld, op. cit., p. 27. He reports that Paoli discovered this manuscript in the Vatican Library. The latter transcribed it in his work *Codice diplomatico del sacro militare ordine Gerosolimitano heute di Malta*, vol. 1, Lucca 1733, in the "Appendix instrumentorum" on pp. XVIII–XXX and translated it into Italian.

²⁸⁶ The fundamental source work by Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire*, provides the edition of the authoritative texts; in the case of the rule of Raymond du Puy (No. 70), the Latin text is printed on the basis of the document in the StAAG (State Archives Aargau), Dept. Leuggern, No. 7.

²⁸⁷Legal history, pp. 31, 33, 35

The bull "Quanto per gratiam Dei"²⁸⁸
by Pope Lucius III. from August 22, 1185



The bull refers to Raymonds statutes already as a "rule".

Pope Lucius III reaffirmed the rule of the Order of St. John and contrasted it with the Augustinian rule:

"Through God and Christ we also have the firm confidence that you too, just as the Rule of Saint Augustine brought salvation to the Canons Regular, will attain the prize of eternal beatitude if you observe **your** Rule." ²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸Bavarian State Archives, Munich, Order of Knights U 4

²⁸⁹ Quoted in Bosio, loc.cit, pages 66 f., translated by Google AI on March 3, 2026. The document is of central importance for the hospital regulations and contains detailed provisions for the care of the sick.

Lucius Episcopus Seruus Seruorum Dei . Dilectis Filijs R. Magistro , & Fratribus Hospitalis Hierosolymitani, salutem & Apostolicam benedictionem. Quanto per gratiam Dei, obsequio Pauperum, & solatio Infirmorum, attentius insudatis, & de die in diem proficitis circa opera pietatis; extendentes vos ad anteriora, posteriorum obliti; tanto sincerius Religionem vestram diligimus, & petitiones vestras, quæ iuri conueniunt, & consonant pietati; facilius debemus, & volumus exaudire: Vt eò deuotius Regulæ vestræ obseruantia insistatis, quò magis eam noueritis à Sede Apostolica roboratam. Ea propter, Dilecti in Domino Filij, vestris postulationibus clementer annuimus, & Regulam, quam piè recordationis Raymundus Magister vester, de communi consilio, & voluntate Capituli, salubriter ordinauit; & felicitis memoriæ Eugenius Papa Prædecessor noster, vt accepimus, confirmauit; auctoritate Apostolica confirmamus. Fiduciam quidem habemus per Christum ad Deum, vt quemadmodum Canonis Regularibus Beati Augustini Regula concessa est ad salutem; ita vestram custodientes Regulam, ad æternæ Beatitudinis brauium pertingetis.

Remedia præterea ad Infirmorum curam, deliberatione prouida, constituta; videlicet, vt in Domo Hospitalis, semper quatuor Medici, & totidem sint Chirurgici, ad quorum dispositionem ea, quæ in cibarijs, aut alijs, Infirmis necessaria fuerint ministrentur; & alia plura, quæ in scriptis vestris redigentes, vtiliter ordinastis, nihilominus approbantes, reuocari a quoquam, sub interminatione anathematis prohibemus; nisi fortè augendo in melius, mutantur. Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostræ confirmationis, & prohibitionis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attemptare præsumperit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, & beatorum Petri, & Pauli Apostolorum eius, se nouerit incursum.



Ego Lucius Catholicæ Ecclesiæ Episcopus subscripsi.

BN

- ✠ Ego Theodouinus Cardinalis Portuensis, & Sanctæ Ruffinæ, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Henricus Cardinalis Episcopus Albanus, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Theobaldus Episcopus Cardinalis Ostien. & Veliternus, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Iohannes Presbyter Cardinalis Tituli Sancti Marci, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Laborans Presb. Card. S. Mariæ in Transtiberim Tit. Calixti, subscr.
- ✠ Ego Pandolphus Presb. Card. Basilicæ duodecim Apostolorum, subscr.
- ✠ Ego Albinus Presbyter Card. Tit. Sanctæ Crucis in Hierusalem, subscr.
- ✠ Ego Melior Presbyter Card. SS. Ioannis, & Pauli, Tit. Pammachij, subscr.
- ✠ Ego Adelardus Presbyter Cardinalis Tituli S. Marcelli, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Ardicio Diaconus Cardinalis Sancti Theodori, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Gratianus Diaconus Cardinalis SS. Cosmæ, & Damiani, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Gofredus Diaconus Cardinalis S. Mariæ in Via Lata, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Rolandus Diaconus Cardinalis S. Mariæ in Porticu, subscripsi.
- ✠ Ego Petrus Diaconus Cardinalis S. Nicolai in carcere Tulliano, subscr.
- ✠ Ego Rainerius Diaconus Cardinalis S. Georgij in Velabro, subscripsi.

Datum Veronæ, per manus Alberti S. R. E. Card. vndecimo calendis Septembris, Indictione quarta, Incarnationis Dominicæ Anno M. C. LXXXV. Pontificatus verò Domini Lucij Papæ Tertij, Anno Quarto.

Lucius, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God. To our beloved sons R. [Roger de Moulins], Master, and the Brothers of the Hospital of Jerusalem, greetings and Apostolic blessing.

Inasmuch as through the grace of God, you devote yourselves most attentively to the service of the poor and the comfort of the sick, and from day to day you make progress in works of piety; stretching yourselves toward those things which are before, forgetting those which are behind; so much more sincerely do we love your Religion [Order], and we ought and wish to more easily grant your petitions, which are consistent with the law and consonant with piety: so that you may insist upon the observance of your Rule the more devotedly, the more you know it to have been strengthened by the Apostolic See. Therefore, beloved sons in the Lord, we graciously assent to your requests, and by Apostolic authority, we confirm the Rule which your Master Raymond [du Puy], of pious memory, wholesomely ordained with the common counsel and will of the Chapter; and which our predecessor of happy memory, Pope Eugenius [III], as we have received, confirmed. We indeed have confidence through Christ toward God, that just as the Rule of the Blessed Augustine was granted to the Canons Regular for salvation; so you, keeping your Rule, will reach the prize of eternal Beatitude. Furthermore, we approve the remedies established with provident deliberation for the care of the sick; namely, that in the House of the Hospital, there shall always be four physicians and as many surgeons, to whose disposal those things which are necessary for the sick—whether in food or other things—shall be administered; and many other things which you have profitably ordained, reducing them to your writings. We forbid anyone to revoke these things under threat of anathema, unless perhaps they should be changed by improving them for the better. Let it be permitted to no man at all to infringe upon this page of our confirmation and prohibition, or to go against it with rash daring. If

anyone, however, should presume to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

- † I, Lucius, Bishop of the Catholic Church, have signed.
- † I, Theodovinus, Cardinal Bishop of Porto and Santa Rufina, have signed.
- † I, Henricus, Cardinal Bishop of Albano, have signed.
- † I, Theobaldus, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, have signed.
- † I, Johannes, Cardinal Priest of the Title of San Marco, have signed.
- † I, Laborans, Cardinal Priest of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Title of Calixtus, have signed.
- † I, Pandulphus, Cardinal Priest of the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, have signed.
- † I, Albinus, Cardinal Priest of the Title of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, have signed.
- † I, Melior, Cardinal Priest of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Title of Pammachius, have signed.
- † I, Adelardus, Cardinal Priest of the Title of San Marcello, have signed.
- † I, Ardicio, Cardinal Deacon of San Teodoro, have signed.

Given at Verona, by the hand of Albertus, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, on the eleventh day before the Kalends of September [August 22nd], in the fourth Indiction, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1185, and in the fourth year of the Pontificate of the Lord Pope Lucius III.

There is also disagreement about the dating of the rule.

The bull "**Quanto per gratiam Dei**"²⁹⁰ of **Pope Lucius III**, dated November 4, 1184 or 1185²⁹¹, deals with the confirmation of the rule by **Pope Eugene III**.²⁹² However, Eugene died on July 8, 1153, which means that the rule must have been issued before 1153²⁹³.

Waldstein-Wartenberg²⁹⁴ adds that the origin of the rule can be assumed to be significantly earlier, since such papal approval, a kind of legalisation of existing facts, was only common from the mid-12th century onward.

On the other hand²⁹⁵, it is dated to the years 1155 to 1160, since the rule repeatedly²⁹⁶ deals with clerics and priests of the order, and **Pope Anastasius IV** only granted the order permission to admit priests on October 21, 1154, through the bull "**Christianae fidei religio**"²⁹⁷, and since Raymond died no later than 1160, its promulgation is placed after 1154 (between 1155 and 1160), because Raymond du Puy died no later than 1160.



Pope
Lucius III²⁹⁸



Pope
Eugene III²⁹⁹



Pope Anasta-
sius IV³⁰⁰

²⁹⁰Bavarian State Archives, Munich, Order of Knights U 4

²⁹¹DELAVILLE LE ROULX, Cartulaire, No. 690 and BOSIO, *ibid*, p. 66 f.

²⁹²This document has not been preserved.

²⁹³See WIENAND, *op. cit.*, p. 43, DELEVILLE LE ROULX, Cartulaire, no. 70 and HIESTAND, *op. cit.*, p. 58

²⁹⁴Legal history, p. 30

²⁹⁵E.g. AMBRAZIEJUTE, Maria: Studies on the Rule of St. John. Diss. Freiburg/Switzerland 1929, p. 5 f., FLUGI VAN ASPERMONT, CHC: The Johanniter Order in the Holy Land (1100-1292) A Book for Johanniter- and Maltezer Ridders and Liefhebbers van Gescheidis - Van Gorcum's Historische Bibliotheek Deel 54, p. 93 and WAAS, Adolf: History of the Crusades. 2 volumes. Freiburg 1956, p. 43

²⁹⁶Johanniter Rule (hereinafter referred to as JR), Entry Protocol; III, V, IX, XIV

²⁹⁷DELAVILLE LE ROULX, Cartulaire, No. 226

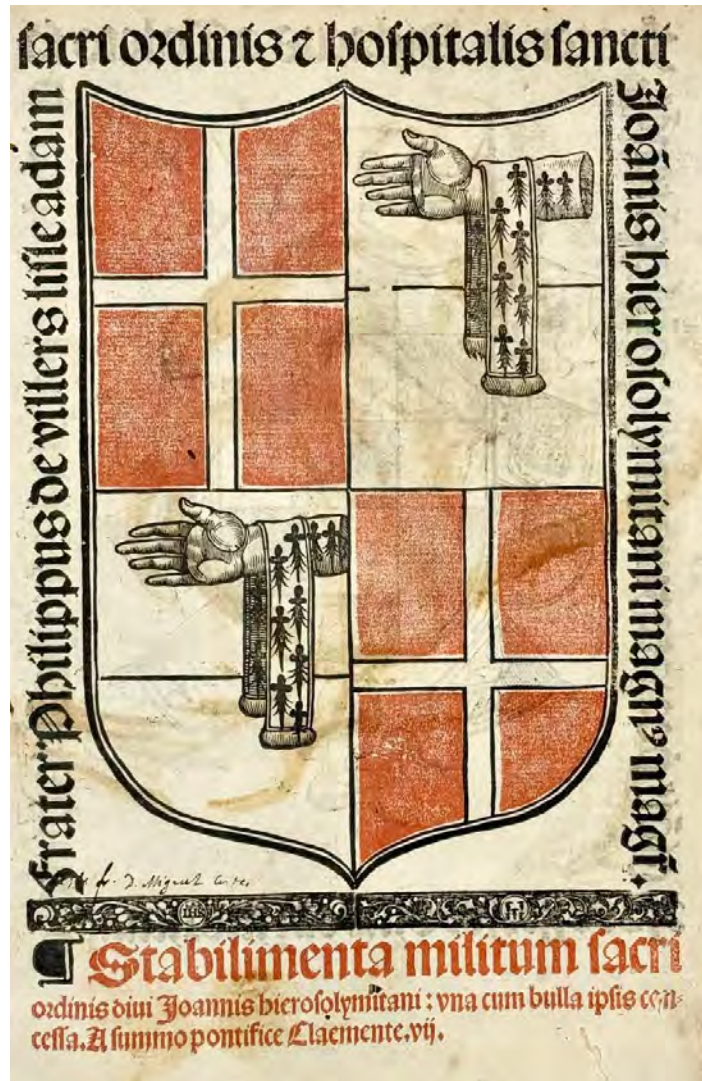
²⁹⁸Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucius_III.png?uselang=de

²⁹⁹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eugenius_III.png?uselang=de

³⁰⁰Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anastasius_IV.png?uselang=de

However, because the bull is to be seen more as a papal confirmation of what was probably previously common practice, and not as a *conditio sine qua non*, and because in both the older orders of the Augustinians and the Benedictines there had always been a natural coexistence of priests and lay brothers, for which no special papal permission was required, I agree with the **dating of the order's rule** to the period **between 1125 and 1153** .

Raymond's rule was and remains to this day a major authority for the development of the Order.



Later versions of the rule (e.g. the *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum militum* of 1489) were always preceded by the first chapter of Raymond's rule ³⁰¹, as it establishes the principles of his spirituality and his activities in Christian charity.

◀ The title page by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Philippe de (ed.): **Stabilimenta militum sacri ordinis divi Joannis Hierosolymitani**.

Una cum bulla ipsis concessa a summo pontifice Clemente VII. Salamanca: Juan de Junta 1534. ³⁰²

³⁰¹See, for example, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Philippe de : *Statuta Hospitalis Hierusalem* [o. Ä.], op. cit., p. 6; **Statuti della Sacra Religione di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano** , with the coordination of the last Capitol General celebration in 1631, sotto il Gran Maestro **Fra Antonio de Paula** . Borgo Novo: Marchesato di Roccaforte 1674 [here in the collected edition of 1676, p. 1]; as well as **the Codice del Sagro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano** , riordinato per comandamento del Sacro Generale Capitolo celebrato nell'anno 1776 sotto gli auspizi del Gran Maestro **Fra Emanuele de Rohan** . Malta: [Palazzo del Maestro] 1782 (so-called "**Code Rohan**"), p. 19. See also Wienand, Adam (ed.) : *The Order of St. John, the Order of Malta. The Knightly Order of St. John of the Hospital of Jerusalem* . Cologne: Wienand 1977 [no other edition], *ibid.*, p. 43.

³⁰²Image: https://artlogic-res.cloudinary.com/w_1600,h_1600,c_limit,f_auto,fl_lossy,q_auto/artlogicstorage/hsrarebooks/images/view/83122848e3140910a35531d38f4d8e8bj/hsrarebooks-order-of-saint-john-of-jerusalem-malta-stabilimenta-militum-sacri-ordinis-divi-joannis-hierosolymitani-una-cum-bulla-ipsis-concessa-a-summo-pontifice-claemente-vii-1534.jpg

¶ Titulo. s. De regula.

¶ Frater Raymondus de podio magister.

¶ Regula hospitaliariorum et militie ordinis sancti Joannis baptiste hierosolymitani.



In nomine dñi amen. Ego raymōdus servus pauperum christi et hospitalis hierusalē custos de consilio capituli fratrum in ista tuo hęc in domo hospitalis sancti Joannis baptiste hierusalē. Precepto enim quod oēs fratres accedentes ad obsequium pauperum et tuitionem fidei catholice teneant et cum divino presidio servent tria que promissa sunt deo: videlicet castitate et obedientia: hoc est quod adimplebunt quicquid eis erit imunctum a suo magistro: atque vivere sine proprio: quoniam deus requeret hęc tria ab eis in ultimo iudicio.

[from: Villiers L'Isle Adam, Sacri ordinis et hospitalis sancti Joannis hierosolymitani magnus magister, Fr. Philippus de: Stabilimenta militum sacri ordinis divi Joannis hierosolymitani. una cum bulla ip-sis concessa A summo pontifice Claemente VII. (Salamanca 1534)]

Detail from: Loubenx de Verdala, Frà Hugues: Statuta Hospitalis Hierusalem . 1588

The oldest known manuscript of the monastic rule



303



304

³⁰³Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_09912/?sp=7&r=-0.911,0.034,2.821,1.285,0

³⁰⁴"The Rule of St. John in Latin" of October 7, 1253. Aarau, Aargau State Archives, Leuggern Branch, Document No. 7. Image source: Aargau State Archives

Delaville divides the text of the Rule into 19 chapters, according to the structure of Codex Vaticanus Lat. 4852.284F³⁰⁵ The following follows the initial protocol, which shows the authorization of the rule by the entire (General) Chapter:

Chapter	German version	French version
1	The Profession	How the brothers should take their vows
2	The brothers' claims	What the brothers are entitled to
3	The honour of the brothers, church service, and the care of the sick	On the conduct of the brothers and the service of the churches and the reception of the sick
4	The brothers' travels and their behaviour towards women	How the brothers should behave abroad
5	Alms collecting	From whom and how alms should be asked
6	The use of alms	About the alms received and about the income from the houses
7	The preaching and fundraising tours	Who should go abroad to preach, and in what way?
8	Clothing and fasting	About the clothing and diet of the brothers
9	The punishment for the brothers' fornication	Concerning the brothers who are guilty of fornication
10	The penalty for disputes and unauthorized leaving of the house	Regarding the brothers who are arguing and hitting each other
11	The silence	On the silence of the brothers
12	What to do if a brother behaves disorderly	Regarding the brothers' misconduct
13	The procedure to follow when discovering (unauthorized) possession by a brother	Regarding the brothers who were found with private property.
14	The funeral rites	Which funeral liturgy should be celebrated for the deceased brothers
15	A reminder to be zealous	How the regulations listed here must be strictly adhered to
16	The admission and care of the "sick gentlemen"	How our sick gentlemen should be received and cared for
17	The brotherly rebuke	How brothers may correct brothers
18	The accusation of another brother	should accuse another brother
19	Wearing the cross on one's clothing	That the brothers bear the sign of the cross on their chests

³⁰⁵Holstenius, Lucas: *Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canoniarum*, Vol. 2, pp. 445–448, divides the rule into 30 chapters. However, the present work follows the numbering in Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 70; this edition is based on the more original tradition and represents the current standard in ecclesiastical and monastic historical research.

Jobert's two statutes , "**The Privilege of the Sick to Receive White Bread**" (the so-called "Bread Ordinance") of 1176 ³⁰⁶ and "**The Customs of the Church of the Hospital of Jerusalem**" (the so-called "Church Ordinance") from the period between 1177 and 1181 ³⁰⁷ , can be described as the first implementing provisions of the Rule.

"**The privilege of the sick to receive white bread**" states that the income from the farms of St. Mary and Caphaer should be used to bake white bread for the sick. Should this income be insufficient, good wheat should be taken from the hospital's granary. Even the weight of a loaf was specified as 16 ounces (≈ 453.59 grams), and such a loaf should be given to two poor people.

The "**Customs of the Church of the Hospital of Jerusalem**" state in

- Chapter 1 prescribes the beginning of the morning mass, prohibits celebrating mass more than once a day, and regulates church ceremonies in the event of death.
- Chapter 2 regulates the stipends and stole fees for priests, with special regulations for the memorial service of a deceased person.
- Chapter 3 stipulates that the light must always be on in the church and specifies which liturgical instruments must be kept ready.
- Chapter 4 regulates what to do if a stranger dies, and
- Chapter 5, if the deceased was a member of the Brethren community.
- Chapter 6 and
- Chapter 7 contains regulations on the use of the stole fees and
- Chapter 8 finally deals with the procedure for depositing a will with the hospital.

The statutes issued by the General Chapter on March 3, 1181, by Master Roger de Moulins, "**That the churches shall be regulated with the prior's knowledge**" (the so-called "Hospital Regulations") ³⁰⁸ , can be considered further regulations for the implementation of the Rule of Raymond, particularly Chapter 16. These regulations are divided into two parts. The second part represents the customary law for implementing the first part. Part one begins with the regulation that priests and clergy, as well as the furnishings of the church, are subject to the prior's supervision. From the second regulation onward, the focus is exclusively on nursing regulations: four physicians were to be employed for the hospital. Furthermore, the size and furnishings of the beds, the clothing of the sick when going to the latrine, the making of cradles for newborns, and the nature of the bier are addressed. Subsequently, the conduct of the nursing staff and the procedure to be followed in cases of misconduct by a nurse are discussed. Finally, the responsions, i.e., the contributions, that the mother hospital required from the overseas branches of its community are listed. The first part concludes with the code of conduct for the brothers: to care for the sick as if they were their masters, to provide them with servants as assistants, and to outline the duties of these servants. The second part describes in more detail the reception, care, and feeding of the sick, as well as their clothing when going to the latrine. We also learn that the hospital formerly sheltered abandoned children and provided food for poor couples at their wedding celebrations. The

³⁰⁶Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 494; cf. also Paoli, aa O., App. instr. XL f.

³⁰⁷ Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 504; see also Paoli, loc. cit., app. inst. XLII–XLIV.

³⁰⁸Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 627; Paoli, aa O., App. instr. XLV–L [erroneously LXV]; German translation in: Winterfeld, aa O., p. 70 ff.

house repaired and distributed used clothing and shoes and provided financial support to released prisoners. Five clerics prayed the Psalter every evening for the benefactors of the house. The convent invited 30 poor people to a meal daily. Three days a week, all the poor who came received alms and food. During Lent, thirteen poor people were invited to a meal every Saturday, their feet were washed, and they received new clothing and alms.



309

³⁰⁹Engraving “De Hospitalitate” from: *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum Militum* by Guillaume Caoursin, 1493

Image source: <https://www.academia.edu/figures/9631847/figure-1-the-logo-of-one-st-john-almsgiving-by-the-brothers>

2. Spiritual Foundations and **Spirituality in the Rule of the Order**

Picture³¹⁰ →

a. The **Image of God**

**Consecration to the Lord:
A life lived according to the evangelical
counsels for the glory of God**



Entering the order meant consecration in the sense of complete self-surrender to God ³¹¹Since the rule is issued in the name of Almighty God ³¹², he demands of the brothers at the Last Judgment their faithfulness to their promise to live according to the evangelical counsels. ³¹³ But God helps them to fulfil this obligation. ³¹⁴ He dwells in his saints and protects them ³¹⁵. Their service, including the work of the General Chapter, is done for the glory of God.

Therefore, and for the glory of the cross itself, they wear the cross on their garments, so that God may protect and defend them through this banner because of their faith. The second and third divine persons are only rarely explicitly mentioned in the documents—except in the formulas “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” and “(year) after Christ’s birth.” But even though the rule in these instances refers only to God the Lord, the theological content of these statements proves that God is meant either as the Trinity ³¹⁶, or specifically Jesus Christ ³¹⁷, or the Holy Spirit ³¹⁸.

Jesus Christ as such is explicitly referred to only in a few cases, e.g., in the Rule, where it says: “The priestly brothers who sing Mass (for a deceased brother) should pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for his soul” ³¹⁹, or in the Latin version of the “privilege of the sick to receive white bread,” the brother who acts contrary to the regulations is equated with the betrayer of Jesus Christ. ³²⁰

b. The **Liturgy**

A dignified liturgy constituted an essential part of service in the Order of St. John, since the entire practice served the glorification of God. Under Master

³¹⁰ Image: from the “Statuta Hospitalis Hierusalem”. Image source: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.9912>

³¹¹See JR XIX, 1: “... all brothers ... who now or later dedicate themselves to God and to the holy hospital in Jerusalem ...”

³¹²See JR XV: “... all these regulations ... we asked in the name of Almighty God.”

³¹³See JR I,2: “... because God requires the three things (religious vows) of them on the last day.”

³¹⁴See JR I, 1: “(Religious vows) kept with God’s help.”

³¹⁵JR IV, 7; “And may the Lord who dwells in his saints keep them in this way. Amen.” JR IV, 7 That the “saints” are to be understood as believers is shown by a comparison with Romans 8:27.

³¹⁶See JR XV.

³¹⁷See JR I, 2 and JR IV, 7.

³¹⁸See JR I, 1 and JR IV, 7.

³¹⁹See JR XIV, 8.

³²⁰Compare BV I,1: “si ... quisquam ... ei ... contraire presumpserit, sit damnatus perpetuo, una cum Juda proditore domini nostri Jhesu Christi.” Bread Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as: BV)

Jobert, the General Chapter even issued its own "church order," which established precise rules for these services³²¹

Within the church, decent behaviour was required³²² moreover, the eternal light had to be burning there³²³ The church was responsible for providing the necessary liturgical equipment³²⁴The order of service stipulated that morning mass could not begin before sunrise³²⁵ and no priest could celebrate mass more than once a day (prohibition of bination)³²⁶ The priest was to be served at the altar by clerics³²⁷ wearing albs³²⁸

Readings from Holy Scripture and the sprinkling with holy water (Asperges) took place on Sundays in the hospital itself³²⁹ The commemoration of the deceased played a significant role in the liturgical celebrations. Extensive regulations in Chapter 14 of the Rule, as well as Chapters 1, 4, and 5 of the "Church Order," governed these ceremonies in detail.

c. The Sacraments

The order's understanding of the sacraments – insofar as it can be derived from the underlying rule and statutes – provides deep insights into its spiritual foundations.

The **sacrament of penance** (confession) is the instrument of reconciliation, to refocus attention entirely on following Christ when a brother has strayed from the right path .³³⁰If sins are publicly confessed, the order prescribes the most severe punishments,³³¹ intended to move the offender to sincere repentance.³³²Also characteristic of the Order of St. John's self-understanding is the spiritual care for those in need: upon admission to the hospital, the sick were to first go to confession and receive Holy Communion before being put to bed .³³³

³²¹See Part III of this work.

³²²"Let their conduct and lifestyle in the church be honourable." JR III, 1

³²³"A light shall burn in the church day and night." JR III, 3

"We also command that the brothers keep a light burning in the church at all times." Church Ordinance (hereinafter abbreviated: KV) III, 1; cf. also "There shall be... an eternal light in the church..." 1 HO I,2

³²⁴"(We command) ... that the chalice and censer ... be." KV, III, 2

³²⁵"First, we command that no early Mass be sung before the day has begun." KV I, 2

³²⁶"No superior or warden of the houses commands a priest to sing two Masses a day." KV I, 3

³²⁷According to the canon law of the time, this referred to anyone who had begun priestly formation after receiving the tonsure. This usage has persisted in the religious orders to this day.

³²⁸"...that clergymen serve the priest at the altar in white robes." JR III, 2

³²⁹"Every Sunday the Epistle and the Gospel should be read in the hospital, and during the procession the sick person should be sprinkled with holy water." JR XVI, 4

³³⁰"If a brother has sinned, ... let him repent ... and let him be prescribed a suitable penance." JR IX, 1

³³¹"...he shall be severely beaten with gardens or straps, and he shall be expelled from the entire community of the Order and the brothers." JR IX, 3

³³²"If after this God enlightens his heart and he returns to the house of the poor, and he confesses that he is guilty and a sinner and has transgressed God's laws and promises to repent, then he shall be received back." JR 13:4-5

³³³"First, he should confess his sins to the priest and receive spiritual care (i.e., Holy Communion). Then he should be carried to the bed." JR XVI, 2 f.

Holy Communion played a central role in the daily life of the hospital, being regularly administered to the sick after their admission.³³⁴

The deep reverence for the sacrament of marriage is, however, indirectly revealed in the "Hospital Regulations": According to these, the hospital generously supported needy couples in organizing their weddings.³³⁵

d. The **Image of Humanity**

The order's view of humanity is reflected in the tasks and positions of the various classes of God's people.

The **religious priest** was an equal member of the community and subordinate to the prior³³⁶). Since diocesan priests at that time were often far from wealthy, the religious rule repeatedly mentions voluntary stipends³³⁷ for diocesan priests who served the order³³⁸).

The canon law of the time included not only priests and deacons in the **clergy**, but all those who had received minor orders, such as subdeacons and acolytes. They were to assist the priest at the altar³³⁹ and accompany him in distributing Holy Communion to the sick³⁴⁰. Furthermore, the Psalter was read every evening by five clerics for the benefactors of the house.³⁴¹

The general view of **man** in the rule and the first statutes reveals the essence of the spiritual basis of the service of the Order of St. John: the faithful themselves become saints³⁴² because God dwells in them³⁴³. The brothers had to bear witness to this holiness, for example, when they went out³⁴⁴.

The perspective of the **poor** and **sick** is a particularly insightful source for our topic: they are called "the poor of Christ" or "the poor of our Lord." The "³⁴⁵of

³³⁴"And when visiting the sick, the priest shall go in white garments and devoutly carry the Body of the Lord. And a deacon or subdeacon or acolyte shall go before him, carrying a lantern with a burning candle and a holy water font. – 2 JR III, 4 f.

³³⁵"Men and women who wish to marry but have nothing with which to celebrate their wedding, to them the hospital shall give two bowls or the portions of two brothers." 2 HO III

³³⁶"He determines what kind of clergy are needed for the service of worship." 1 HO I, 2

³³⁷Scholarships and stole fees are not automatically granted to the celebrant.

³³⁸"Of what is received in confession, one shall give to the priests one-sixth out of goodwill and not according to law." KV VII, 1

"In Masses sung without solemnity, the priests shall have no legal claim to the sacrifice, except as much as the brethren give them voluntarily." KV VI "(We command that) it is at the discretion of the prior to give or allocate to him (the priest) as he wills." KV VII, 2

³³⁹"...that clergymen serve the priest at the altar..." JR III, 2

³⁴⁰"When visiting the sick, a deacon or a subdeacon or an acolyte should go first." JR III, 4 f.

³⁴¹"Every night, five clerics are to read the Psalter for the benefactors of the house." 2 HO VI

³⁴²See Mt 27:52; Mk 6:20; Rom 1:7; 6:22; 1 Cor 1:2 etc.

³⁴³See John 14:20, 23 and JR IV:7 "Our Lord, who dwells in his saints..."

³⁴⁴"But when the brothers pass through the cities or the castles... nothing (disgusting) shall happen... as befits their holiness." JR IV, 1.4

³⁴⁵"I, Raymond, a servant of the poor of our Lord Jesus Christ..." JR Entry Protocol, 2

Christ³⁴⁶ are therefore "holy poor"³⁴⁷; in whose name the Rule is issued ...³⁴⁸ ³⁴⁹ like lords because they are ³⁵⁰.



←Image ³⁵¹

Chapter 5 of the Rule of the Order of St. John is also part of its propers.

The term "holy arms" is a novelty introduced by the Rule of the Order of St. John.

In the spirituality of the Order of St. John, the sick person is a full member of the "community of saints" of the hospital.

William de Ferrariis and Raoul le Funs (1165 – 1172) later used the term "holy arms".

The term "*quasi dominus*" can be interpreted in two different ways:

1. On the one hand, as "like **a** lord"
– note that "lord" was a kind of title of sovereignty at that time – and
2. On the other hand, it is "like **the** Lord", meaning like God or like Christ.

The oldest Latin and French texts allow for both interpretations, while the oldest German text opts for the interpretation "like **a** gentleman." The many discussions about which of these interpretations might be correct will not be elaborated upon here. Instead, I will summarize both into one:

By serving the sick as if they were masters, the brother serves the Lord.

This is the stated aim of the Order. Nowhere else in the relevant documents is it clearer that Christ's words, "*Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me*"³⁵² are to be put into practice. The hospital is to be a **community of saints**, in which all contribute to the sanctification of all. The sick are called to be instruments for the sanctification of the brothers ³⁵³ and when they follow this calling, they themselves become holy. The brothers glorify the Lord through their service to the sick, which has always been understood as a holistic service of body, mind, and soul. In this way, the brothers sanctify the sick, the service itself, and themselves. Even the house in which

³⁴⁶JR II, 2

³⁴⁷"the holy poor" JR V, 1

³⁴⁸"These regulations... we command in the name of Almighty God, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St. John, and of the holy poor..." JR XV

³⁴⁹"The sick person should be fed like a master..." JR XVI, 3

"Therefore, the brothers should be zealous in the service of the sick, who are our masters." 1 HO XVIII, 1

³⁵⁰"His master" JR II, 3

"I command the blessed, our sick master... to give two splendid estates to him in perpetuity." BV I, 5

"... to the holy sick, our blessed Lord..." BV I, 7

³⁵¹Image source: https://www.hospitaliers-saint-jean.com/sceaux/index.php?page=sceau_saint_jean_jerusalem

³⁵²Matthew 25:40; cf. the context Matthew 25:31-46. On the position of the sick, see also Waldstein-Wartenberg, *Brotherhoods*, pp. 14 ff.

³⁵³See John 9:3

this mutual sanctification takes place becomes holy ³⁵⁴Now we understand why the word "holy" is used so frequently in the Rule of the Order.

e. Asceticism

A look at the ascetic goals and practices of the brothers offers us a deep insight into the spirituality of the Order of St. John ³⁵⁵:

At the heart of it all are the **monastic vows**: All the brothers vow chastity, obedience, and the renunciation of personal property ³⁵⁶). The requirements of the individual evangelical counsels are subsequently specified:

1. **Chastity**: To maintain the vow of chastity, the brothers must avoid contact with women ³⁵⁷). Where this is unavoidable, they are obliged to maintain their sense of modesty ³⁵⁸). Contrary to the customs of the time, they are also forbidden to sleep naked ³⁵⁹). If a brother, despite all precautions, falls into fornication, he must, if he has sinned secretly, confess in secret and do appropriate penance ³⁶⁰). However, if the sin becomes public knowledge, a severe punishment follows ³⁶¹).
2. **Obedience**: Whatever the Master requires of a brother ³⁶², he must obediently carry it out. This devotion is called "holy obedience" because it serves as an essential instrument for sanctification ³⁶³).
3. **Poverty**: Fulfilling the vow of poverty requires simple, by no means luxurious clothing ³⁶⁴. This requirement is enforced by the threat of severe punishments – even beyond death, should a fellow brother die in possession of forbidden goods ³⁶⁵. If such possessions were discovered during his lifetime, the money was tied around his neck; he was paraded naked through the hospital and severely beaten ³⁶⁶.

³⁵⁴"Ego Jobertus, sacrae domus .. magister" BV I, so only in the Latin version.

³⁵⁵See Ballestrem, *Spiritualité*; and Ducaud-Bourget, François: *La spiritualité de l'Ordre de Malte*, 2nd ed., Rome 1963 (English translation: *The Spiritual Heritage of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta*, Vatican City 1958).

³⁵⁶"First, I command that all the brothers who come to serve the poor keep, with God's help, the things that God has promised in the hand of the priest and on the book (=Holy Scripture): these are chastity and obedience, this is all that is commanded to them by their superiors, and that they live without possessions." JR I

³⁵⁷"Women, however, should neither wash their heads nor their feet nor make their beds." JR IV, 6

³⁵⁸"Where women are, they should keep their modesty." JR IV, 5

³⁵⁹"... nor should they lie naked..." JR VIII

³⁶⁰"If a brother has fallen into unchastity, let him do penance in secret, if he has sinned in secret, and let him be prescribed a suitable penance." JT 9, 1

³⁶¹"...he shall be undressed...and he shall be beaten...and he shall be expelled from the entire community of the Order and of the brothers." JR IX, 2 f.

³⁶²"Obedience is all that their rulers (=superiors) offer them." JR I, 2

³⁶³"mandans...sub virtute sancte obediencie firmiter et districte." BV I, 9 -8only mentioned in the Latin version).

³⁶⁴"...their clothing should be modest..." JR II, 2

"Furthermore, we forbid the brothers to wear iron-brown and yellow-brown cotton cloth and furs of wild animals." JR VIII, 1

³⁶⁵"If it happens that any brother who should be without property dies with property which he did not show to his superior during his lifetime, no religious services shall be held for him, but he shall be buried like a convict." JR VII, 1

³⁶⁶JR VIII, 2

Another ascetic obligation is **fasting**. The brothers are only allowed to eat twice a day; on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as well as during the period from Septuagesima to Easter, the consumption of meat is forbidden .³⁶⁷

Furthermore, the brothers are called to utmost **humility**³⁶⁸ and obliged to observe **silence**³⁶⁹— especially at table and after Compline.



f. The **Veneration of Saints**

Another essential element of the order's own spirituality is the veneration of saints, although this topic is only explicitly mentioned sporadically in the sources of the early period examined here.

Mary³⁷⁰, the holy Mother of God, and **Saint John** are mentioned only once in the Order's Rule. Chapter 15 states: "All this [...] we command and ordain in the name of Almighty God and the Blessed Mary and Saint John and the (holy) poor." Interestingly, only the German source adds the attribute "holy" to the poor. This formula effectively introduces Mary, John, and the poor as the central patron saints of the Order.

The roots of this devotion can be traced historically: The hospital church was built in the immediate vicinity of the Church of Saint Maria Latina and originated from this monastic environment. Marian

³⁶⁷"They shall not eat more than twice a day, and on every Wednesday and Saturday from the time of the Alleluia (=Septuagesima) until Easter they shall not eat meat. ..." JR VIII, 2

³⁶⁸"Give you no more than water and bread and clothing of your claim..." JR II, 1

³⁶⁹"At table, each one shall eat his bread in silence, and in their beds the brothers shall keep silent." JR XI, 1,3

³⁷⁰Image: Detail from the painting "The Virgin with Saint Publius and Saint John the Baptist", by Mattia Preti (1613-1699), which is kept in St. Paul's Collegiate Church in Rabat, Malta.



devotion was evidently continued seamlessly from there. Later sources attest to the growing importance of this spiritual orientation over time: Around 1239, it is documented with certainty that novices had to vow upon their admission: "*I vow and promise to God, Almighty God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to Saint John the Baptist, that I will always obey the superior whom God and our Order have given me, that I will live without possessions, and that I will preserve chastity, so help me God.*"³⁷¹. This profound devotion is also reflected in the accounts of Bosio, to which Moroso refers. These accounts emphasize the knights' particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the erection of numerous shrines in her honour.

Image: Our Lady of Philermos³⁷²

³⁷¹ Quoted from: Moroso, Nicola: The veneration of the Holy Virgin, patron saint of the Order of St. John, by the Knights of Malta, Sigmaringen 1956, p. 3 (German translation of: *La dévotion des Chevaliers de Malte envers la Sainte Vierge, protectrice de l'Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem, sous l'invocation de Notre-Dame de Philermos*, Rome 1954).

³⁷² Stained glass window in Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni, South Africa.
Image source: Author's own photograph.



373

**Among these is the Shrine
of Our Lady of Liesse**

Particularly noteworthy is the one built by three French knights who were miraculously saved by Mary. 351F ³⁷⁴
(Moroso. loc. cit.. p.4)



375

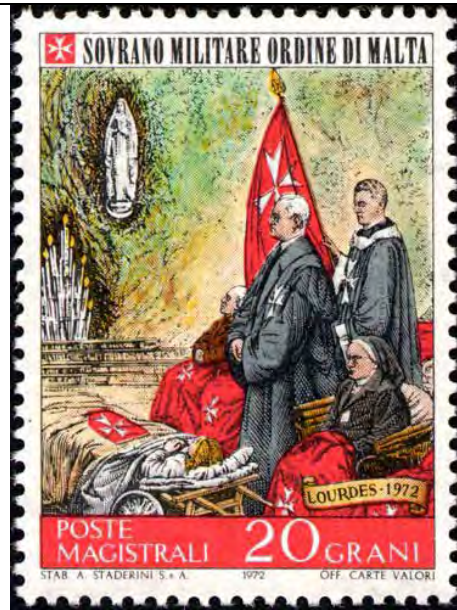
**The veneration of the image
of Our Lady of Philermos**

played an important role later in the time of the Order on Rhodes and continues to do so today.



376

**The Devotion
to Our Lady of Damascus**



377

and

Our Lady of Lourdes

are other contemporary Marian devotions of the order.

³⁷³Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basilique_Notre-Dame_de_Liesse_14082008_10.jpg

³⁷⁴Ibid., p. 4

³⁷⁵Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Our_Lady_of_Philerme_icon.jpg

³⁷⁶Image source: Author's own photograph

³⁷⁷Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated May 8, 1872. Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderof-malta.int/francobolli/emissione-17-decennale-elezione-sa-em-ma-il-principe-e-gran-maestro-fra-angelo-de-mojana/>

The veneration of **St. John** plays a special role in the order, especially since the order is named after him. First, however, a distinction must be made:

The men's hospice and its chapel, built as an extension of the monastery of St. Maria Latina, were originally dedicated to the late 11th century.

◀ St. John



He was soon revered in the East as one of the greatest benefactors, as he devoted himself especially to the poor and sick. He founded hospitals and homes for the poor and was the first to call the poor and sick his " *lords and masters* ".

He died between 616 and 620 ³⁸⁰.

Picture³⁸¹ ➔

the Merciful ³⁷⁸ consecrated.

Historians who consider the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem to be a continuation of the hospice also call him the first patron saint of the Order of St. John ³⁷⁹.

He was a nobleman from Cyprus, born in 550.

He became Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt.



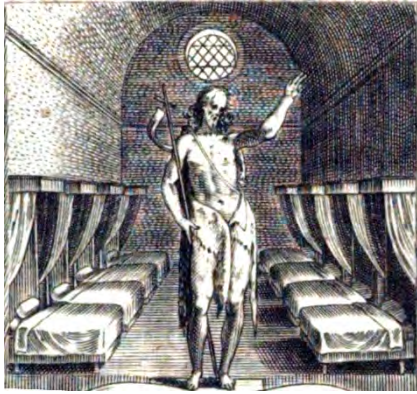
³⁷⁸Image: The image shows a panel from the Polyptych of St. John the Merciful, painted around 1475 by Jan Goraj for St. Catherine's Church in Krakow. The painting depicts a scene from the life of St. John the Merciful, who was Patriarch of Alexandria in the 7th century. John the Merciful was known for his charity and his help to the poor and needy. Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Polyptych_of_John_the_Merciful_01.jpg

³⁷⁹ The first of these was probably Guilelmus Tyrensis: *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* . In: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (ed.): Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux (RHC Occ.), vol. 1.1, Paris 1844, lib. 1, cap. 10, pp. 30–31. See also Volborth, Carl Alexander von: Der vergessene, erste Schutzheilige des Ordens St. Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem. In: Rundschreiben der Württembergisch-Badenschen Gemeinschaft des Johanniterordens 27 (1962), pp. 50–51.

³⁸⁰A legendary biography can be found in: Jacobus de Voragine: The Golden Legend. Translated from the Latin by Richard Benz, Berlin (East) 1963, pp. 160–168.

³⁸¹ Image: Mattia Preti: St. John the Almoner.

Image source: <https://mattia-preti.it/194-san-giovanni-elemosiniere/>



Most historians who deny the hospital's dependence on the Amalfi Hospice consider **John the Baptist** from the beginning as patron saint of the Order ³⁸².

←Picture³⁸³

The first document that mentions John the Baptist is the deed of gift from Foupier Favard concerning the land of Diosvolvol.

This document ³⁸⁴dates from the period between 1106 and 1110.

From this point onwards, i.e., during the lifetime of the founder Gérard, John the Baptist is considered the patron saint of the order.

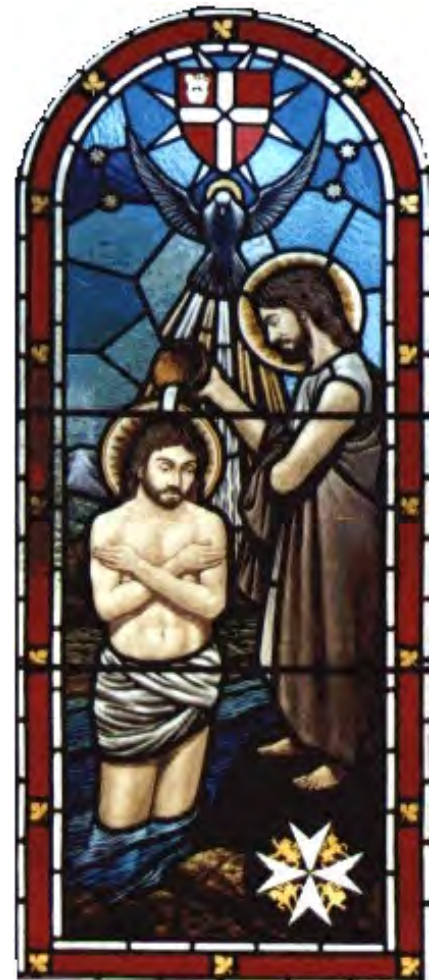
This is also what the bull "*Pie postulatio voluntatis*" by Pope Paschal II of 15. February 1113 ³⁸⁵John the Baptist

as patron saint.

He was venerated as a forerunner of Christ.



He lived and preached in the desert, like the brothers of the Order of St. John, who went to a strange, desert-like region to serve Christ.



³⁸²*De cultu S. Joannis Baptistae antiquitates christianae*, Rome 1755, p. 273 ff. tries to prove this in great detail ; also Hiestand, op. cit., pp. 43–47.

³⁸³Picture:.. Saint John in the Order's Hospital. Coloured copper engraving from the rule book of Grand Master Frà Hugues Loubenx de Verdala: *Statuta Hospitalis Hierusalem*, Rome 1588.

Image source:

³⁸⁴See Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 10.

³⁸⁵Ibid., No. 30

←Image³⁸⁶ Image³⁸⁷ →

³⁸⁶ Stained glass window in Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni, South Africa.
Image source: Author's own photograph.

³⁸⁷ Stained glass window in a facility of the Order of Sr. John in South Africa.
Image source: Author's own photograph.



◀ Saint John (probably as the Vicar of Christ) is symbolically depicted on the coins of the Order ³⁸⁸ from the beginning of the 16th century as a liege lord ³⁸⁹, who invests the Grandmaster with banners, or his (John's) head on the platter after his beheading, ➔
[images](#) ³⁹⁰



↓ [Image](#) ³⁹¹



while the Grandmaster and the Council of the Order kneel and pray before the tomb of Christ on the oldest seals of the Order ³⁹².



Waldstein-Wartenberg mentions the veneration of St. John the Baptist as patron saint of the lonely and of baptisteries in France, and Bedford reports that St. John was also venerated as patron saint of the sick – he means epileptics ³⁹³.

³⁸⁸As a subject of international law, it had, among other things, the right to mint coins.

³⁸⁹ These notes and the information in the following footnote are based, among other things, on a personal communication from Waldstein-Wartenberg.

³⁹⁰Image source for both coins: Prokopowski, aa O., p. 93.

³⁹¹Image source: Prokopowski, op. cit., p. 21

³⁹²As a consequence of the lay piety propagated in the 11th century, the Order of St. John saw itself as a "vassal of Christ." The ideal was to serve not a secular overlord, but Christ alone. The resulting duties included the protection of Christ's "subjects"—primarily pilgrims, the poor, and the sick, who, in the Order's spirituality, were considered "brothers of Christ" (and thus the knights' true "lords"). This encompassed escorting pilgrims on the roads to the "ancestral home of Christ" (Jerusalem), protecting the Holy Sepulchre, and defending his realm, which was initially conceived in practical terms as the Kingdom of Jerusalem and later as Christendom. This ideological foundation explains the early transformation into a chivalric order under Master Raymond du Puy. (Cf. Waldstein-Wartenberg, *Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 19.)

³⁹³ Bedford, William Kirkpatrick Riland / Holbeche, Richard: *The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. Being a History of the English Hospitallers of St. John, Their Rise and Progress*, London: King 1902 (Reprint: New York: AMS Press 1978), p. 3.

Excursus: The saints and blessed of the Order in the period up to 1187



394

The official canonization process, as we know it today, developed in the Catholic Church from the **10th century onwards** .

The most important stages at a glance:

- **First papal canonization:** The first historically documented canonization by a pope took place on **January 31, 993**. Pope John XV officially canonized Bishop **Ulrich of Augsburg** .
- **Monopolization by the Pope:** Previously, the veneration of saints had mostly arisen locally through popular piety or bishops. From the **12th century** onward (under Pope Alexander III), it was established that only the Pope had the right to canonize.
- **Introduction of Beatification:** The distinction between beatification and canonization became more firmly established later, particularly in the **16th century** . Beatification is considered a preliminary step to canonization and permits regional veneration, while canonization mandates worldwide veneration. ³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴Image: Detail from an engraving in the Maltese Commandery of Ehreshoven. Photo: Maresi Rehder

³⁹⁵ Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

By 1187, the Order of St. John had been awarded two Blessed and two Saints:



396

Blessed Gérard
- 1113



397

Blessed Raymond
- 1160



398

St. Gerlach
1100 - 1176



399

St. Nicholas
- 1187

The life and work of Blessed Gérard has already been described in detail in this work.

The same applies to Blessed Raymond. He is venerated as a Blessed primarily within the tradition and liturgy of the Order. Here, he is specifically referred to as follows:

- **According to the Order's rule:** He is considered the one who codified the [rule of Blessed Raymond du Puy](#), which forms the foundation of the Order's life.
- **Historical sources:** Even contemporaries and early chroniclers (such as the historian René Aubert de Vertôt) reported that Christians in the East venerated him as a **Blessed because of his virtues even before his formal canonization** —a title that was "confirmed" by posterity.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, I would like to introduce the two saints of the order during its founding period:

³⁹⁶Image source: Author's own photograph

³⁹⁷Image source: <https://sacredmurals.com/gallery.html?gImage=1845>

³⁹⁸Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:De_H._Gerlacus.jpg?uselang=de

³⁹⁹Image source: Author's own photograph

⁴⁰⁰ Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

Whether the first of these, Saint Gerlach, became a member of the Order of Saint John when he served as a penitent in the Hospital of Jerusalem for seven years from 1151 onwards is neither historically proven nor excluded.

Saint Gerlach of Valkenburg / Houthem

Wikipedia (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerlach_von_Houthem) writes: Gerlach **of Houthem** (variant names: *Gerlachus*, *Gerlac*, *Gerlach of Valkenburg*, and others ; * around 1100 in [Valkenburg aan de Geul](#) ; † between 1164 and 1177 in Houthem near Valkenburg aan de Geul) was a [knight](#) and later a [hermit](#) from the [Duchy of Limburg](#) . He was later [canonized](#) and is venerated in various ways, particularly in the [Maastricht](#) and [Aachen area](#) . His Catholic feast day is January 5.

Life and work

Gerlach was of noble birth and participated as a knight in various battles and [tournaments](#) . During one of these away tournaments, he was informed that his wife had died at home. Gerlach was deeply saddened that he had not been present during her final days and repented of his careless life. He then made a pilgrimage to Rome and asked the Pope for appropriate penance. The Pope advised him to first make a seven-year pilgrimage to [Jerusalem](#) and to lead a permanently ascetic Christian life.

Gerlach then gave away all his possessions and luxury goods and embarked on the imposed pilgrimage to **Jerusalem. There he worked in a hospital run by the [Knights Hospitaller](#)** and as a simple shepherd in the fields.

It must have been around the year 1151 when Pope Eugene III imposed a penance of seven years of servitude in Jerusalem on him.



Image ⁴⁰¹ ↑ Upon arriving in Jerusalem, he goes to the hospital where the poor and sick are cared for.

It was the hospital of the Order of St. John, and possibly Blessed Raymond, who welcomed him.

The brothers wanted to give him easy tasks, but he refused. He desired humble, hard work and became quite talkative after tending to the hospital's livestock.

⁴⁰¹Fresco in St. Gerlach Church in Houthem. Image source: Author's own photograph.

Wikipedia continues: "Gerlach subsequently settled as a hermit in the small hamlet of Houthem near Valkenburg in the [Göhl valley](#)



Der hl. Gerlach von Houthem.

402



403

There he set up his dwelling in a hollow tree..."



404

... He gave food to the poor

Gerlach died on January 5th

, and depending on the interpretation of the literature, between 1164 and 1177."

His feast day is celebrated on January 5th.

⁴⁰²Image source: <https://www.santiebeati.it/immagini/Original/36350/36350C.JPG>

⁴⁰³Image source: <https://www.santiebeati.it/immagini/Original/36350/36350D.JPG>

⁴⁰⁴Image source: Author's own photograph

Saint Nicholas ⁴⁰⁵

Martyrs of the Order of Malta Commemoration Day: July 1st

Nikasius, a scion of the Kameti family (later known as de Burgo), was born in Sicily in 1135. He became a knight of the Order of St. John, fought as one of the defenders at the siege of Acre in Palestine, and was captured and beheaded there in 1187 along with many others, including allegedly his brother Ferrandino.

Prayer:

O God, who delights us every year with the commemoration of your martyr, Saint Nicholas, grant that through his example and intercession all members of our Order may continually grow in faith and remain faithful to you with all their hearts.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, from eternity to eternity.

(Translated into German from

“The Missal of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta”, San Francisco, California 2016)



←Image ⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵Fresco in the chapel of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of Malta.

Image source: Author's own photograph.

⁴⁰⁶Oil painting of Saint Nicholas in the Grand Magisterium of the Order of Malta in Rome.

Image source: Author's own photograph.

Of Saint Nicholas, a knight martyr, it is only known that he lived shortly after Blessed Gerland. His image, painted in several churches (in the Church of Saint Dominic in Palermo, in the Church of Saint Catherine dell'Olivella – near the altar of Our Lady of Itria – Saint Mary of Miracles in Palermo, and in the Church of Saint John the Beheaded in Valletta, Malta), shows that he is not a myth, but a martyr of our Order. Beneath the image of Saint Nicholas, painted on a column of Saint Dominic in Palermo, this inscription can be read, which testifies to a popular belief:

“Saint Nicholas, martyr and champion of our Lord Jesus Christ, had many glands on his neck, and our Lord Jesus Christ commanded that the glands should not harm him who bears his name. Amen.”

Image ⁴⁰⁷ →

Our knight suffered from scrofula as a result of his torture. From his heavenly place, he will protect us from scrofula, under one simple condition: if

our glands cause us or our children concern, let us confidently write down the name of Saint Nicholas and wear it on ourselves or in the patient's clothing. The holy martyr

will indeed be able to heal the disease he knew. And if our curiosity drives us to learn more about his life, I will tell you, together with Frà Bosio, that you should act in such a way that “we are worthy to know what he did ... in heaven”.

(From: Ducaud-Bourget, Msgr. François:

The Spiritual Heritage of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Vatican 1958)



↑Image: ⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷St. Nicholas Martyr: Oil on canvas, 210 x 159 cm, by Mattia Preti, Oratory of the Beheading, St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta/Malta. This painting is often erroneously attributed to Blessed Adrian Fortesque.

⁴⁰⁸From the Order of Malta's Christmas 1976 stamp series, Saints and Blesseds of the Order, 1 Scudo stamp: St. Nicholas. Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-37-santo-natale-1976/>

Life and Martyrdom of Saint Nicholas ⁴⁰⁹

Image ⁴¹⁰ ➔

Saint Nicholas was born in Sicily between 1130 and 1140 and came from a Saracen and Norman family. His ancestor Hammud (later Roger Camuto) converted to Christianity in 1088 and received land as well as the family name "Burgio." Robert of Burgio, Roger's son, married into the Hauteville family, and their sons Ferrandino and Nicholas joined the Order of Saint John, vowing to defend the Holy Land and help the needy.



In 1185, the brothers traveled to Jerusalem and served in the hospital there. During Saladin's conquest in 1187, Nikasius, a captain under Roger Des Moulins, was captured and executed at the Battle of Hattin for refusing to convert to Islam. His martyrdom was quickly recognized, and he became a revered example of the faith.

Miracles and veneration

The cult of Saint Nicholas spread from Caccamo, promoted by the Burgio and Cabrera families. He became the city's patron saint, with a brotherhood and church dedicated to him. Many miracles were attributed to his intercession.

Image ⁴¹¹ ➔

- Ending of epidemics: Saint Nicholas is credited with ending the devastating plague epidemics in Caccamo in 1575 and 1624.
- Healing of illnesses: People prayed to him for relief from a throat ailment known as "struma" or "scrofula," a swelling of the lymph nodes in the upper neck. His reputation as a healer contributed to the spread of his cult throughout Sicily.
- Protection and Patronage: His relics were venerated, and annual celebrations were instituted to honour his memory and the transfer of his relics. The church dedicated to him was built to protect the inhabitants of Caccamo, and his miracles solidified his status as the city's oldest patron saint.



⁴⁰⁹Summary of http://ilsiciliano.net/page35_st_nicasius.htm by MS Copilot:

⁴¹⁰Image: St. Nikasius by Wolfgang Heimbach, Spanish School of the 17th century.

Image source: https://image.invaluable.com/housePhotos/Tajan/00/796800/H0965-L424665168_original.jpg

⁴¹¹Icon (detail) in the Maltese Commandery in Ehreshoven/Germany



412

The cult of Saint Nicasius

Origin and distribution

The cult originated in Caccamo, Sicily, presumably under the influence of the Burgio and Cabrera families, who venerated him as an ancestor and promoted his worship. The Cabrera family played a key role in establishing him as the patron saint of Caccamo, which led to the construction of a church dedicated to him on the outskirts of the town.

[Image 413](#) ➔

Development and practice

- **Early veneration:** Saint Nicholas was venerated as a martyr shortly after his death, as he had died for the Christian faith. His cult was strengthened by belief in his intercession and the miracles attributed to him.
- **Relics and the Brotherhood :** In 1596, a brotherhood was founded in Caccamo in his name, and a relic of the saint was kept in the town church. The official recognition of the brotherhood by the Archbishop of Palermo strengthened his cult.
- **Commemorative Days and Rituals :** The annual celebrations include his liturgical memorial day on July 1st, as well as a local festival on the last Sunday in August and the following Monday, commemorating the transfer of his relics. These events involve the entire community.



Cultural and social impacts

⁴¹²Stamps of the Order of Malta: Christmas 1988, Mattia Preti: Saint Rosalia being crowned by the Virgin of Constantinople. The painting by Mattia Preti is kept in the *Church of Sant'Agostino degli Scalzi* in Naples. The Knight of the Order on the right stamp (detail of the painting) is Saint Nicholas.

⁴¹³Saint Nikasius, canvas, Wignacourt Museum (Rabat), Malta

- **Art and Iconography** : Numerous paintings and images of Saint Nicholas adorned the streets and houses of Caccamo, reflecting the depth of his devotion. His image became a symbol of protection and faith for the population.
- **Official recognition** : Church authorities formalized his cult by granting indulgences to visitors of his church on his feast days and officially naming him the patron saint of the city. The enduring nature of his cult is evident in the continued celebration of his feast day and the revival of his brotherhood in modern times.

Summary: The cult of Saint Nicholas is deeply rooted in the history and identity of Caccamo. It is characterized by the veneration of his relics, the attribution of miracles (especially protection from the plague and healing), the establishment of a brotherhood, and annual religious festivals. His cult shaped local religious practices and contributed to the social cohesion and spiritual life of the community.



g. The works of charity.

Hospitality as the core task of the order

Image ⁴¹⁴➔

"Hospitality occupies the first rank among all works of piety and humanity. All Christian peoples agree on this because it encompasses all other virtues. It must be practiced and respected by all people of good will—especially by those who bear the honourable name of a Hospitaller Knight. Therefore, we must devote ourselves more devotedly to no other task than that from which the Order derives its name. ⁴¹⁵"

Image ⁴¹⁶⬇



History proves that these words of **René Aubert de Vertôt** were not merely a formula but were put into practice in real-world service.

The hospitality of the Order of St. John is rooted in the profound spirituality discussed earlier; it is its practical expression. Hospitality is consistently understood here as service to the poor of the Lord. This is reflected in the titles: the Grandmasters are known as "*Servants of the Poor of Our Lord Jesus Christ*" ⁴¹⁷ or "*Servants of the Poor and Sick*" ⁴¹⁸, while the friars are simply called "*Servants of the Poor*" ⁴¹⁹.

This attitude may seem paradoxical at first glance, since chivalric self-image is rarely associated with humility. However, the chivalric ideal of loyalty found its sacred expression here: the Crusaders regarded Christ as their supreme overlord. Since Christ, following Matthew 25:37-40, identifies with the least among us, service to the hungry, the sick, or the imprisoned becomes direct service to Christ himself.

Caring for the poor as "masters" is therefore the logical consequence of chivalric loyalty and Christian faith.

⁴¹⁴Image: Blessed Gerard in the hospital. In: Bosio, Giacomo: Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano, Vol. 1, 3rd ed., Venice 1695, p. 56.

⁴¹⁵Vertot, Histoire, vol. 6, p. 52 f., quoted from: Wienand, op. cit., p. 268.

⁴¹⁶Image source: https://content.easyliveauction.com/auctions/images_lots/B8FFCE8A0707C0E21D56530C9C2BEF96_the17/1100391144_PREVIEW.JPG

⁴¹⁷JR, Entry Log, 2

⁴¹⁸HO Entry Protocol, 3

⁴¹⁹JR II, 2

The reading of the Latin manuscript of the monastic rule (JR II,2) speaks even more clearly of:

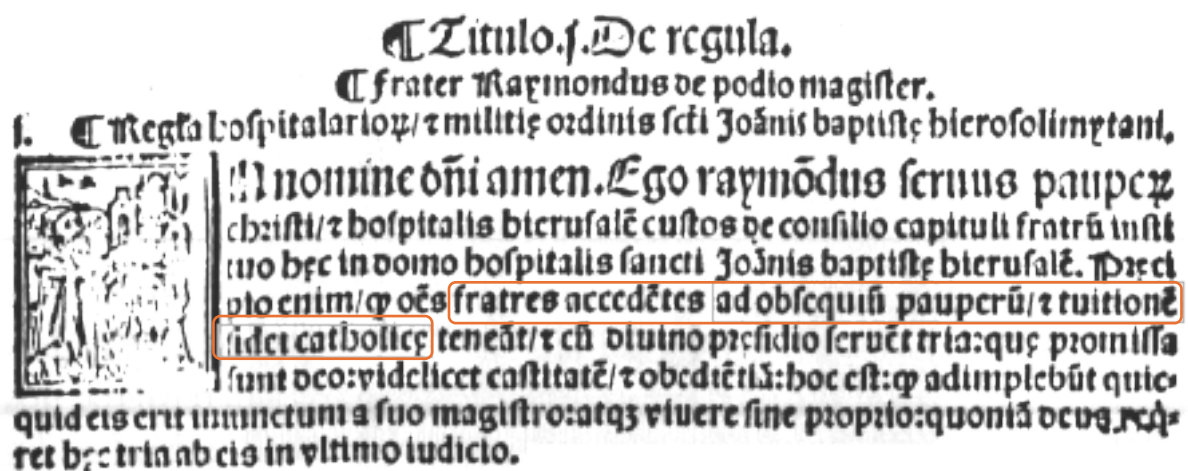


"Domini nostri pauperes quorum servos nos esse fatemur "
Our Lords, the poor , whose servants we profess to be...

The rule of the Order of St. John calls the members of the order



"fratres ad seruitium pauperum uenientes"
= brothers who come to serve the poor.



In later versions of the rule, this is expanded to a dual mandate

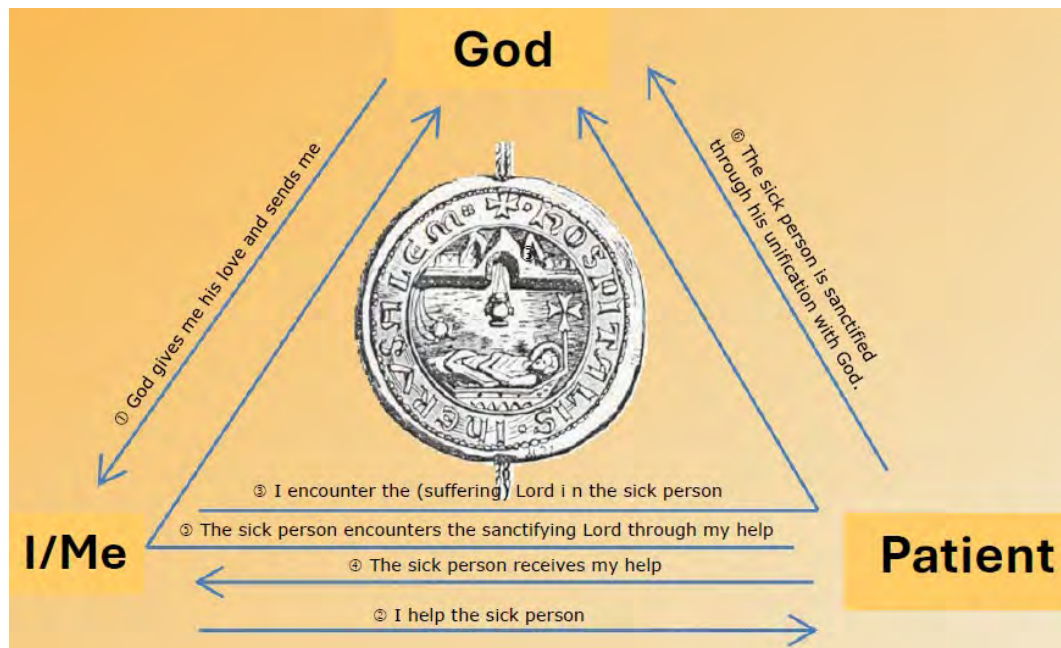
" fratres accedentes ad obsequium pauperum et tuitionem fidei catholicae "
(Brothers who approach the service of the poor and the protection of the Catholic faith).

"tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum" comes from.

A distinctive feature of the Order of St. John (cf. Chapter 3 of the Rule) is the holistic nature of care: Service is not limited to physical care but includes concern for the spiritual well-being of both those receiving care and those providing it. The pastoral and sacramental dimensions – **priestly visits to the sick and Holy Communion** – are not optional additions but **integral components of care** .

In the Order of St. John, **charity** thus becomes **a fully realized act of worship** : the hospes (guest) is Christ himself, who encounters us in the sick.

Hospitality as a salvific event and the "communio" sanctorum ":



1. God gives me his love and sends me
2. I help the sick person
3. and encounter the (suffering) Lord in the sick person
4. The sick person receives my help
5. and thus encounters the [holy] Lord
6. And becomes holy in oneness with God.

This transforms...

- the **hospital** as a **place of healing experience**,
- the **hospital community** became the "**community of saints**" and
- Hospitality becomes a sacramental event of **salvation**.

Historical uniqueness and the "Fourth Vow"

The Order of St. John was the **first community in the West** to make hospital-ity its primary mission. While Roman valetudinaria primarily served to maintain the labour power of slaves, and episcopal xenodochia (from the 5th century on-ward, ⁴²⁰) were more general welfare institutions, the Order of St. John distinguished itself through a primary focus on the care of the poor and sick on a large scale. Although the original rule does not yet contain an explicit vow of hospital-ity, the customary law of the Order of St. John, around 1239 (Chapter 121), cod-ifies a unique admission ceremony. In addition to the evangelical counsels (obe-dience, chastity, poverty), a fourth, distinctive promise is added: "...for you promise **to be servants and slaves to our lords who are ill .**"

⁴²⁰"The assumption that the Council of Nicaea (325) ordered such institutions is based on a historical confusion or later attribution. ... Provisions concerning the administration and protection of xenodochia were only enshrined in detailed canon law at the **Council of Chalcedon (451)** in canons 8 and 10." by Google AI on January 12, 2026

The Architecture of Salvation: Sacred Space and Hospital Ward



421



422

This theological orientation shaped the architecture: many hospital wards of the Order of St. John had built-in altars or were designed as two-story churches. This arrangement allowed patients on the upper floor to see and hear the liturgy at the altar below, thus ⁴²³them to participate even from their beds.

⁴²¹Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_09912/?sp=76&r=-0.803,-0.059,2.606,1.556,0

⁴²²Image: Sacra infermeria Malta. Image source: <https://dynamic-media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-o/21/2d/59/ba/caption.jpg?w=1000&h=-1&s=1>

⁴²³See GRUNSKY, op. cit., passim



A principle that extended even to the hospital trains of the First World War ⁴²⁴



and other institutions such as San Giacomo in Augusta in Rome, traditional ⁴²⁵.



426

Holy Mass in the Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni/South Africa

⁴²⁴Image: Interior of a hospital train carriage with altar of the Italian Association from the First World War (1914-18), from PROKOPOWSKI, *ibid.*, p. 229

⁴²⁵Image: Ward with altar in the Order Hospital of San Giacomo in Augusta, where the Order of Malta once maintained a ward. The images were taken during a visit by a Grand Master. The hospital was in operation until 2008. (from PROKOPOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 203)

⁴²⁶Image source: Author's own photograph.

The Rule of the Order of St. John consistently prioritizes pastoral and sacramental care. Before hospitalization, the salvation of the soul is ensured through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Only then is the sick person received as "quasi dominus " (like a lord) and strengthened daily (reficiantur).

The oldest seal of the Order dates from the era of Blessed Raymond du Puy.

Image ⁴²⁷ →

and a lead bulla, used by Grandmasters in Jerusalem in the 12th century, symbolize this connection:



←Image ⁴²⁸



The bull depicts the Order's hospital in Jerusalem, recognizable by the inscription "HOSPITALIS HIERUSALEM" and the octagonal cross. In the centre is a dome from which hangs the lamp of the Eternal Light. The "Eternal Light" testifies to the uninterrupted

presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. To the left is a censer, symbolizing the prayers and care of the Knights for the sick. The sick man lying in bed represents Christ, with a halo and the crown of thorns, symbolizing his divinity and suffering.

Image ⁴²⁹ →



The Hospital of Jerusalem as a comprehensive social system

The statutes demonstrate that the Order of St. John operated a highly sophisticated system of charity from its very early stages. The Hospital of Jerusalem was far more than a hospitium (guesthouse); it functioned as a comprehensive centre of charitable care, encompassing infant care, welfare for the needy, and prisoner support. In both quality and quantity, it represented the first regular and professional aid institution in Western Christendom.

⁴²⁷Oldest seal of the order, from: Sandoli , Sabino de: *Corpus Inscriptionum Crucesignatorum Terrae Sanctae (1099–1291). Testo, traduzione e annotazioni* , Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press 1974 (SBF. Collectio Maior, Vol. 21), p. 94.

⁴²⁸Image source: <https://bidkit.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/40/imgBig/18/919D.jpg>

⁴²⁹Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated April 27, 1989. Image and text source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-135-bolla-plumbea-magistrale-del-xii-secolo/>



⁴³⁰The Dimensions of the Hospital of Jerusalem

The efficiency and scope of the social services provided by the Order of St. John can be impressively demonstrated by the logistics of the hospital in Jerusalem.

Johannes von Würzburg, who visited Jerusalem in 1135, left behind a detailed description in 1170 ⁴³¹documenting the exceptional character of this institution:

*"Opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the opposite side of the road heading south, stands a beautiful church built in honour of John the Baptist. **Attached to it is a hospital where, in various rooms, an enormous number of sick people, both men and women, are gathered. They are cared for and healed daily with great effort.***

When I was there, I learned from the account of the ministering brothers themselves that the total number of these sick was two thousand, of whom sometimes more than fifty are carried out dead in the course of a day and a night, while many new ones are constantly arriving. What more can I say? This same house provides food for as many people outside as inside, in addition to the boundless charity it bestows daily on the poor who beg for bread from door to door and do not live in the house, so that the total sum of its expenditures certainly cannot even be calculated by the administrators and stewards. In addition to all this money spent on the sick and other poor, this house also maintains, in its various chambers, many people who participate in all kinds of military exercises for the defense of the Christian lands against the invasion of..." Saracens are trained."



⁴³⁰Image: Woodcut from: Octavien de Saint-Gelais: Le Vergier d'Honneur, Paris undated [approx. 1500–1520].

Image source: https://blogger.googleusercontent.com/img/b/R29vZ2xl/AVvX-sEhFn1Nn_jVaJKVcLdP8MOOy_sectHvBK6k2Xi1qe5mYQOmjZV7-Gq0K13kl8lbswjF97dnRCCiaSY3esxK_09dyZ5ZKh2flitkSrAGcV32TqvSshGblpzLrm2oLWL2i58TSj0tEE-jzXlw/s1600/hospitalmedieval.jpg

⁴³¹The primary source cited is Johannes von Würzburg's "Descriptio Terrae Sanctae" (c. 1165), quoted from the edition by Pez (Augsburg 1721, cols. 483–546) [1.1]. The secondary literature includes Adolf von Winterfeld's "Geschichte des ritterlichen Ordens St. Johannis" (Berlin 1859, pp. 56 ff.), Giovanni Bottarelli's "Storia politica e militare" (Milan 1871, p. 22 f.) as well as Heinz Himmels' unpublished manuscript "The Order of Malta" [1.1].

Infrastructure and holistic care

This account illustrates that the hospital of the Order of St. John was far more than a medical station. It was a large, multifunctional institution that both treated the sick as inpatients and accommodated the healthy and pilgrims as "hospitaliters ." The scale of 2,000 beds underscores its quantitative uniqueness in the 12th century.

A key characteristic of the Order of St. John was the combination of charitable service and military protection. The mention of armed forces to secure the lands and castles demonstrates the order's early on-developing dual structure: the protection of the faithful (*tuitio fidei*) formed the necessary framework to enable service to the poor (*obsequium pauperum*) in the first place.

Thus, the Hospital of Jerusalem, in the context of the Order of St. John, represents a holistic model of Christian existence, combining physical healing, social security, and military protection into a theologically grounded unity.

Excursus created by Google AI:

Functional differentiation:

Fratres armorum and Fratres infirmarii

The professionalism of the **Order of St. John** manifested itself early on in a clear internal division of tasks. This differentiation was not an expression of hierarchical value judgment, but rather the necessary structural response to the dual mission of *tuitio fidei* and *obsequium pauperum* .

1. The Fratres infirmarii (nursing brothers)

The *brothers The infirmarians* formed the spiritual and operational core of the hospital. Their service was directly focused on the "proper" of the **Order of St. John** : the direct care of the " *domini* ". *nostris pauperes* " .

- **Job profile:** They were responsible for inpatient admission, nursing care and the organisation of pastoral-sacramental care.
- **Identity:** They primarily embodied the ideal of the "servant and slave" of the sick. Their actions were characterized by the daily encounter with Christ in the suffering person.

2. The Fratres Armorum (Brothers in Arms)

The *brothers The armorum* (later often referred to as knightly brothers) represented the military capacity of the **Order of St. John** . However, their role should not be considered in isolation from the hospital system.

- **Job description:** They secured the infrastructure of the **Order of St. John** , protected the pilgrimage routes and defended the border castles, which served as an economic and strategic base for the upkeep of the hospital.
- **Identity:** Their struggle was a "protective service". While the *infirmarii* cared for Christ in the sick, the *armorum* defended the space in which this care and Christian existence were even possible.

The organisational unit

Despite these specialized areas of expertise, the **Order of St. John** remained an indivisible unit. Sources demonstrate that military resources (castles, lands, armed forces) were consistently directed towards the goal of hospitality . The *fratres armorum* created external security so that the *fratres The infirmarii* were able to carry out the saving event of hospitality. Only through this professionalization could the **Order of St. John** exist for centuries as the most stable aid institution in the West.

Capacity and universality of the service

Further contemporary accounts support the reports of the hospital's exceptional capacity in Jerusalem. The **pilgrim Theodoric** ⁴³², who visited the institution around 1172, documented 1,000 beds. **Roger de Moulins provides a concrete example of its logistical capabilities** for the year 1177: After the Battle of Tell Diezer (Montgisard /Ramla), 750 wounded soldiers were admitted to the hospital, which at that time was already caring for 900 patients.

A key distinguishing feature of the Order of St. John was the unconditional universality of its admission: no distinction was made in treatment based on the origin or religious affiliation of those seeking help. This practiced impartiality led, as early as the 11th century, to a form of *gentlemen's agreement* between the hospital and its non-Christian opponents.



Zwehl acknowledges this pioneering achievement of the Order of St. John with the words:

"The Knights Hospitaller deserve the honour of having been the first to undertake the accommodation and care of the sick of all kinds and origins on a larger scale." ⁴³³

In addition to its social openness, the Order of St. John also set new qualitative standards in infrastructure. Unusual for the medieval period was the fact that each patient was assigned their own bed ⁴³⁴). Overall, the hospitality of the Order of St. John thus marked a substantial advance in the history of Western nursing.

←Picture⁴³⁵

Universal recognition by secular and religious powers

The preeminent position of the Order of St. John is underscored by the

⁴³²Text on page 84

⁴³³ Zwehl , *ibid.*, p. 15. The statement of the quotation is limited to the Western world; in the Christian Orient, the xenodochium as a specialized institution for the care of the poor and sick was established much earlier.

⁴³⁴Camp, Maxime du: *La Charité privée à Paris*, Paris: Hachette 1886, p. 75 ff., reports on the occupancy of the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris in 1785, when 1,219 beds were occupied by a total of 3,148 patients.

⁴³⁵"Pax Hospitibus " Detail from a copper engraving from Verdala , Hugues Loubenx de (ed.):

Statuta Hospital Jerusalem . Rome: [Tito & Paolo Diani] 1588.

Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_09912/?sp=86&r=-0.586,0.171,2.172,1.297,0

recognition of the highest contemporary authorities.



436

Frederick Barbarossa and Richard the Lionheart

Emperor **Frederick I Barbarossa** praised the achievements as “**invaluable works of mercy**” ⁴³⁷.

Similarly, **Richard the Lionheart** praised the “**holy hospital of Jerusalem**” as “**great in works of piety**” ⁴³⁸.

This secular appreciation corresponded with the papal recognition of the order's special structure.

In his bull “*Quanto maior*” of March 9, 1160, **Pope Alexander III** explicitly referred to the brothers in the Order of St. John as “**steadfast fighters of Christ**” ⁴³⁹. This title legitimized the unity of charitable service and chivalric protection characteristic of the Order of St. John.

⁴³⁶Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Foltz_-_%27Kaiser_Friedrich_Barbarossa_und_Herzog_Heinrich_der_L%C3%B6we_in_Chiavenna.jpg?uselang=de

⁴³⁷Frederick I, charter of June 13, 1153 (Worms). In: MGH Dipl. Fed. I,1 (1152–1158), edited by Heinrich Appelt, Hanover 1975, no. 55, pp. 95–97. In the charter, the emperor declares the “*inestimabilia*” caritatis opera “ (invaluable works of charity) that the Order performs at the Hospital in Jerusalem.

⁴³⁸ Richard I, Privilege for the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem, Westminster, 16 November 1189. In: Landon, Lionel: *The Itinerary of King Richard I, with some additional documents* (Pipe Roll Society, Vol. 51), London 1935, No. 153. The text emphasizes the “*sacrosanctum Hospitals Hierosolymitanum in operibus pietatis magnificentissimum*” .

⁴³⁹Alexander III, *Bulle Quanto maior*, Anagni, March 9, 1160. In: Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph (ed.): *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100–1310)*, Vol. 1, Paris 1894, No. 291, pp. 210–211 (JL 10639). In it, the members of the order are referred to as “*invicti Christi athletae*” (undefeated fighters of Christ) and “*strenui Christi pugnatores*” (steadfast fighters of Christ).

Glimmers of hope in the history of the order: New sources discovered

Two significant discoveries have decisively advanced research into the practical activities of the Order of St. John in medieval Jerusalem.

1. In 1988, Berthold Waldstein-Wartenberg uncovered a fascinating eyewitness account from the Munich "Johanniterregel" (CLM 4820, folios 132v – 139v) in his book " **Die Vasallen Christi** " .
2. This was supplemented in 2010 by Katja Klement, who discovered a previously unknown hospital ordinance in the Codex Vaticanus Lat. (No. 4652, folios 89r–104r) . This source, attributed to Roger de Moulins, impressively illustrates the knights' self-conception as " **God's hosts** ."

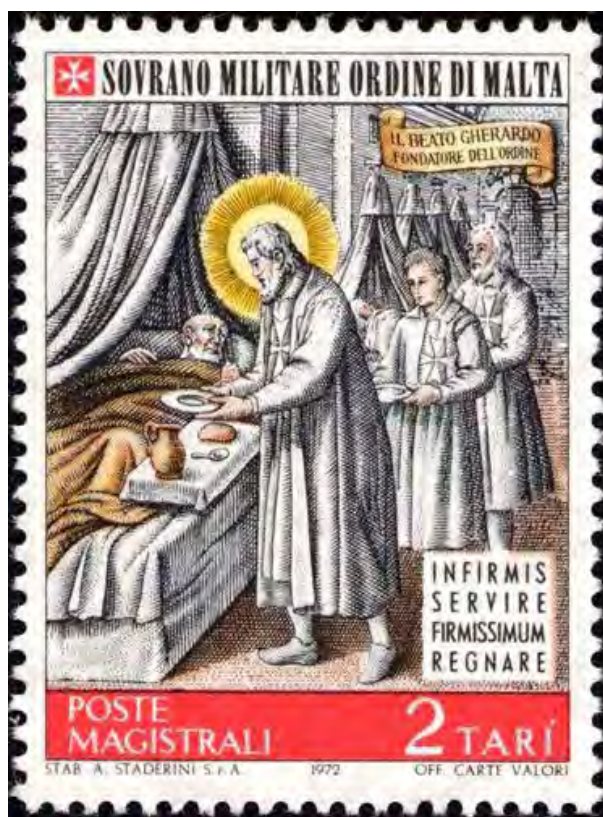
"The Vassals of Christ"⁴⁴⁰ (CML 4620):

Insights into the nursing care of the early Order of St. John

The discovery of the "eyewitness account"

A significant contribution to the study of the early history of the Order of St. John was made by Count Berthold von Waldstein-Wartenberg in 1988 with his work "The Vassals of Christ." His research was based on a discovery in the **Bavarian State Library in Munich** (CML 4620 f. 132v–139v): the account of an unknown German monk. Waldstein-Wartenberg suggests that the author was either John of Würzburg or the pilgrim Theoderich.

The author states that he had been within the city walls of Jerusalem even before its conquest by the Crusaders and was himself admitted to the hospital as a patient. The charitable devotion he experienced there contrasted so sharply with the secular life of the city that he felt inspired to write a treatise on charity. This treatise contains a detailed description of the nursing care provided by the Order of St. John. Since the author did



⁴⁴⁰Postage stamp of the Order of Malta dated March 8, 1972.

Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-17-decennale-elezione-sa-em-ma-il-principe-e-gran-maestro-fra-angelo-de-mojana/>

not want to distract the doctors and nurses from their work by questioning them, he limited himself to pure observation. This fact makes the document particularly valuable today, as it reflects the unvarnished everyday life – even if the author clearly had difficulty distinguishing between knights and serving brothers or representing the correct hierarchies of the order.

The hospital as a "palace of the sick"

The hospital followed the radical principle of universality: it admitted patients of all nations, social classes, and denominations. Every patient—regardless of gender or faith—was considered "Lord" and representative of Christ. Consequently, the hospital was known as the "Palace of the Sick"; it symbolically belonged to the patients, not the order.

To ensure the best possible care, the order likely employed not only European specialists but also doctors from the Orient. This significantly increased the local population's trust in the institution.

Mobility and field medicine

Image ⁴⁴¹ ➔

The Order's care began even outside the hospital walls. The sick, unable to make the journey on their own, were fetched by the friars. Historically noteworthy is the existence of a mobile medical service that accompanied the crusaders on their campaigns. The staff included full-time surgeons who erected tents and pavilions on battlefields to provide initial medical care. The friars even provided their own mounts and pack animals for transporting the wounded – a symbol that their possessions were ultimately only a loan from their "masters," the sick.



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Admission and nursing structure

Upon arrival at the hospital, each patient was received by the porter with a respect usually reserved for royalty. The admission process began spiritually: before medical treatment came confession and the reception of Holy Communion, which was referred to as "heavenly medicine"—a practice the order had adopted from the medical school in Salerno.

⁴⁴¹Image source: Sacra infermeria, Valletta/Malta. Author's own photograph.



←Image ⁴⁴²

The hospital was divided into eleven wards, each specializing in a particular medical condition. A ward comprised between 90 and 180 beds and was staffed by a team of twelve nurses under the direction of a head nurse. The women's ward, primarily a maternity ward, was located in a separate building, presumably in the west wing near the Maria Latina Maior monastery.

Comfort and nutrition as remedies

The hospital wards were luxuriously furnished for medieval standards. The beds were large, with linen sheets, feather pillows, and bedspreads to spare the patients any discomfort. When getting out of bed, patients were given coats, furs, and shoes so they would neither freeze nor soil themselves on the cool marble floors.



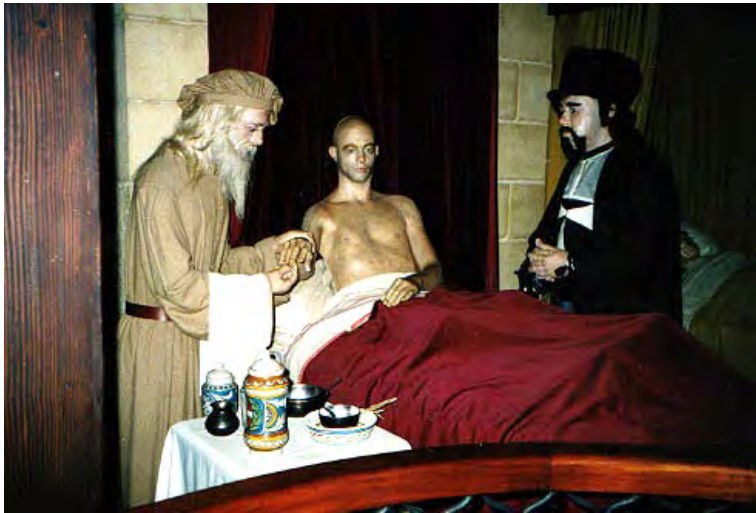
←Picture ⁴⁴³

Nutrition was a central component of the therapy. While the basic meals (meat on Tuesdays and Thursdays, flatbread on the other days) were prepared in the monastery kitchen, there was a sophisticated system for supplementary food. In cases of poor appetite or to provide sustenance, delicacies such as partridges, pigeons, lamb, fish, or fresh fruit (pomegranates, pears, figs) were purchased. The order's treasury provided each ward with a weekly budget for this purpose. Interestingly, the members of the order ate only after the patients and received exactly the same food to ensure the quality of the meals.

⁴⁴²Image source: Sacra infermeria, Valletta/Malta. Author's own photograph.

⁴⁴³Image source: Sacra infermeria, Valletta/Malta. Author's own photograph.

Medical practice and hygiene



←Picture⁴⁴⁴

Hygiene was of paramount importance. In addition to regular personal care (hair-cutting, beard trimming, foot washing with pumice stone), the wards were ritually sprinkled with water and fumigated with the wood of the oriental tree of life during mealtimes. This served not only as a ceremony but also disinfected

and repelled insects.

Medical care was provided by learned specialists. Since European medical knowledge was limited, the order specifically recruited Jewish, Arab, Armenian, and Syrian physicians. Rounds took place in the morning and evening, with the doctors accompanied by orderlies who recorded prescriptions and prepared samples for the then-standard urinalysis.

Humoral pathology and surgical interventions

In addition to physicians, the hospital employed barbers for surgical procedures such as bloodletting. These treatments were based on the ancient humoral pathology (theory of the four humours). It was believed that illnesses arose from an imbalance of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. An excess of these humours affected not only health but also temperament (sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, melancholic). Bloodletting was considered a necessary means of artificially restoring this balance.

The Night Watch: Devotion and Control

A distinctive feature of the care provided by the Order of St. John was the continuous provision of services after nightfall. Two brothers took turns on the night shift at each ward. To protect the patients from nighttime anxieties, illusions, and doubts, the ward remained brightly lit by several lamps.

The night shift was characterized by a ritualistic cycle of care: The brothers walked along the rows, offering drinks with the cries of "Wine from God!" and "Water from God!" Later, the patients were cleansed with warm water, which, according to eyewitness accounts, was always done with gentle persuasion and without coercion. During the night's rest, the brothers kept a constant vigil to ensure that the sick remained warmly covered and comfortably bedded. In emergencies, it was their responsibility to summon the priest for the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum, or to escort the deceased with dignity from the ward.

⁴⁴⁴Image source: <http://www.brandenburg1260.de/johanniter7.jpg>

Prayer as a spiritual remedy



←Picture⁴⁴⁵

Although the reporter does not explicitly mention it, communal prayer was an integral part of daily life. The sick were actively involved in intercessory prayers. They were asked to pray for peace, the fruits of the

earth, the Church hierarchy, the Holy Land, as well as for benefactors and prisoners of war. This practice stemmed from the medieval belief that the sick, through their suffering, were especially close to Christ and that their prayers therefore possessed a greater power.

To ensure the quality of care at night, a solemn candlelight procession of all those on duty took place. During this procession, it was checked whether the staff were properly fulfilling their duties. An elected overseer also patrolled throughout the night to immediately correct any negligence. Violations of the monastic discipline or the mistreatment of patients were punished severely—ranging from public flogging to 40 days of confinement on bread and water, as well as immediate dismissal from service.

The Women's Hospital: Obstetrics and Care

The women's hospital was located in a separate building, to which the male reporter presumably had only limited access. The nurses working there are referred to as "Mothers of St. John"—likely nuns from the tradition of the Magdalene Convent.

⁴⁴⁶The focus of this department was obstetrics. Women in labour received warm baths and comprehensive hygiene care. Each newborn was given its own cradle next to its mother's bed. However, should a mother be too ill or unable to care for her child due to extreme poverty, the order's social safety net intervened: the newborn was entrusted to a wet nurse.

⁴⁴⁵Image source: <http://www.brandenburg1260.de/johanniter3.jpg>

⁴⁴⁶Image source: Author's own photograph

Social responsibility for foundlings

The care did not end with discharge. If mothers were unable to raise their children due to their precarious living conditions, the hospital director arranged for their placement with foster families. The report speaks of a considerable scale: up to a thousand children received financial support from the order, with annual costs per child amounting to approximately twelve talents ⁴⁴⁷. This underscores that the hospital in Jerusalem was not only a medical institution but also a significant centre of medieval social welfare.



Image ⁴⁴⁸ ↑

⁴⁴⁷"12 talents are equivalent to the current value of €267,240," which the author considers disproportionately high. Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

⁴⁴⁸Depiction of the nursing care provided by the Order of St. John at the Tower of David History Museum in Jerusalem. Image source: Author's own photograph.

“God’s Host” (Vat. Lat. 4852)

The text discovered by Katja Klement in the Vatican manuscript Vat. Lat. 4852, probably between 1181 and 1183 from

Roger de Moulins wrote **hospital regulations**

On the food for the sick and on the doctors and the order that was customary in the Palace of the Sick in Jerusalem.

The Master of the Hospital and the General Chapter decreed that every day each sick person should have half a soft loaf of bread and enough of the house’s bread, and the same wine as the convent.



←Picture 449

The physicians should examine the characteristics of the sick and what diseases they have. And they should examine the urine and give them syrup and electuaries ⁴⁵⁰and the other things the sick need, and they should forbid harmful things and administer beneficial ones. And the sicker and weaker they find them, the more they should strive to heal them.

The diet of the sick shall be as follows. From Easter until the Feast of St. Michael, they shall receive meat from chickens and other poultry, and meat from goats and lambs under one year old, and meat from mutton one year and older. They shall be cared for as prescribed by the physician ⁴⁵¹From the Feast of St. Michael until Lent, they shall receive chicken and the same as before, and meat from one-year-old male pigs, as determined by the physician. The sick shall not eat meat from female four-legged animals at any time of year, and the brothers caring for the sick shall not give it to them. During Lent, the sick shall be given fresh fish three times a week, if they can tolerate it given their illness, but this shall be done on the advice of the physician. Vegetable soup and other cooked dishes made from vegetables and barley flour (pearl), and other foods suitable for the sick, shall be given to them on the physician’s instructions. And, properly prepared, they shall be served to them on the appointed days. We forbid the sick to be given eels, cheese, lentils, beans, cabbage, and other foods that are not good for them.

⁴⁴⁹Image source: <http://www.brandenburg1260.de/johanniter4.jpg>

⁴⁵⁰Generated by Google AI on 12.1.2026: “ **Electuaries** (Latin *Electuaria* , singular: *Electuarium*) are a traditional pharmaceutical dosage form known as **electuaries** .

⁴⁵¹Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “The term **fisicien** (or *fisicien*) comes from Old French and is the historical term for a **physician** or **natural scientist**. **Etymology:** The word derives from the Latin *physica* (natural science), which in turn goes back to the Greek *physis* (nature). In English, this evolved into the modern term *physician* for a medical professional.”

About the fruits intended for the sick

One third of the tree fruits, such as pomegranates and other apples, pears, plums, figs and grapes, shall be given to them, as the masters who came before us established and designated in the chapter of the hospital in Jerusalem for the support and benefit of the poor.

The provisions concerning the brothers and the sergeants⁴⁵² in the corridors

In each row of the sick, there shall now and in the future be twelve sergeants who make the beds of the sick, keep them clean, and take the sick to the latrines, guiding and supporting them. For the Easter crossing and the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, additional sergeants shall be posted at the direction of the Hospitaller. Between the rows shall be those brothers who keep the night watch, specifically two brothers who must stand watch every night so that nothing adverse befalls our sick lords.

Of the 7,500 Byzantine gold coins for the sick

At the General Chapter, it was decided and determined that 1,500 Besanten⁴⁵³ should be given annually to the Hospitaller Brother, who is responsible for the care of the sick, for the employment of physicians and for almonds for the sick, from the first alms collection brought back during the two voyages, in the following manner: Half of the aforementioned Besanten should be given to the Hospitaller Brother for the Easter voyage and the other half for the voyage to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. These Besanten must be paid first, as stated, and the remaining alms should be used for the upkeep of the house.

Gold bezant with Christian symbol ➡
(1250s) ([British Museum](#)).⁴⁵⁴



⁴⁵²Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “The term ‘sergent’ (from the Latin *serviens*, ‘servant’) has different meanings depending on the historical and social context, all of which refer to a serving or mediating function.

1. In medieval knightly orders

In the large religious orders of knighthood (such as the **Templars**, Hospitallers or the Teutonic Order), the sergeants (also *known as serving brothers*) formed a separate social class below the knight brothers.

- **Status:** They were mostly not of noble birth, but like the knights, they took the vows of the Order.
- **Distinguishing feature:** While knights often wore a white coat, sergeants usually wore dark (brown or black) coats.
- **Tasks:** They served as heavily armed cavalry, infantry, or in craft and administrative professions within the Order.”

⁴⁵³Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “Besanten are gold coins named after the city of **Byzantium** (Constantinople).”

1,500 Besanten are equivalent to €573,450 today.

⁴⁵⁴ [PHGCOM](#) (Own work, photographed by the British Museum)

The Casalia ⁴⁵⁵of the Sick

These are the estates whose fruit harvest and production of goats, rams, goats, pigs, and chickens belong to the common good of the hospital and are for the benefit of the sick. Specifically, the estate of Mont Gabriel, the estate of Sareth, the estate of Cuisinat, the estate of Saint Marie, the estate of Caphaer, and the estate of Cole ⁴⁵⁶. No one may violate this provision or take away, diminish, or in

⁴⁵⁵Generated by Google AI on 12.1.2026: “The term **Casalia** (singular: *Casale*) is a historical technical term that was primarily used in the administration of the medieval Crusader states in the Middle East (such as the Kingdom of Jerusalem).

Here are the most important details:

- **Meaning:** Casalia refer to **settlements, farmsteads, or villages** in rural areas. They formed the smallest economic and administrative unit of the manorial estate.
- **Structure:** A casale usually consisted of a collection of farmhouses, agricultural land and often communal facilities such as ovens or mills.
- **Ownership:** Large knightly orders such as the **Templars** , **Hospitallers** or the **Teutonic Order** often acquired entire groups of casalia through donations or purchases to secure their finances and the supply of their troops.
- **Etymology:** The word derives from the Late Latin *casalis* (belonging to the house) or *casale* (farmstead/village). In Arabic, this roughly corresponds to the term *kafr* .

⁴⁵⁶Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “These casales were located in the **Kingdom of Jerusalem** (part of the Latin Crusader states in the Levant) and belonged to the possessions of the **Order of St. John** (Hospitalites).

The places you mentioned are listed in historical statutes of the Order (especially in the regulations from the 1180s under Roger de Moulins) as supplies for the hospital in Jerusalem:

- **Mont Gabriel:** An estate near Jerusalem or in the area surrounding Acre, which served to supply the hospital with food.
- **Sareth:** Often identified with the biblical *Zereda* or a place near Nablus.
- **Cuisinat (also *Cuissinat* or *Mal-cuisinat*):** This name often appears in descriptions of the Holy Land in connection with the supply of the monastic kitchens; it referred to agricultural areas in the hinterland of the coastal cities (often near Acre or Jerusalem).
- **Saint Marie:** An estate named after the Virgin Mary, usually located in close proximity to the order's ecclesiastical centres.
- **Caphaer (also *Caphaer*):** This is a Latin form of *Kafr* (village). It often refers to *Capharnaum* or similar places in Galilee or Judea.
- **Cole (also *Casale Chole*):** Historians often locate this Casale in the plain of Acre or near Ramla.

Background:

These estates were protected by a papal bull or order statute to ensure that their yields (grain, wine, oil) were used exclusively to feed the poor and sick in the Hospital of Jerusalem. They formed the economic backbone of the Hospitallers' charitable work in the 12th century.

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any way disturb these possessions, but all the belongings of the sick shall remain fully preserved for the benefit of the Hospital of Jerusalem.

On the reception, care, and concern for the poor of Jesus Christ

When the sick person arrives at the Hospital of St. John, he must go to the church and wait until one of the chaplains arrives, according to the custom and regulations of the House of Charity. The chaplains appointed for this service shall come to the sick person, hear his confession, administer Holy Communion, and escort him to the ward. The sergeants shall be prepared to receive him. And when it is time for lunch or dinner, they shall take him to the tables set by the altar in the ward of the sick, and there he shall eat and drink if he wishes. Afterwards, the sick are taken to the caravan room ⁴⁵⁷and undressed, and their clothes are tied tightly and shown to the sick so that each one can recognize his own when they wish to depart. And the caravanier ⁴⁵⁸shall give each person a pair of sheets, a blanket, a pillow, a tankard, a spoon, and a small barrel for their wine, and he shall assign a sergeant to attend them to bed. Then they shall ask them if they have any money to give to the hospitalier for safekeeping. The will shall be drawn up before the hospitalier or one of his companions, and the will shall be observed according to the means of the house. One brother and the notary are sufficient for the will. And if the sick person wishes, they may call a

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⁴⁵⁷Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: "**The Caravan (Caravana)**"

In the context of religious orders, the **term "caravan"** originally referred to the **obligatory service** that a young knight brother had to perform before he could hold higher offices within the order or attain full knighthood.

- **Military training:** This involved a multi-year phase of training and active deployment. In Malta (after 1530), this usually consisted of four sea voyages on the Order's galleys to secure the Mediterranean against pirates and Ottoman fleets.
- **Supply:** During the time in the Holy Land (before 1291), the term also referred to armed convoys that transported goods from the **casalia** (estates) to the central headquarters in Jerusalem or Acre, protecting pilgrims in the process."

⁴⁵⁸Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: "**The Caravanier (Caravanier)**"

A **caravanier** was a member of the order who was currently in this phase of service or was responsible for organizing these trains.

- **Service at the grassroots level:** The caravanier was often deployed on the front line – be it in the defense of supply routes or in the practical care of pilgrims.
- **Logistical interface:** Since the hospital in Jerusalem relied on regular deliveries of food from widely scattered villages, the caravan driver was the key figure for logistics. He ensured the transport of bread, wine, and meat through dangerous territory.

In summary, the **caravan was** the system of active service and training, while the **caravanier** was the executing brother who ensured the survival of the order through protection and transport tasks."

chaplain or another person, and they shall draw up their (last) will as God inspires them, and the notary must put on parchment how much they will tell them. The brother who is present must show them the benefits of the house and exhort them to bequeath to the house first.

Every day after morning mass, the sergeants are to be ready to give the sick some of the wine that the convent drinks, diluted in the same way, and each is to take half a litre of it into his cask. And if the sick person does not want wine, he is to have sugar, a quarter of the weight of a cask. After this, the sergeants are to eat their breakfast: a loaf of bread and a (glass?) full of the convent's wine and a bowlful of cooked food. While they are eating, the hospitaller and his companions, and those in his room, are to serve the weakest among the rooms the best and finest food that the house has. When the sergeants have eaten, a bell is to be rung that hangs above the entrance to the bottle shop ⁴⁵⁹, and water is to be made available to the sick throughout the palace for washing their hands. Long and wide tablecloths are to be laid before them, and the brothers and the sergeants are to carry the food to them. Every day, the whitest bread that can be found locally should be bought, and each sick person should have as much of it and of the convent's bread as they need. On three days of the week—Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday—they should have pork or mutton. Five portions of roast pork should be prepared, and only four portions of roast mutton. On these three days, chicken or hens should be prepared in good broth, very well-seasoned and infused with saffron. The chicken should be divided into four parts, the hen into two. And whoever does not want pork, or mutton should have chicken or hen if they wish. And if they want neither, they should pay two denarii (≃ (approximately 6 euros) and a bowl of cooked food, provided by the hospitaller or someone else in his place. When the sick have eaten, the leftover meat should be given to the sergeants. The larger and best pieces should go to those who are charitable to the sick. Every evening, semolina should be given in the palace to all who wish to have some, and the weak should be given ground almonds with barley grits or almond milk or a light porridge, and fruit and other things they need. When the sick eat supper, they should be given wine, diluted in the same way as in the morning, three half-litres. On Wednesdays and

⁴⁵⁹Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “A **Bouteillerie** (derived from the French *bouteille* for bottle) refers in a historical context – especially in the knightly orders and at medieval courts – to the office or department of the **cupbearer** .

Regarding your previous questions about the Knights Hospitaller and the Casalie (estates), the term has the following specific meaning:

- **The office of the cupbearer:** The person responsible for the bottle service (the *bottler*) was responsible for managing the drinks, especially the **wine** .
- **Supplying the hospitals:** In the Order of St. John, the winery was closely linked to logistics. It ensured that the wine produced at the **castles** was safely transported to the cities (such as Jerusalem or Acre) and used there both to feed the knights and to provide medical care for the sick in the hospital.
- **Part of the court offices: In the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the *Bouteiller de Jérusalem* was one of the five great offices of the crown, which underlines the importance of this area for the administration and provision of the state.**

In summary, the Bouteillerie is the **cellar or beverage management** , which played a central role in resource planning and supplying the community during the Middle Ages.”

Saturdays, the sick should generally have salad for supper. And twice a month, the sheets and tablecloths should be changed. On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, chickpeas and almonds or delicious... should be served, and everyone should have a bowl of it, and whoever doesn't want one should have the other. After that, they should receive eggs boiled in water, and whoever wants them should have four, and whoever doesn't want any should receive a denarius or something else from the hospitaller instead of eggs. And the weak should be given what they ask for. On the days of great fasts, such as Ember Day and other major fasting periods, the sick should receive double the ration of cooked food. Almonds, noodles, or rice with chickpeas and plenty of fruit should be given as fasting food if available. On Good Fridays, when the fruit is fresh, they should frequently have fruit as fasting food.

Regulations concerning winter clothing and night watch

At the beginning of winter, each sick person should be given a pair of shoes, and blankets and rugs for the entire winter, as needed. Sixteen sergeants should keep watch in the palace every night to care for the sick. Eight should watch from Compline until midnight, and the other eight from midnight until daybreak. Four should be at one end of the palace and four at the other, and four in one room with the weak and four in another room. All the sergeants should check on the sick throughout the night, covering those who have been uncovered, bringing fresh water, and saying in a low voice, "Sick gentlemen, look, here is water from God." The sergeants should take the sick to the privy, support them, and carry them there and back to their beds. If necessary, they must carry them back and forth. They should also give them their commodes when needed, carry them to the privies to be emptied, bring them back, and place them under the sick people's beds. The other sick, whose needs arise from weakness and who defecate in their beds, are to be dried and gently cleaned by the sergeants, who are to place white, soft, and clean cloths beneath them. This is to be done day and night, whenever necessary, and not only by the sergeants but also by the brothers themselves. They are to have a physician for the weak, who will attentively care for each individual according to their needs. When the brothers appoint this physician to treat the sick, he must swear by the saints or promise that he will care for the sick to the best of his ability, without asking anything of them. On Candlemas, the hospitaller gives each of the sergeants a candle. On the day before the start of Lent (Shrove Tuesday), the sick receive leeks and fresh pork in the morning and chicken in broth in the evening, one chicken divided into four parts.

Lent and processions

On Ash Wednesday, the prior, the clergy, the brothers, and the people from the world who come that day process around the sick, singing the psalms and the litany. The procession is to end before the altar, where a sermon is to be given to the healthy and to the sick for their salvation. Afterward, the prior and the chaplains are to go among the sick and give them ashes. During Lent, the sick receive fresh fish three times a week, if it is available, just as they receive meat on meat days, only exceptionally salted if no fresh fish can be obtained. On the other four days, they receive double the usual ration of cooked food with

almonds, pasta, rice with chickpeas and raisins, or other fruit. On Sunday, when the altar wine is distributed, the sick are covered with long, wide, and valuable cloths of purple and silk, and even those embroidered with gold. And there the procession goes, circling the sick, and then it stops before the altar where the Epistle and the Gospel of the Holy Spirit are read, and then the procession returns to the church. Every night throughout the year, the procession circles the sick, and the Caravanier goes ahead with a burning candle in his hand, covering those who are covered and kindly admonishing the sick to behave quietly and respectfully until the procession has passed. Behind him walks a brother, the Bottlelier of the Sick, who carries a censer and incenses them. Behind him walks a brother who says the prayer for all Christendom and for all the benefactors of the hospital, especially for the particular benefactors. Behind him walks the Hospitaller, carrying a large burning candle. Behind the Hospitaller walk the Prior, the Chaplains, and the Clerics. Behind them walk the Commander and the other brothers. Behind them walk the Sergeants of all offices. Twice a year, or more often as needed, the caravan is set up wherever the sick people's belongings are located, in the following manner: All the sick people's belongings are brought to a large and spacious place. There, the sick people line up in an orderly fashion. First, those who are in one section (actually: row), and then those who are in another section, and each person is to mark their bundle and separate it from the others. Anyone who wishes to leave should take their belongings and may leave if they so desire. Anyone who wishes to stay should return their belongings to the safekeeping, and the belongings are placed back into the caravan. If someone cannot find their belongings, the hospitaller is to compensate them as best he can. And if they are not those whom one would readily believe at their word, they are asked to explain, on their journey, how much the lost item was worth and whether they lost it at home. And when this service is completed, the belongings of those who have died are taken to a room, and the following day the Hospitaller, accompanied by his sergeants or whomever he trusts most, enters this room and opens the bundles, carefully checking for any money sewn inside. The woollen items are placed together on one side, and the linen items on another. Belts are removed from trousers, and the same is done with coats, shoes, and all other belongings. Once this is done, the Hospitaller takes the best woollen and linen garments, as he sees fit, and keeps them to give to those who cannot find their belongings in the caravan. The less valuable garments are given by the Hospitaller at the beginning of winter to the sergeants who care for the sick, one to each. The poorer and less valuable garments are sold. On Good Friday, the sick receive water and bread, and those who wish to have wine are to take some in their tankards. On Holy Saturday, the sick throughout the palace receive fish. And if the feast of the Holy Evangelist Mark falls on a meat day, the sick should receive a casserole of eggs and cheese on that day, or fish if it is available, or eggs.

Festivals and holidays

On the Monday of Rogationes⁴⁶⁰, processions from all over the city circle the palace of the sick, and silk cloths are spread over them. On this day, they receive eggs and their usual provisions. The next day, they receive fish if it is available, and if it is not, they receive flocks⁴⁶¹). On Christmas Day, Easter, and Pentecost, the sick receive meatloaf and other customary items, and fresh meat in sauce. On the Feast of St. John the Baptist, they are to be served the same if the feast falls on a Sunday, Tuesday, or Thursday. If it falls on another day, they receive cooked food and some fruit. The sick must fast on the Vigil of St. Lawrence and on the Vigil of Our Lady of Mid-August⁴⁶². And on the feast day itself, the solemn procession circles them, and they must fast for the Vigil of St. Bartholomew, the Vigil before Pentecost, and the Vigil before All Saints' Day. The sick are also to fast during the Ember Days in May. Throughout the year, the sick generally receive eggs on Wednesdays and Saturdays when no Vigil is being observed. And on Fridays, they receive chickpeas, almonds, and fresh fruit if available.

⁴⁶⁰Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “The ‘Monday of Rogationes’ (also called **Biting Monday**) is the first of three consecutive Rogation Days immediately preceding the Feast **of the Ascension**.”

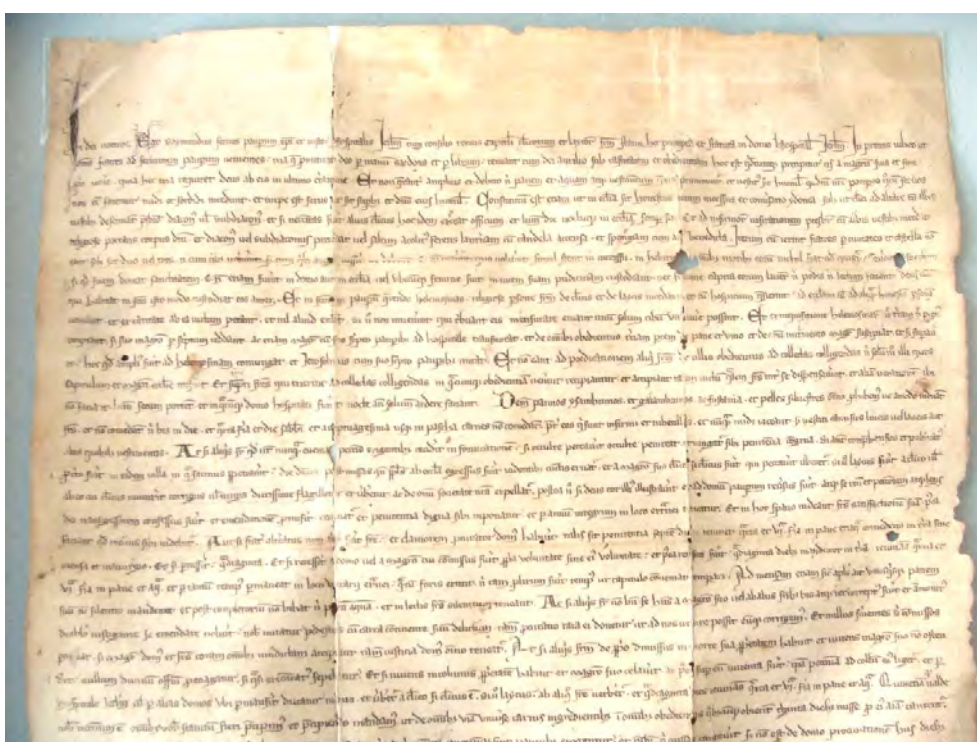
⁴⁶¹Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “The roots of this dish reach back to the Middle Ages; the first written records date back to the 13th century. The name derives from the Old French word *flaon*, which in turn goes back to the Latin *flado* (flat cake/galette) – the same origin as the now well-known ‘flan’.”

⁴⁶²Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: “The term ‘Holy Woman of Mid-August’ is a popular name for the **Virgin Mary** and the Solemnity of the **Assumption of Mary** (Mary's Assumption into Heaven), which is celebrated annually on **August 15**.”

B. Sources of spiritual Traditional goods

The various hypotheses regarding the origin of the Rule of the Order of St. John have already been briefly mentioned above. In contrast to these opinions, Truszczynski ⁴⁶³ that the Rule issued by Gérard, the founder of the Order, was a Benedictine-based rule. This assumption is plausible, since the hospital already belonged to the Benedictine monastery of St. Maria Latina before 1099. Other authors believe that Gérard or Raymond adopted the Augustinian Rule. Referring to the hypothesis, supported above, of the independence of the Rule of the Order of St. John, since Pope Lucius III compared both rules and the Rule of the Order of St. John contains parts of the Augustinian Rule verbatim, this hypothesis can be explained and substantiated below:

To explain the hypothesis, the elements of the Rule of the Order of St. John ⁴⁶⁴ are common to the Rule of St. Benedict ⁴⁶⁵ or the Rule of St. Augustine ⁴⁶⁶



The oldest manuscript of the Rule of the Order of St. John ⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶³ Truszczynski, Georg from: op. cit., p. 2.




⁴⁶⁴ StAAG (State Archives Aargau), Leuggern Branch, Document No. 7. The chapter division follows the edition in Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire , No. 70, which contains the aforementioned . document transcribed reproduces .

⁴⁶⁵ See The Rule of St. Benedict. Latin- German, ed . by Basilius Steidle, 3rd ed ., Beuron 1978. Furthermore The critical Linderbauer editions used : Linderbauer , Benno: S. Benedicti Regula Monachorum , Metten 1922; *ibid.*: S. Benedicti Regula Monasteriorum , Bonn 1928 (= Florilegium Patristicum 17).

⁴⁶⁶ Regula sancti patris nostri Augustini (iuxta edition criticam a P. Luca Verheijen OSA paratam). In: Regulations and Constitutions Fratrum S. Augustini, Rome 1978. The citation follows the local Chapter numbering and subdivision . These corresponds dem current standard, deviates however from older Issues from (kind note from Fr. Adolar Zumkeller OSA).

⁴⁶⁷Image source: Author's own photograph.

The following diagram briefly shows
the **content-related parallels** between the compared rules:

No.	Theme	 rule of Order of St. Johannes	 Rule of St. Augustine	 Rule of St. Benedict
1	no property	I, 2 ; XIII, 1	I, 4	XXXIII, 6; LV, 17
2	obedience	I, 2	II, 44	V
3	The order provides food and clothing.	II, 1	I, 4	
4	simple clothing	II, 2	IV, 19	LV, 7
5	Foreign travel only in pairs or groups of three, accompanied by a supervisor.	IV, 1 f.	V, 36	
6	Brothers are the temple/dwelling place of God	IV, 7	I, 9; IV, 24	
7	inconspicuous behaviour	IV, 4	IV, 19	
8	general behaviour	IV, 4	IV, 20 f.	
9	Contact with women	IV, 5 f.	IV, 24	
10	Light in the night	VII, 3		XXII, 4
11	Fasting, except in cases of illness	VIII, 2	III, 14	
12	sleep dressed	VIII, 3		XXII, 5
13	Punishment for sins with women or fornication	IX	IV, 29	
14	Punishment for serious offenses	IX		XXV
15	Satisfaction of the displaced	IX, 4 f.		44
16	Dispute between brothers	X, 1 f.	VI, 41 f.	LXX
17	Repatriation of escaped brothers	X, 3 f.		XXIX
18	Silence at the table	XI, 1	III, 15	XLII, 8
19	fraternal correction	XII, 1 XVII	IV, 25	XXIII; XXVIII; LXX
20	Denunciation to superiors	XII, 1 XVII, 4	IV, 26	XLVI, 4
21	Reception of the sick / guests	XVI		LIII
22	to care for the sick/guests first mentally, then physically	XVI, 2 f.		LIII, 4+8

The diagram above illustrates the close thematic connection between the rules. This may be due, in part, to the fact that all three rules were written for members of religious orders. Certain elements are therefore found in each rule. This certainly applies to the themes of poverty, simple clothing, obedience, and silence. However, there are parallels in individual regulations and statements that suggest a closer relationship. Steidle ⁴⁶⁸deals with the influence of the Rule of St. Augustine on the Rule of St. Benedict. He identifies the paragraphs XXXIII,6; XLII,8; and XLVI,4 cited above as Augustinian parts of the Rule of St. Benedict. Regarding the dependence of the Rule of the Order of St. John on the Rule of St. Augustine, we even find a literal correspondence ⁴⁶⁹in Chapter 4 of the Rule of Raymond:

Rule of the Order of St. John IV, 1-5.7	Rule of St. Augustine V, 36
(1) "Iterum cum ierint fratres per civitates et castella, non eant soli sed duo vel tres,	Nec eant ad balneas, sive quocumque ire necesse fuerit, minus quam duo vel tres.
(2) nec cum quibus voluerint, sed cum quibus magister iusserit ire debent,	Ne qui habet aliquo eundi necessitatem, cum quibus ipse voluerit, sed cum quibus praepositus iusserit, ire debebit.
(3) and cum venerint quo voluerint, simul stent	(IV,20) cum veneritis quo itis, simul state.
(4) in incesso; in habitu et in omnibus motibus eorum nichil fiat, quod cuiusquam offendat aspectum, sed quod suam deceat sanctitatem.	(IV,21) In incesso, in statu, (in habitu) in omnibus motibus vestris nihil fiat quod cuiusquam offendat aspectum, sed quod vestram decet sanctitatem.
(5) Quando etiam fuerint in domo aut in ecclesia, vel ubicumque femine sint invicem, suam pudicitiam custodian...	(IV,24) Quando ergo simul estis in ecclesia et ubicumque et feminae sunt, invicem vestram pudicitiam custodite;
(7) Deus enim, qui habitat in sanctis, iso modo custodiat eos, amen.	Deus enim, qui habitat in vobis, etiam is modo vos custodiet ex vobis.

Ambraziejute only allows for dependencies in cases of literal correspondence to ⁴⁷⁰. This may be too simplistic, because beyond literal correspondence, there are close parallels in content and theme to both the Rule of Saint Augustine and that of Saint Benedict. A dependency is particularly likely where a specific regulation is concerned, such as light in the dormitory ⁴⁷¹or lying clothed. A fundamental aspect of the spirituality of the Order of Saint John parallels the Rule of Benedict: In chapter LXIII,13, Benedict stipulates that the abbot should be called "Lord" and "Abbot," "because we believe that he takes the place of Christ." What a minimal difference to the dominus predication of the sick, who in the

⁴⁶⁸ibid., p. 16

⁴⁶⁹see AMBRAZIEJŪTĒ, ibid, p. 6 f.

⁴⁷⁰ibid., p. 8

⁴⁷¹This was common practice in the Orient for a long time. See Waldstein-Wartenberg, Rechtsgeschichte, p. 36.

Order of Saint John are called "poor " Christ ⁴⁷²", "holy arms ⁴⁷³" are called because he sees the Lord in them!

If this Geraldus, whom William of Tyre refers to after 1048 as head of the branch hospice of the Order of St. John belonging to the monastery of St. Maria Latina (⁴⁷⁴, is identical with the Gérard who founded the Order of St. John in 1099, and if one further assumes that the first-mentioned Geraldus was a Benedictine monk and was entrusted by the abbot of St. Maria Latina with the management of the hospital, then the incorporation of Benedictine elements into the rule of the Order of St. John is plausible. A direct adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict was not possible with regard to Gerhard's aims, since the Rule of St. Benedict was too narrowly defined for his foundation. What could be more natural than to pick out the appropriate elements from the Rule of St. Benedict, add elements from the more general Rule of St. Augustine, as well as one's own ideas and ideals, and fuse all these ingredients into a new rule, which Gerhard's successor, Raymond du Puy, recorded in writing as the Rule of the Order of St. John? The strong Augustinian influence evident in Raymond's Rule becomes more understandable when one considers that the Augustinian Canons Regular of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre lived in the immediate vicinity of the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem. Delaville ⁴⁷⁵ even deduces from the strongly Augustinian character of the Rule of the Order of St. John a striving for independence from the Benedictine monastery of St. Mary Latina.

Picture⁴⁷⁶ →

Excerpt from the icon of Our Lady of Philermos, written by Makarius Tauc, in the Spiritual Centre of the Knights of Malta in Ehreshoven/Germany.

The inscription on the image excerpt reads:

"Beatus Gerardus benedictionem impertite noscomio Sancti Joannis Baptistae ab eo ipso conditio" –

"Blessed Gérard blesses the Hospital of Saint John the Baptist, which he founded."



⁴⁷²JR II

⁴⁷³JR V

⁴⁷⁴Recueil des histoires des croisades . histories occidentaux (RHC Occ .), Vol. [No.], p. 315; cf. Caoursin , op. cit., quoted from: Delaville Le Roulx , Joseph: De prima origine Hospitaliariorum Hierosolymitanorum , Paris 1885, p. 132.

⁴⁷⁵Delaville Le Roulx , Les Hospitaliers, p. 32. He identifies chapters IV, VIII, XIII and XVII of the Rule of the Order of St. John (JR) as having content parallels to the Rule of St. Augustine.

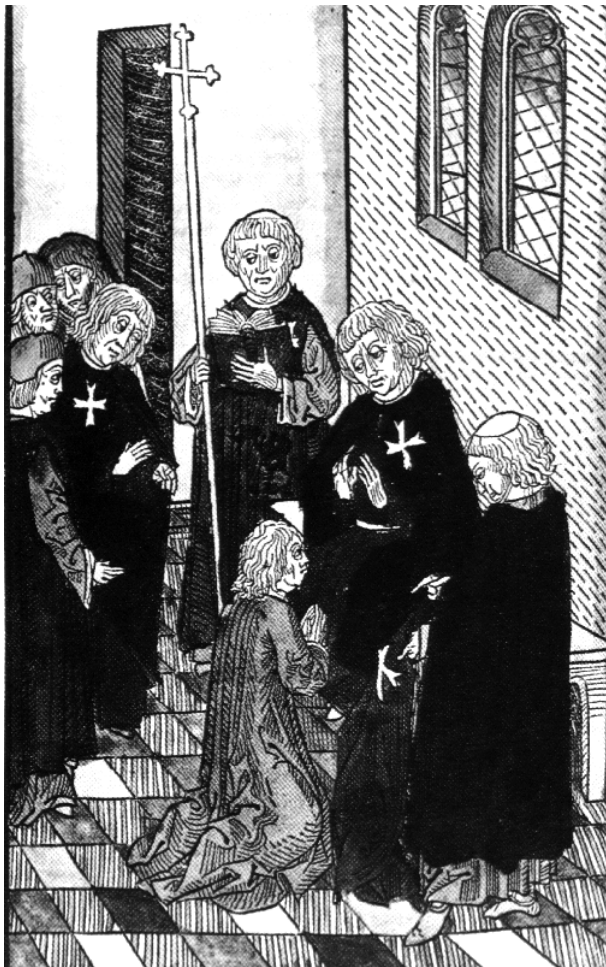
⁴⁷⁶Image source: <https://www.malteser-geistlicheszentrum.de/spiritualitaet-und-geschichte/ikone-muttergottes-von-philermos.html>

C. The **Novelty** in the Spiritual Tradition

Based on the above descriptions and investigations, we can now recognize what innovations the Order of St. John introduced into the history of religious orders, the Church, and the world through its founding and its rule. We have thus reached the final stage of our presentation.

1. The **Vow of Chastity**

A significant new element in the spiritual tradition of the Order of St. John is the requirement of a vow of chastity ⁴⁷⁷. No previous founder of a religious order had explicitly required this in their Rule. This does not mean that earlier orders did not require chastity, but



⁴⁷⁸**The Rule of the Order of St. John is the first monastic rule that explicitly mentions the vow of chastity as a monastic vow.**

Nicolas Moroso quotes the initiation rite for novices(?) ⁴⁷⁹(ca. 1239):

“I vow and promise to Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. John the Baptist that I will always obey the superior whom God and our Order give me, live without personal possessions, and **preserve chastity**, so help me God.”

The **Augustinian Rule** makes clear statements in chapter 4 regarding the preservation of chastity. It demands that one should be pleasing in one's moral conduct (AR 4,19), behave in a manner befitting one's holy state (AR 4,21), and not desire women, nor wish to be desired by them, nor look at them impurely (AR 4,22).

The **Rule of St. Benedict** does indeed call “loving chastity” (RB 4.64) an instrument of good works, and the

abbot must also be chaste (RB 64.9).

⁴⁷⁷JR I

⁴⁷⁸ On admission to the novitiate and investiture, see Caoursin, op. cit., [p. XX].

⁴⁷⁹The text is essentially a formula for profession. No one would demand such a vow from a candidate for a religious order upon entering the novitiate.

As early as 816, the **Aachen Rule for Clergy** listed chastity among the duties of clergy.⁴⁸⁰

Canon 4 of the **Lateran Synod of 1059** likely served as the basis for the canonization of the Rule.⁴⁸¹ It requires of secular priests:

"Those clergy who, obedient to our predecessor, have preserved chastity, should eat and sleep together in the churches to which they are consecrated, share the incomes, and lead an apostolic life."

Chastity first appears in the **profession formula of the Canons Regular of St. Genoveva** in Paris in 1148 during its reformation at the suggestion of St. Bernard of Clairvaux⁴⁸²). Abbot Odo of St. Genoveva called these vows "*chastity, community life and obedience*".

Raymond formulates it in the Rule of the Order of St. John:

*"the things they have promised God... chastity and obedience... and that they live without possessions."*⁴⁸³

Through a further development of the Rule of St. Augustine, the vow of chastity found its way into the Rule of the Order of St. John. The priests of the

⁴⁸⁰Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026: "The Aachen Rule of 816 (also known as the Institutio Canoniorum Aquisgranensis) was a milestone in church history. It was written under Emperor Louis the Pious to regulate the lives of canons and clearly distinguish them from monks (Benedictines)."

Regarding chastity (castration), the rule is very clear, but also pragmatic:

1. **The moral obligation:**

The rule requires clergy to maintain "immaculate chastity." Since canons, unlike monks, were still allowed to own private property and live in the world (in cities near the cathedrals), chastity was considered the defining characteristic that nevertheless marked them as a spiritual elite.

- **Goal:** Inner purity should make the cleric worthy to administer the sacraments (especially the Eucharist).
- **Model:** The rule relies heavily on patristic writings (Church Fathers such as Augustine) to portray chastity as an "ornament of the priestly office".

2. **Distinction from monasticism:**

The interesting aspect of the Aachen Rule of 816, however, is what it does not do:

- Although it required sexual abstinence (celibacy in a broader sense for higher orders), it was somewhat more flexible in its lifestyle compared to the strict monastic rules (such as the Rule of Benedict).
- Although the canons were expected to live in a community (Vita Communis) (eating and sleeping together), they were allowed to own their own houses within the cathedral precinct.

3. **Disciplinary measures:**

The rule emphasizes that clerics who violate the commandment of chastity must be severely punished.

- Those who behaved "unchastely" risked losing their sinecures (income) and their status.
- The rule explicitly warns against dealing with women in order to avoid any suspicion or temptation from the outset.

Why was the year 816 so important?

Before 816, chaos often reigned: Many clerics lived like nobles, were married, or had concubines. The Aachen Rule attempted to create a middle ground: The clerics were allowed to keep their property (which made them attractive to the nobility), but in return, they had to maintain strict moral discipline and outward chastity.

⁴⁸¹See Waldstein-Wartenberg, Legal History, p. 35 f.

⁴⁸²See Hertling, Ludwig: The Profession of Clerics and the Origin of the Three Vows. In: Journal for Catholic Theology (ZKT) 56 (1932), pp. 170 f.

⁴⁸³JR I, 1 f.

Brotherhood of the Hospital of Jerusalem, the predecessor of the Order, had a decisive influence on the formation of the Rule.

2. The "Poor of Christ"⁴⁸⁴ / "*pauperes Christi*"

A second new element of the Order of St. John is the designation of the sick as "*Poor of Christ*" or "*Holy Poor*"^{485 486}.

This designation was not previously common in the Western Church but later became part of its vocabulary⁴⁸⁷.



In the Rule of the Order of St. John, the sick are first called "Poor Christ" (*pauperes Christi*) in the Western Church.

Later, this expression entered common usage:

Thus, various popes used the term "*Poor Christ*" in several bulls:

- Pope Anastasius IV in the year 1153⁴⁸⁸ and
- Pope Alexander III in the years 1166⁴⁸⁹ and 1168⁴⁹⁰.

⁴⁸⁴Hiestand, op. cit., pp. 49 ff., leaves open the question of whether "*pauperes*" also refers to the brothers of the hospital, given their vow of poverty. He thus denies—in contrast to Waldstein-Wartenberg, *Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 19—that "*pauperes*" refers synonymously to the sick. Since the order summarizes its main task as "preserving the faith" (*tuitio fidei*) and "serving the poor" (*obsequium pauperum*), applying the concept of poverty to the sick seems more plausible. The Rule of the Order of St. John (JR I) also defines the personal poverty of the brothers as living "without property" (*sine proprio vivere*) and not as "*paupertas*," since the latter denotes a general need for assistance that goes beyond the renunciation of personal possessions. See also Grunsky, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴⁸⁵JR V, 1

⁴⁸⁶JR Entry Protocol, 2

⁴⁸⁷See Wienand, op. cit., p. 47

⁴⁸⁸DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire*, No. 227

⁴⁸⁹*Ibid.*, No. 360. Other dating: 1178 or 1179

⁴⁹⁰*Ibid.*, No. 392. Other dating: 1169 or 1170

Even secular rulers used this term:

- King Baldwin I of Jerusalem in the year 1110 ⁴⁹¹
- Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the year 1158 ⁴⁹² or
- King Baldwin III of Jerusalem in the year 1160 ⁴⁹³.
- In the deeds of gift of William Ferrariis ⁴⁹⁴ and Raoul le Fun ⁴⁹⁵ (1165–1172) the sick are referred to as "*Holy Poor*".

These concepts are closely and profoundly connected with the spirituality of the Order of St. John, which – as explained above – admits the sick person as a full member into the "*community of saints*" of the hospital.

Chapter 6 is also part of the propers of the Rule of the Order of St. John.

Sending alms to "the poor of the hospital" in Jerusalem has always been the shared responsibility of the religious orders' branches for the motherhouse, the hospital in Jerusalem, known as "responsions".

This leads us to the third, most characteristic new element in the spiritual heritage of the Order of St. John: Hospitality in its particular form and its particular authenticity in the Order of St. John.



←Picture⁴⁹⁶

Interior view of a hospital of the Order of St. John. Copper engraving by Rasmäsler, 1828, after Rarnberg.

⁴⁹¹WIENAND, *ibid.*, p. 604

⁴⁹²*ibid.*, No. 270

⁴⁹³*ibid.*, No. 296

⁴⁹⁴*ibid.*, No. 338

⁴⁹⁵*ibid.*, No. 339

⁴⁹⁶Image credit: Wellcome Library, London. Wellcome Images images@wellcome.ac.uk <http://wellcomeimages.org>. Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_interior_of_a_hospital_of_the_Order_of_St._John._Line_eng_Wellcome_V0015181.jpg

3. Hospitality



497

⁴⁹⁷Colourised and digitally optimised representation of a copper engraving from: Caoursin, Guillaume: *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum Militum*, [Place of publication/Year, e.g. Ulm 1496]. (Image processing using AI-supported methods).

The Order of St. John was the **first order to make hospitality its main task** . It is the oldest and **for centuries was the only regular aid institution in the West** .

Precursors were

- the Roman **valetudinaria** for the care of sick slaves in order to maintain their labour power and
- the **xenodochia** , which were established in large numbers over time by the bishops for the care of the sick and elderly, based on a recommendation of the Council of Nicaea in 325,

But the Order of St. John is the **first religious order whose central task and focus was the care of the poor and sick**, and which carried out this service on a large scale.

The rule of the Order of St. John does not yet include a vow of hospitality.

It was only in the customary law of the Order around 1239 that the admission ceremony for new members was described in chapter 121.

Here it says:

"You promise and vow to God and Our Lady, as well as to our gracious Lord, St. John the Baptist,

- **To live and die in obedience** means to be obedient to every sovereign God will give you.
- You also promise **to live chastely** until death.
- You also promise **to live without owning property** .
- But we make yet another promise that no one else makes: for you promise **to be servants and slaves to our sick masters** ."

If we now consider this as a fourth religious vow or an additional promise, it is certainly a profound innovation, for such a promise appears for the first time in the history of religious orders alongside the vows to live according to the evangelical counsels, as we find in our day in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God (Brothers of Mercy) ⁴⁹⁸.

As I have described in detail above, the hospitality of the Order of St. John is, in its innermost essence, spirituality. Service to the "poor of Christ" is spiritual service. This is evidenced by Chapter 3 of the Rule, which belongs to its independent body of material. There, visiting the sick, including administering Holy Communion to the sick, is taken for granted, and only liturgical regulations have been established for it.

I am convinced that the conception of charity as the worship of God, which then as now constitutes the essential aim of religious orders, was the driving force that has preserved the Order through the severe storms of its history, unlike other religious orders of ⁴⁹⁹. **472F The Order of St. John was the first order**

⁴⁹⁸The rule is printed in: Holstenius, Lucas: Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canoniarum, Vol. 6, p. 264 ff. (Reprint of the Augsburg 1759 edition, Graz 1958).

⁴⁹⁹See Grunsky, *ibid.*, p. 6 ff. While the Templar Order lost its primary purpose – its protection – with the loss of the Holy Land, the Teutonic Order shifted its activities to Prussia and the Baltic region, where it subsequently operated almost exclusively in the military-political sector.

to make hospitality its principal task. It was sometimes proudly described as the oldest and for centuries the only regular charitable organisation in the West .⁵⁰⁰ It rightly deserves the honour of being the oldest hospitaller order in the world.

"The order founded by Gérard anticipated for many centuries all subsequent organisations dedicated to the care of the poor and sick."⁵⁰¹

Also noteworthy and novel in this context is to whom the service was directed. While the Augustinian and especially the Benedictine Rule⁵⁰² primarily aim at attaining salvation through service to God and neighbour⁵⁰³, the main goal of the Rule of the Order of St. John is the selfless striving for the salvation of one's neighbour, that is, the poor and the sick. The latter is certainly not the result of a comprehensive dogmatic-exegetical reflection on fundamental principles but rather owes itself to an early Christian impulse. The desire for one's own salvation certainly plays a major role for a brother of the Order of St. John, but the Order's activity is directed far more clearly outwardly, that is, toward the sick, in an altruistic way.

Blessed Gérard
in the Hospital of Jerusalem➡
504



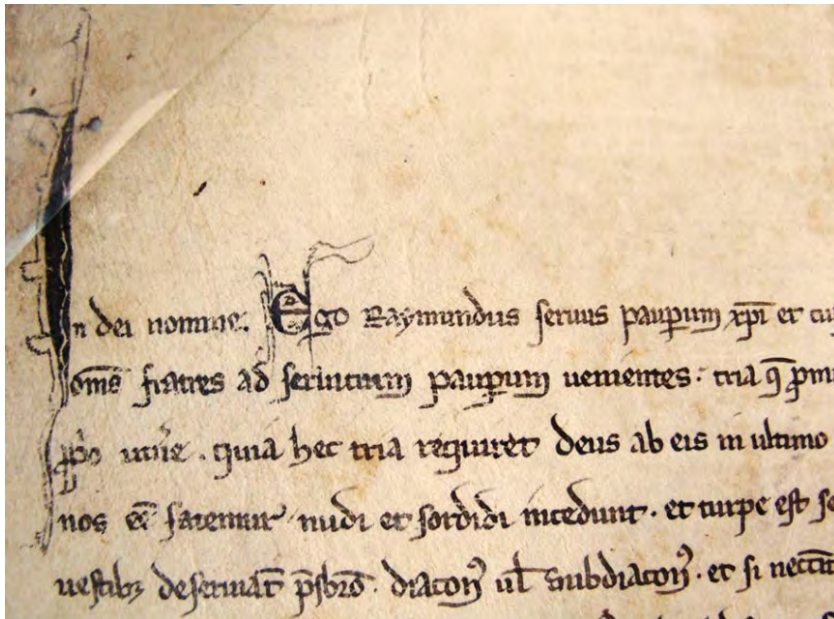
⁵⁰⁰ Landsberg-Velen, Dieter Graf: Various speeches. In: Rotter, Erich (ed.): Under the sign of the Maltese cross. Knights of love – servants of one's neighbour, [record], Frankfurt am Main n.d. [ca. 1965–1975].

⁵⁰¹ Bradford, Ernle: Cross and Sword. The Order of St. John/The Knights of Malta, Berlin 1972 (German paperback edition Munich 1981); Original title: The Shield and the Sword, London 1972.

⁵⁰² Compare the end of the prologue to the Benedictine Rule: "Therefore, let us never turn away from the guidance of this Master, but rather, in the monastery, let us cling to his teachings until death and patiently participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that we may also merit to share in the glory of his kingdom. Amen."

⁵⁰³ This was also the fundamental criticism of the Reformation, which is expressed in Article 27 of the Augsburg Confession.

⁵⁰⁴ Mural formerly located in the Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in Mandeni, South Africa. Image source: Author's own photograph.



4. The **Origin of the Rule** of the Order of St. John

One final novel aspect is the different origin of the Rule of the Order of St. John compared to older monastic rules. In the Rule of St. Augustine and the Rule of St. Benedict, the founder of the order provides practically and theoretically grounded precepts for a God-pleasing monastic life. The Rule of

the Order of St. John, on the other hand, is a theoretical and theological reflection on the practice of the order, written down because this practice has proven correct and has thus been standardized. That is to say, the rule is not merely theory to be put into practice, but a philosophy of lived experience, whose norms will also govern future practice.



What is also unusual in this context is that the order's rule itself and all its appended statutes are always authorized by the entire General Chapter and not just by the founder or his successors, the Hospitallers. These are early signs of a democratic structure in the legislation of a religious order. Thus, the veneration of Blessed Gérard or his successor Raymond du Puys as the order's founder receded into the background compared to the great veneration of St. John, the chosen patron saint. This fact, too, is unknown in any other ancient order.

←Picture⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁵Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_09912/?sp=7&r=-0.911,0.034,2.821,1.285,0

D. The **Influence** of the Order

The Order of St. John, its rule, and the practices underlying it exerted a formative influence on monastic and church history from early times. This is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that its rule, as an exemplary rule, was adopted in whole or in part, or in the spirit of, later orders.

- The Hospitaller Order of Teruel
- The Teutonic Order of Saint Mary in Jerusalem
- The Hospitaller Order of the Holy Spirit
- The Order of Bridge Builders of Saint James
- The Order of the Trinitarians
- French hospitals
- Order of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star

In doing so, the Order of St. John set standards for Christian charity in large parts of the West for centuries.

The Hospitaller Order of the Holy Redeemer of Teruel



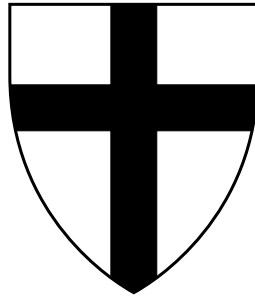
Pope Clement III. ⁵⁰⁶

transferred on July 18, 1188 ⁵⁰⁷ **The rule of the Order of St. John the Hospital-ler Order of the Holy Redeemer of Teruel** , which had been founded by King Alfonso II of Aragon for the release of prisoners. Later in 1188, the Hospitaller Order of the Holy Redeemer was united with the Order of Mountjoy (Montegaudio), and the hospital was given to the Templars in 1196.

⁵⁰⁶Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clemens_III.png?uselang=de

⁵⁰⁷JAFFÉ, *ibid.*, ²16316

The Teutonic Order of Saint Mary in Jerusalem



The Teutonic Order of Saint Mary of Jerusalem (Teutonic Knights),

whose aim was the fight against the enemies of the Church and the charitable duties towards the poor, also **adopted the rule of the Order of St. John** in its constitution ⁵⁰⁸in 1198 , concerning the care of the poor and sick.



As early as 1143,
◀**Pope Celestine II subjugated** ⁵⁰⁹ the German Hospital to the obedience and **authority of the Order of St. John** ⁵¹⁰.

“In 1143, Pope Celestine II issued a bull granting the Order of St. John jurisdiction over the Santa Maria Alemanna (Church of St. Mary of the Germans) in Jerusalem, a hospital that had housed German pilgrims and crusaders since 1128 who spoke neither the local language nor Latin. Although formally an institution of the Order of St. John, the Pope decreed that the prior and the brothers of the domus Theutonicorum (House of the Germans) should always be German themselves. Thus, in the 12th century, a tradition of a German-run religious institution developed in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The latter gained its independence in 1190 and remained under the responsibility of the Order of St. John until 1229. ⁵¹¹”

⁵⁰⁸ See Perlbach, Max: The Statutes of the Teutonic Order according to the oldest manuscripts, Halle a. S. 1890 (reprint: Hildesheim/New York 1975); and Hering, Ernst: The Teutonic Knights Order, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1944, pp. 44 f.

⁵⁰⁹ Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caelestinus_II.png?uselang=de

⁵¹⁰ Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 145: “[...] statuimus ut idem Hospitale cum omnibus suis pertinentiis in tua, dilecte in Domino fili Raymunde, prior, tuorumque successorum obedientia et dispositione deinceps omnino permaneat.”; see *ibid.*, No. 155.

⁵¹¹ Quoted and translated from: Sterns, Indrikis: The Teutonic Knights in the Crusader States. In: Zacour, Norman P. / Hazard, Harry W. (eds.): A History of the Crusades, Vol. 5: The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East, Madison 1985, pp. 315–378. More information about this source can be found via the University of Wisconsin Press.



Pope Innocent III, in his bull "Sacrosancta Romana ecclesia" of February 19, 1199, expressed his satisfaction that the Teutonic Order, in its care for the poor and sick, was indeed following the rule of the Order of St. John ⁵¹².

←Image ⁵¹³



514

Pope Celestine III presents the Black Cross to the Teutonic Order.

⁵¹²Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 1072; see also Ambraziejūtė, op. cit., p. 13 ff.

⁵¹³Image source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Innocent_III_\(Monastery_of_Subiaco\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Innocent_III_(Monastery_of_Subiaco).jpg)

⁵¹⁴Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Celestin_III_Den_Tyske_Orden.jpg

The predecessor of the Teutonic Order was " **St. Mary's of the German Knights** "

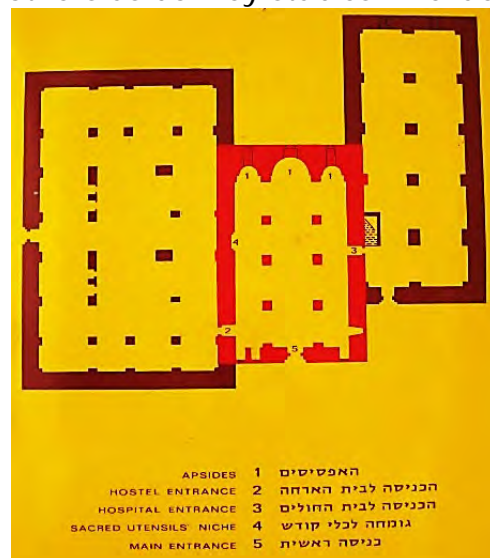
A sign near the ruins explains:

"St. Mary's of the Teutonic Knights

In 1128, during the Second Crusade, a group of Teutonic Knights was formed to care for pilgrims in the Holy Land who were unfamiliar with the language of the other crusaders. Besides a church, the Knights' Jerusalem centre at St. Mary's consisted of a hostel and a hospital. After many years, the Knights managed to separate from the dominant Hospitaller Order, and in 1190, during the Third Crusade, the Teutonic Order was founded. In the second half of the 13th century, part of the complex was destroyed by the Mamluks. Subsequently, residential buildings, storehouses, and stables were built on the site. Archaeological excavations began in 1968, followed by conservation and reconstruction work. This project was carried out on behalf of the Jerusalem Foundation by the Jerusalem Archaeological Expedition and the Company for Reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, with the help of a donation from AS Xel SE.

"The Church of St. Mary of the Teutonic Knights (also known as the Crusader Church of Santa Maria or the Church of St. Mary of the Germans) was a Crusader-era complex consisting of a church, hostel, and hospital. It was built in 1128 for German-speaking pilgrims. The Romanesque-style church was partially destroyed in the 13th century. In 1968, when the city began rebuilding the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, archaeologists unearthed the remains of the church. The site, located at the top of Ma'alot Rav Yehuda Halevi (the main staircase leading down to the Western Wall), was covered by collapsed buildings, some of which had served as makeshift dwellings and others as donkey stables. Archaeologist Meir Ben-Dov directed the excavation, conservation, and restoration of key elements of the site, which has been transformed into an archaeological garden with green spaces, seating, and information panels." ⁵¹⁵

Image ⁵¹⁶ →



⁵¹⁵Quoted and translated from: <https://jerusalemfoundation.org/old-project/st-marys-of-the-german-knights/#:~:text=About%20the%20project,landscaping%2C%20seating%20and%20interpretive%20signs>.

⁵¹⁶Image source: Author's own photograph



Both images on this page are the author's own photographs.



The Hospitaller Order of the Holy Spirit



◀Cruise ship passengers load their ships before departing for the Holy Land.

◀Image ⁵¹⁷

Collar ➔

of the Order of the Holy Spirit,
first half of the 19th century,
France



Hospitaller Order of the Holy Spirit (Ordre Hospitalier du Saint-Esprit) , founded by

Guido of Montpellier around 1170-1175 to care for the poor

and sick, also modelled its charitable activities on the Order of St. John (⁵¹⁸). **Its rule** ⁵¹⁹ In many re-

spects **it corresponds verbatim or in substance to the Rule of the Order of St. John.** ⁵²⁰

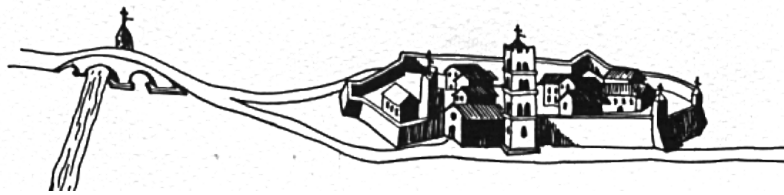
⁵¹⁷Image from: Statuts de l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit, 14th century Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF), MS fr. 4274, f. 6r [or 6v]. Image source: <https://images.freeimages.com/variants/trXLC47VWozPG7KEufUQXTt4/f4a36f6589a0e50e702740b15352bc00e4bfaf6f58bd4db850e167794d05993d?fmt=webp&h=350>

⁵¹⁸See Ambraziejūtė, op. cit., p. 18 ff.

⁵¹⁹The oldest surviving version, dating from 1564, is printed in: Holstenius, Lucas: Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canoniarum, Vol. 6, pp. 503 ff. (reprint of the Augsburg 1759 edition, Graz 1958). The Rule is first mentioned in 1198 by Pope Innocent III; cf. the transcript of the bull in: Brune, Paul: Histoire de l'Ordre Hospitalier du Saint-Esprit, Paris/Lons-le-Saunier 1892, p. 420.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Drossbach, op. cit., pp. 145 f.: “Nevertheless, it must be noted here that 17 chapters of the 19-chapter Rule of the Knights Hospitaller correspond, at least thematically and partly verbatim, to the 89 chapters of the Vienna manuscript and the 105 chapters of the ‘Liber Regulae’. Thus, the Rule of Raymond de Puy constitutes an important foundation for the entire Rule of the Order of the Holy Spirit, even though the contents of the individual chapters are rarely adopted verbatim. Where verbatim passages are found, usually only excerpts from a chapter of the Rule of the Knights Hospitaller are taken and incorporated into the more extensive context of a chapter of the Rule of the Order of the Holy Spirit.”

The Order of Bridge Builders of Saint James



The **Order of the Bridge Builders of Saint James**, whose task it was to build bridges to make it easier for travellers to cross rivers, and which also ran hospices, also **based** its charitable organisation **on the Order of Saint John** ⁵²¹.



←Image ⁵²²

The French branch of the Order (de l'Hôpital d'Altopascio) **received the Statutes of the Order of St. John** ⁵²³ Pope Gregory IX on April 5, 1239 ←.

It says: " ...vobis regulam et institutionales hospitalis Sancti Johannis Jerosolimitani duximus concedendas, quas vobis et domui vestre volumus perpetuo observari." ⁵²⁴ " ...in habitu et aliis secundum regulam et institutions ipsius hospitalis [Sancti Johannis] incedatis . ⁵²⁵ "

(Translation: "...we have decided to grant you the rule and the institutions of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, which we want you and your household to observe forever." ... "that you dress and in other things according to the rule and the institutions of that very hospital [of Saint John]"

Image: Altopascio ⁵²⁶ →



⁵²¹See Ambraziejūtė, loc. cit., p. 21 ff.

⁵²²Image: Gregory IX receives the decretals. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican.

Image source: <https://www.thehistoryofart.org/de/raphael/gregor-ix-empfangt-die-dekretalien/>

⁵²³ Delaville Le Roulx, Cartulaire, No. 2225: "[...] regulam fratrum Hospitalis sancti Johannis Jerosolimitani vobis et successoribus vestris auctoritate presentium duximus concedendam."

⁵²⁴ <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1524/9783486840544.73/pdf?licenseType=free>

⁵²⁵ https://perspectivia.net/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/ploneimport_derivate_00010887/meyer_bet_tel.pdf

⁵²⁶Image: The image shows a historical depiction of the Italian town of **Altopascio** in the province of Lucca, Tuscany. Altopascio is known for its history as a hospice for pilgrims on the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrimage route leading from Canterbury to Rome. The town was the seat of the Order of the Knights of Altopascio, also known as the Knights of the Hospital of Saint James. The tower visible in the image is the bell tower of the Church of San Jacopo, built in the 12th century.

Image source:

<https://www.galleriabazzanti.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/blog-carrara-cave27-1140x500.jpg>



527

The Order of the Trinitarians



528



529

Saint John of Matha founded the **Order of the Trinity**⁵³⁰ (Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives) in 1197 to exchange prisoners.

⁵²⁷Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trinitarians_-_old_cross.jpg?uselang=de

⁵²⁸Image source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Signumordinis.gif?uselang=de>

⁵²⁹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_de_Matha_Ordre_de_la_Sainte_Trinit%C3%A9.jpg?uselang=de

⁵³⁰See Deslandres, Paul: *L'Ordre des Trinitaires pour le rachat des captifs*, Toulouse/Paris 1903. For information on the current rule, see Borrego, Juan: *La Regla de la Orden de la Santísima Trinidad. Contexto histórico*, Salamanca 1973. A reprint of the rule can be found in: Holstenius, Lucas: *Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canonicarum*, Vol. 2, pp. 24 ff. (reprint of the Augsburg 1759 edition, Graz 1958).



Pope Innocent III ⁵³¹

approved the order on December 17, 1198, with his letter "Operante divine dispositionis clementia."

His rule also corresponds in some points verbatim to the rule of the Order of St. John or follows the same philosophy.

"The rule, which was alternately relaxed or reinstated, stipulated that each house should consist of seven brothers, one of whom should be the superior; the income of the house should be divided into three parts, one for the monks, one for the support of the poor, and one for the ransom of prisoners; finally, it forbade the monks from using a horse when traveling, either out of humility or because horses were forbidden to Christians in the Muslim countries to which the monks had to travel; hence their popular name, "Donkey Brothers" ⁵³³.

"The original rule of the Trinitarians (confirmed in 1198 by Innocent III) shows clear references to the older organisation of the Knights Hospitaller:

- **Referencing the sick:** Both orders utilize the philosophy of the "sanctity of the poor." In the rules of the Knights Hospitaller, the sick were referred to as "our lords" (*domini nostri*). The Trinitarians adopted this hospitalic spirit in their daily practice of mercy.
- **Organization of the houses:** The Trinitarian Rule stipulated that a community should ideally consist of seven brothers (four clerics, three lay brothers), led by a *minister*. This clear hierarchy and the distinction between the classes of brothers can be found in a similar form in the early statutes of the Knights Hospitaller.
- **Nursing as a duty:** Although the Trinitarians were primarily a redemption order for slaves, their rule literally prescribed that hospitality and care for the poor and sick had to be provided in every one of their houses. ⁵³⁴

Image ⁵³² →



⁵³¹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Innocentius_III.png?uselang=de

⁵³²Image source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Um_cap%C3%ADtulo_da_Ordem_trinit%C3%A1ria._Miniatura_da_Regula_Fratrum_S.tae_Trinitatis_et_Redemptionis_Captivorum,_de_1429._\(Paris,_Bibl._Mazarine,_manuscrito_1765\).jpg?uselang=de](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Um_cap%C3%ADtulo_da_Ordem_trinit%C3%A1ria._Miniatura_da_Regula_Fratrum_S.tae_Trinitatis_et_Redemptionis_Captivorum,_de_1429._(Paris,_Bibl._Mazarine,_manuscrito_1765).jpg?uselang=de)

⁵³³Translated into German from: Catholic Encyclopedia: [Order of Trinitarians](#)

⁵³⁴Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026

Stamps of the Order of Malta dated March 2, 1998, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Order of the Trinitarians:



535

St. Felice de Valois,
co-founder of the Order

St. John of Matha re-
ceives the bull approving
the Trinitarian Rule from
Pope Innocent III.

St. John of Matha,
founder of the Order
the Trinitarians

French hospitals

The same applies to **French hospitals** , e.g.



Fig. 44. — Une salle de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Paris. Fac-similé d'une gravure sur bois, du seizième siècle, en tête d'un registre manuscrit, intitulé: *Le Pardon, grâces et facultés octroyés à Monseigneur l'archevêque patriarche de Bourges et primat d'Aquitaine, aux bienfaiteurs de l'Hostel-Dieu de Paris*. Biblioth. de Bourgogne, à Bruxelles.

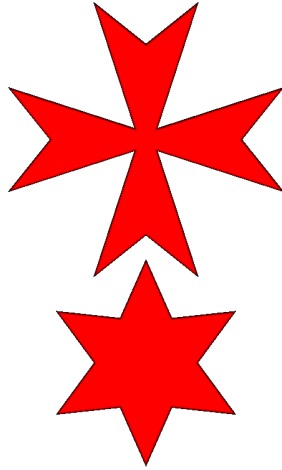
◆in Paris (Hôtel Dieu) ⁵³⁶,

Château-Thierry,
Saint-Paul,
Mont Didier,
Noyon,
Saint Julien,
Saint-Jean in
Cambrai,
Amiens,
Saint-Riquier,
Abbeville,
Beauvais and
Montreuil-sur-
More ⁵³⁷.

⁵³⁵Image source: <https://postemagistrali.orderofmalta.int/francobolli/emissione-238-ottavo-centenario-della-fondazione-dellordine-trinitario/>

⁵³⁶Image source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Hotel_Dieu_-_Gravure.jpg

⁵³⁷See Ambraziejūtė, op. cit., p. 24.



538

The Order of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star

Rytířský řád křižovníků s červenou hvězdou

The commemorative publication marking 757 years of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star reports:

"The mission and significance of the Order of the Knights of the Red Star were shaped both by the historical period of its founding and by the personality of St. Agnes Přemyslíd, a daughter of Přemysl Otakar I, who lived between 1211 and 1282. According to the Czech historian Josef Pekar, she is among the noblest figures in Czech history. Imbued with the reformatory religious ideals of St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), St. Agnes decided to renounce secular life and take the habit of a nun. She corresponded with St. Clare and with the centres of the new piety (devotio moderna) in Italy. She also followed the example of her aunt, St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, who founded the hospital in Marburg an der Lahn. This influenced not only St. Agnes's spiritual growth but also the spread of Franciscan ideals in the region." Bohemia.

In 1231, Saint Agnes appears to have co-founded two monasteries in Na Františku, Prague, which were then known as Bohemian Assisi. These were the Poor Clare convent, of which she became abbess in 1234, and the Franciscan monastery. The site also included a hospital, located near the Church of Saint Castulus, whose activities were more diverse than they are today. The term "hospital" derives from the Latin word "hospes" (meaning guest, traveller, stranger), which denoted a place where not only the sick, but also travellers, the poor, the homeless, and the unjustly persecuted were cared for. The hospital was managed by a lay brotherhood. **The organisation and structure of its life and activities were based on rules already in place in other religious orders. The hospital brotherhoods of so-called knightly orders, such as the Order of Saint John** , the Knights Templar, the Order of the Holy Spirit, and others, **served as models .**

⁵³⁸Image credit: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cross_with_red_star.svg?uselang=de

At the request of Saint Agnes,



Pope Gregory IX, ⁵³⁹

the Prague Hospital to the status of a separate order with the monastic rule of Saint Augustine.



The Red Cross – symbol of Christian charity – was augmented in 1252 with a six-pointed red star. This symbol distinguished the Bohemian Order of the Knights of the Red Star from other hospitaller orders. To this day, it remains the only order of Czech origin and also the only male order founded by a woman. The mission of this order fulfilled the medieval man's desire for a union of chivalric and spiritual life. Among the most important characteristics of the order was its active charitable love for people in need of help and companionship.

◀The Order Cross ⁵⁴⁰

The first independent settlement of the Teutonic Knights was the Church and Sanctuary of St. Peter in Poręčí, now part of Prague's New Town (Nově Město). This temple building is among the best-preserved Romanesque basilicas in Prague. In 1252, the Order's headquarters were moved to the crossroads near the Judita Bridge on the right bank of the Vltava River. At the foot of the bridge, a new Hospital of the Holy Spirit and the Church of St.

⁵³⁹Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gregorius_IX.png?uselang=de

⁵⁴⁰Generated by Google AI on January 12, 2026:

- **Symbolism:** The characteristic badge of the Order is a red, eight-pointed Maltese cross, which was supplemented in 1252 by a six-pointed red star.
- **Design:** The piece shown in the image is a magnificent work of jewelry, probably used as a breast star or necklace. It is made of gold, set with numerous **garnets** (the typical Bohemian gemstones) and diamonds or white sapphires.
- **Components:**
 - **Crown:** At the top is a royal crown adorned with precious stones, symbolizing the royal protection and confirmation of the order.
 - **Cross:** The central element is the Maltese cross of the Order.
 - **Star:** Below the cross hangs a movable, six-pointed star, which represents the unique characteristic of this specific order compared to other hospital orders.

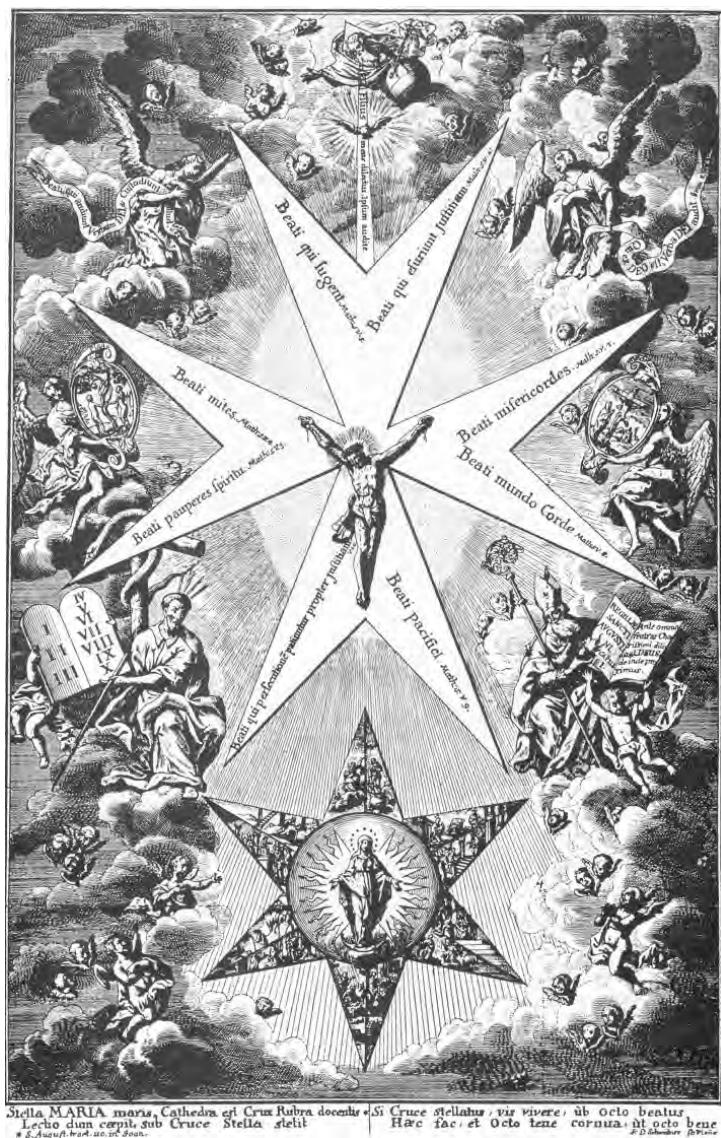
Francis were built. Both foundations recall the original cradle of the Order of the Teutonic Knights, as well as the Monastery of St. Agnes na Frantisku. The original church was later replaced by an early Baroque building from 1679 to 1688, constructed according to the designs of the renowned architect Jean B. Mathey and decorated with frescoes by V.V. Reiner and altarpieces by M.L. Willmann and J.K. Liska. The original Gothic church, however, never ceased to exist. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the ground floor of the church sank almost five meters below the level of the adjacent square due to the gradual rising of the old town's terrain and has remained in this state to this day. Later, it was converted into a burial and hospital chapel, which was decorated with artificial stalactites in 1683. The Baroque part of the monastery is located near the Church of St. Francis, on the foundations of the Judita Bridge, which was situated further north than the later Charles Bridge. The main Art Nouveau building was constructed between 1909 and 1912. In 1990, it once again became the headquarters of the Order of the Knights of the Crusades, which, after 40 years of suppression, is drawing on the spiritual legacy of its holy founder and renewing its activities for the benefit of the faithful.

Jan Nepomuk Jiriste, O. Cr."

The Crusader symbol ⁵⁴¹ ➔

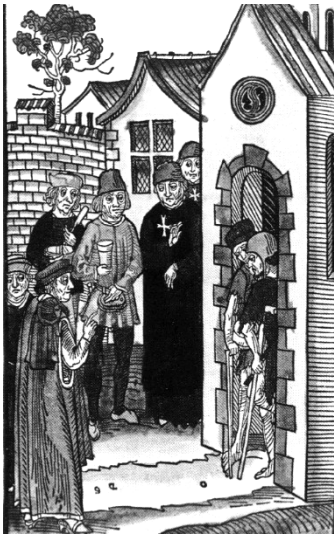
Images and text from: *Galerie u Křižovníků.*

The Treasure of the Order of the Knights of the Red Star. The catalogue of the permanent exhibition in the monastery building in Prague, Křižovníků Str. 1



⁵⁴¹Copper engraving, FD Schachtner, Vienna, mid-18th century

CONCLUSION AND VISION



⁵⁴²The founding of the Order of St. John in 1099 represents—as I attempted to describe above—a remarkable event in the history of religious orders. It was not only the birth of one of the many orders, but of the Church's first hospitaller order. It set spiritual standards that continue to shape the life of the Church to this day. **The spirituality culminating in hospitality was the fundamental spiritual innovation that the Order of St. John introduced into the history of religious orders**. Rooted in faith, it was and remains the driving force of the Order. Although the transformation into a military order, which assumed military and sovereign duties and arose from the spirit of protecting pilgrims and the idea of the "militia Christi" (service of Christ), began under its second superior, Raymond de Puy, and made the Order appear more as a military force than a

hospitaller order in its turbulent history, it never forgot its primary mission: hospitality. (See: <https://youtu.be/D5ltg57y6eM>.)

⁵⁴³When the Maltese cross, the symbol of the eight Beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount, bears eloquent witness in refugee camps and hospitals, in medical research centres and ambulances, in civil defense and rehabilitation facilities, in hospital trains for pilgrimages to the sick and in training centres for nursing staff, in hospices and orphanages, that the Order of Malta puts its timeless motto "Protection of the Faith and Service to the Poor" into practice in contemporary works of Christian charity, we are reminded of the words of the Order's founder, Blessed Gérard:



"Our brotherhood will be everlasting, because the soil in which this plant is rooted is the misery of the world – and because, God willing, there will always be people who want to dedicate themselves to alleviating this suffering and making this misery more bearable."

May the Order of St. John, on the basis of its spiritual foundation, humbly serve the hungry and thirsty, the alienated and naked, the sick and imprisoned of the Lord in all future times, and thus become a sign of Christian faith, joyful hope and apostolic love for humanity.

⁵⁴²Image source: Caoursin, *ibid.*

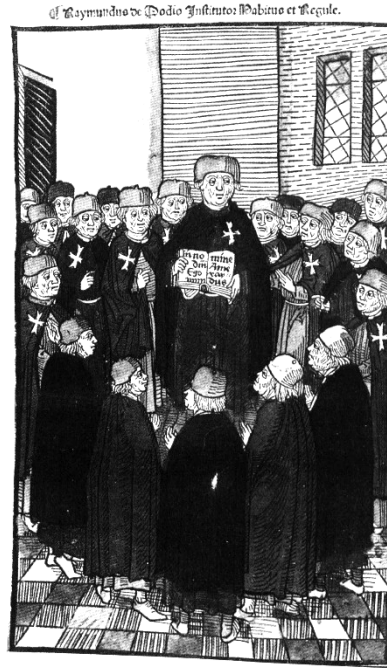
⁵⁴³Image source: Author's own photograph

PART III
The rule
of the Order of St. John



First General Chapter of the Order of St. John,
presided over by Blessed Raymond du Puy,⁵⁴⁴
Promulgation of the Order's Rule.

⁵⁴⁴Fresco in the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta. Image source: <http://www.teutonic.al-tervista.org/G/img/a012.jpg>



545

Raimundus de Podio The founder of customs and rules

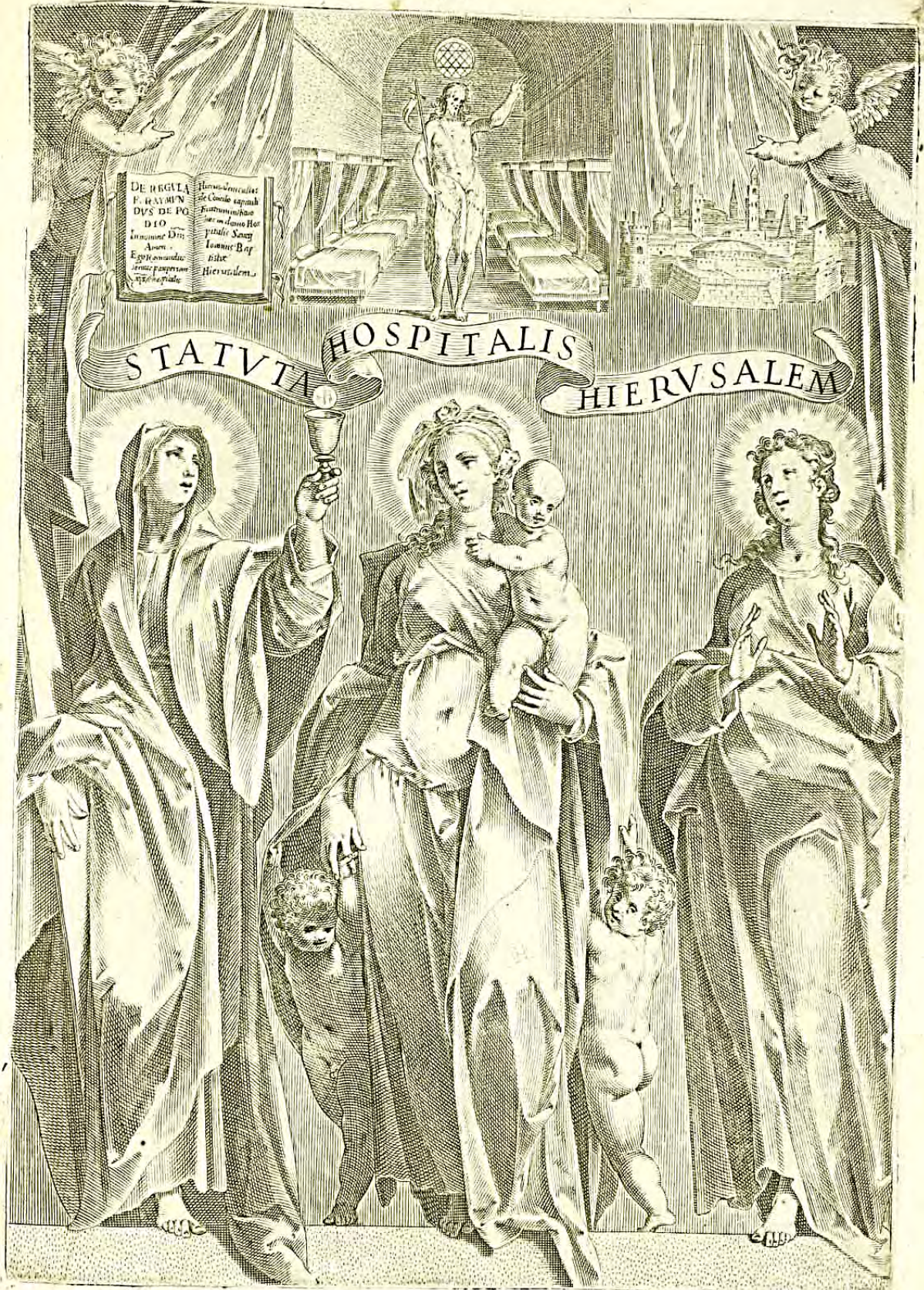


Fol. 3v–4r ⁵⁴⁶from the oldest Old French manuscript of the Rule of the Order of St. John (after 1288). Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library (BAV), Cod. Vat. lat. 4852.

The entire Codex is available online at: https://digi.vat-lib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.4852

⁵⁴⁵Images from Caoursin, *ibid.*

⁵⁴⁶Existing black and white image enhanced and coloured using ChatGPT



⁵⁴⁷Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_09912/?sp=7&r=-0.911,0.034,2.821,1.285,0

THE RULE OF THE BLESSED RAIMUND DU PUY

The oldest known manuscript dates from October 7, 1253.



This copy of the Rule of the Order of St. John from the year 1253, kept in the Aargau State Archives (Leuggern Department, Document No. 7), is the oldest preserved, authorized version of the Order's Rule.

The charter transmitted by Grandmaster William of Chateaufneuf reached Aargau via the Grand Priory of Heitersheim and is considered the only authentic document, as other versions survive only as later copies. ⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁸Source: From parchment to chip. Cultural assets in the Aargau State Archives. Image source: Aargau State Archives



The original rule of the Order of Raymond de Puy

from the period 1125 - 1153

This translation of mine, ⁵⁴⁹of the Rule of the Order and the subsequent ordinances of Grandmasters Jobert and Roger de Moulins, is based on the oldest Middle High German manuscript of the Rule of the Order of St. John from the 14th century (Bavarian State Library, Munich, CLM. 4620, fol . 73^R – 84^R).

I have taken and translated the chapter headings (which are missing in the Latin and Middle High German versions) from the oldest Old French manuscript of the Rule of the Order of St. John (after 1288) in the Vatican Library (Codex Vaticanus Lat. No. 4852).

[←Image](#) ⁵⁵⁰

The Constitutions of Brother Raimund

- (1) In God's name.
- (2) I, Raymond, a servant of the poor of our Lord Jesus Christ and a protector of the hospital in Jerusalem, after thorough consultation with the entire chapter of clergy and laity, have issued these commandments and laws to our brothers in the house of the hospital in Jerusalem.

I. The Profession

- (1) First, I command that all **brothers who come to serve the poor** keep, with God's help, the things they have promised to God, into the hand of the priest and on the book (= Holy Scripture):
- (2) These are **chastity** and **obedience** ; this is all that is commanded of them by their leadership (= superiors), and that they **live without possessions** , because these three things (obligations) are what God demands of them on the Last Day.

⁵⁴⁹I owe the translation from Middle High German largely to my father Hans Lagleder and my brother Johannes Lagleder.

⁵⁵⁰Illustration from: Prokopowski , Rudolf: *Order of Malta. The knightly, hospitaller and sovereign face* , Vatican City 1950. (Coloured and digitally optimised version using AI-supported methods).

II. The brothers' claims

- (1) And they shall grant you no more (lat./fr.: they shall not ask for more) of your claim than the water and bread and clothes that are promised to you.
- (2) And their clothing should be modest, since we call ourselves **servants of our Lord's poor** , who walk naked and dirty.
- (3) And it is shameful for a servant to be proud while his master is humble.

III. The Honour of the Brothers, Church Service , and the Hospitalisation of the Sick

- (1) It is also stipulated that their conduct and lifestyle in the church must be honourable.
- (2) This means that clerics serve the priest at the altar in white robes (= albs), be it a deacon or a subdeacon, or if necessary, another brother who is trained.
- (3) There should be a light (burning) in the church day and night.
- (4) And when **visiting the sick** , the priest should wear white robes and piously carry the **body of our Lord** .
- (5) And a deacon or a subdeacon or an acolyte shall go ahead carrying a lantern with a burning candle and a holy water font.

IV. The brothers' travels and their behaviour towards women

- (1) But when the brothers go through the cities or the castles, they do not go alone, but in pairs or in groups of three.
- (2) And they should not go with whomever they want, but with those whom the superior commands them to go.
- (3) And as soon as they arrive where they want to go, they stop.
- (4) Nothing should happen in her appearance, her way of life, or in any of her possessions that could cause offense, as befits her holiness (= holy state).
- (5) Even when they are in the house or in church, or wherever women are, they should maintain their modesty (decency).
- (6) Women, however, should neither wash their heads nor their feet nor make their beds.
- (7) May our Lord, who dwells in his saints, protect them in this way. Amen.

V. Alms Collecting

- (1) collect alms for the **holy poor , religious persons, clerics and lay brothers, should set out on their way.**
- (2) When they are looking for lodging, they go to a church or to another respectable person and ask for something for their sustenance for God's sake and buy nothing else.
- (3) If they can't find anyone to give them something, they should buy a single, moderate amount of food that they can live on.

VI. The Use of Alms

- (1) **to the poor of the hospital** with an accompanying letter .
- (2) And the superior shall receive from all the houses a third part of bread, wine and all food.
- (3) And whatever is left over, he shall give to **the poor in Jerusalem , along with his** written confirmation .

VII. The preaching and fundraising tours

- (1) No brothers should leave any house to preach or collect alms, except those whom the superior and the chapter designate to do so.
- (2) The brothers who go out to collect alms shall be received in whatever house they enter and share in the sustenance of the brothers among themselves and shall ask for nothing further.
- (3) They should carry a light with them, and wherever they find lodging, they should leave it burning before them at night.

VIII. Clothing and Fasting

- (1) Furthermore, we forbid (prohibit) the brothers from wearing iron (= rust) brown and yellowish-brown cotton cloth (= fustian) and furs of wild animals.
- (2) They should also not eat more than twice a day, and every Wednesday and Saturday from then until Easter, when the Alleluia is said (= Septuagesima, i.e., the pre-Lenten season), they should not eat meat, except for the brothers who are weak and sick.
- (3) They should also not lie (= sleep) naked, but in linen clothing or flax skirts.

IX. The punishment for the brothers' fornication

And if a brother, which God forbid, has fallen into unchastity, let him do penance in secret, if he has sinned in secret, and a suitable penance should be prescribed for him.

- (1) But if he is caught and the truth is made public, he shall be stripped naked in the same village where he sinned, on the Sunday after the first Mass, when the people are leaving the church, so that everyone can see him, and he shall be beaten by a cleric on the instructions of his superior, if the one who sinned is a cleric.
- (2) But if it is a layman, he shall be beaten most severely with whips or straps by a cleric or by one whom the cleric recommends, and he shall be expelled from the entire community of the order and the brothers.
- (3) If, after that, God enlightens his heart and he returns to the house of the poor and confesses that he is guilty and a sinner and has transgressed God's laws and promises to amend his ways, then he shall be received back, and a worthy penance shall be imposed upon him.
- (4) He is to be kept in the position of a stranger throughout the year, and during this time the brothers are to observe his improvement and later do what seems best for him.

X. The penalty for disputes and unauthorized leaving of the house

- (1) If one brother gets into a quarrel with another and the matter comes before the Commander, he shall do penance for seven days and fast on Wednesday and Friday on bread and water, eating on the floor without a table or tablecloth.
- (2) However, if one brother stabs another, he should be made to do penance for fourteen days, every Wednesday and Friday, on bread and water.
- (3) If he (= one) leaves the house or the superior to whom he is entrusted, wilfully against the will of his superior, and then returns, he shall eat on the floor for fourteen days and fast on bread and water every Wednesday and Friday.
- (4) and he shall remain in the position of a stranger for as long as he has been outside, unless the board of directors' orders (the length of time) to reduce it.

XI. The Silence

- (1) At the table, as the Holy Apostle says, everyone should eat their bread in silence.
- (2) and after Compline he drinks nothing but pure water,
- (3) And the brothers are to keep silent in their beds.

XII. Procedure in case of disorderly behaviour of a brother

- (1) If a brother behaves disorderly and is punished by his superior or reprimanded two or three times by other brothers, and he does not improve after being warned by the whispers of the devil, he should be sent to us with a letter listing his guilt.
- (2) He should be given modest provisions for his journey so that he can come to us and we can judge him (decide his fate).
- (3) No one shall strike servants entrusted to him, except the head of the house and brothers administering punishment to him in full view of everyone.
- (4) In any case, one should fully respect the rights of the house.

XIII. The procedure when discovering (unauthorized) possession by a brother

- (1) If it happens that any brother who should be without property has property at his death which he did not show to his superior during his lifetime, no religious services should be held for him, but he should be buried like a convict.
- (2) If, during his lifetime and in good health, he has property which he hid from his superior and which is then found in his possession, then his property shall be tied around his neck, and he shall be led naked through the hospital in Jerusalem or through the other houses where he lives and shall be beaten by a cleric if he is a cleric.
- (3) But if he is a layman, let another who is commanded to do so strike him, and let him sit on the bare ground for forty days, fasting every Wednesday and Friday on bread and water.

XIV. The Exequies (The Office of the Dead)

- (1) And what is also very necessary, we command you all to observe the regulations for all those who are departing (= dying) in all houses.
- (2) In whatever house they die, thirty masses should be sung for the soul of the dead brother.
- (3) At the first Mass, each brother present should offer a candle with a penny.
- (4) No matter how many pennies it is, they should be given to poor people.
- (5) And the priest who sings all the masses shall receive his food throughout the day if he does not belong to the household.
- (6) Once the office is completed, the superior should show him favour.
- (7) All the clothes of the dead brother should be given to poor people.
- (8) And the brothers who are priests, when they sing Mass, should offer their prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ for his soul.
- (9) Every member of the clergy should pray a psalter for him, and every layman fifty Our Fathers.
- (10) One should also decide and judge fairly on other transgressions and on all matters within the chapter.

XV. Exhortation to Zeal

- (1) And we command all these regulations, as we have issued them, to be observed with the utmost zeal in the name of Almighty God, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St. John, and of the **poor holy** .

XVI. The reception and care of the "sick gentlemen"

- (1) If a sick person comes to the house to whom the hospital master grants the right and permission to run a hospital, then he shall be admitted.
- (2) **First, he should confess his sins to the priest and receive spiritual care** [i.e., Holy Communion for the Sick].
- (3) Then he should be carried to the bed and, **like a master**, lovingly fed every day according to the means of the house, even before the brothers eat.
- (4) And on every Sunday, the Epistle and the Gospel should be read in the hospital, and during the procession, the sick person should be sprinkled with holy water.
- (5) If it happens that one of the brothers who look after the houses in the country gives away the property of the holy poor to any secular person against the will of the superior, he shall be expelled from all fellowship of the brothers.

XVII. The fraternal rebuke

- (1) Even if two or more brothers are together, and one of them leads a disgraceful life, the other brother should not bring him into disrepute before the people or the prior but should first rebuke him himself and exhort him to improve.
- (2) But if he does not want to improve his attitude, the brother can take one or two more brothers, and they should admonish the brother who is not behaving well a second time to improve his life.
- (3) If he does this, they should be glad and praise God because of him.
- (4) However, if he refuses to reform, they should confidentially (secretly) report the brother's life and guilt to the board.
- (5) After that, whatever the superior wants happens to him.

XVIII. The accusation of another brother

- (1) But no brother should accuse his brother unless he can prove it.
- (2) But if he does, he is not a good brother, and he shall suffer the punishment that the accused brother would have had to suffer as soon as it could have been proven.

XIX. Wearing the cross on clothing

- (1) Furthermore, all brothers in all houses who now or later dedicate themselves to God and the holy hospital in Jerusalem shall wear crosses on their breasts, on their cloaks and on their mantles in honour of our Lord and God.
- (2) That God, for the sake of the same sign—faith, works, and obedience—may protect us and shield us from the power of the devil in this world and the world to come, both in soul and body, together with all Christians who do us good.

Amen.

Blessed Gérard⁵⁵¹



⁵⁵¹Reverse glass painting at the Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in Mandeni/South Africa.

A. THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1176

The privilege of the sick to eat white bread.

"Bread Ordinance"

Chapter I

- (1) In the year 1181 AD, in the month of March.
- (2) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) On the Sunday of Mid-Lent (= Laetare, i.e., the 4th Sunday of Lent), I, Jobert, a servant of the holy sick, in the great chapter, in the presence of the 'Brothers of the Hospital of Jerusalem, the clergy and laity,' issued these special rights for the glory of God, for the glorification of his saints, for the promotion of spiritual life and for the benefit of the holy sick.
- (4) I want these our laws to be made known to those who live now and to those who come after, that we, with the common will of our entire chapter and after common deliberation, have decided on these special rights and have commanded those who come after us to observe them.
- (5) I command forever and ever to give to the Blessed One, our Lord Sick, and Brother Stephen, who is now Hospital Master, and to those who will be Hospital Masters after him, two splendid estates as their perpetual possession.
- (6) One (property) is named after Our (Dear) Lady "Holy Mary", the other is called Caphaer, so that the holy sick always receive white bread from it, with all the land and everything that belongs to it, inside and out.
- (7) If it should happen that the same goods were ravaged by storms or by unrest, so that the bread could not be given in sufficient quantity to the holy sick, our blessed lords, then we desire that the hospital master take from our treasury enough to buy white bread for the holy sick, our lords, for their needs.
- (8) Should the grain coming from the aforementioned estates be mixed with weeds, then one should take it from our fields, from where the finest grain lies, a Metzen (\cong approx. 15 kg) (exchanged) for another Metzen.
- (9) But we have guaranteed with our document that the sick will receive their livelihood in full.
- (10) But if anyone were to act against our laws in word or deed, we condemn him as Judas, the traitor, for all eternity. With Cain, as well as with Dathan and Abiram, whom the earth swallowed alive, shall the curse fall upon them for all eternity. Amen.

Chapter II

The bread given to two sick people should weigh two half pounds.

Chapter III

, we have instructed those present to affix our seal.

Chapter IV

This was given in Jerusalem in the year 1176 (1177) after the birth of Christ.

B. THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1177

The customs of the Church of the Hospital of Jerusalem

"Church Ordinance"

These are the customs to be observed in the church and the statutes (bylaws) issued by Master Roger in the year 1181 AD. These are the laws of Master Roger: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Chapter I

- (1) We command that these commandments be observed forever and ever in the house of the holy hospital in Jerusalem.
- (2) First, we command that no early morning mass be sung before the start of the day.
- (3) Furthermore, that no superior or caretaker of the houses should command a priest to sing two masses a day, unless a corpse was present (lying in state).
- (4) Then the priest should sing the first Mass of the Sunday or of a saint, followed by the second Mass of the dead, if the body is present.
- (5) In whatever house a brother dies, his anniversary should be written in the calendar, and Mass should be sung for his soul on thirty days.
- (6) As soon as the thirtieth day is celebrated, his anniversary should be commemorated forever in the house where he died.
- (7) If there are three priests in the house where the thirtieth birthday is celebrated, one should solemnly celebrate his thirtieth birthday with the office, while the other two sing the Mass appropriate for that time.
- (8) However, if there are only two priests, they share the office (= Exequies) equally between them.
- (9) However, if there is only one priest, a foreign priest should be invited for thirty days so that the service can be celebrated.

Chapter II

- (1) When the feast day is solemnly celebrated, he (the priest) should be given a stipend (Mass stipend), a shirt and new trousers according to the house.
- (2) However, if it is the case that no priest can be found and the priest of the house remains without assistance, he may observe the thirtieth day by singing the Requiem Mass daily for the deceased, with the exception of Holy Week and Sundays, and he shall say a prayer for the brother's soul at the altar.
- (3) After thirty days, he then counts the days on which he did not sing a requiem mass and adds that many days afterwards so that he is still given the pious remembrance of the house.
- (4) If he were to die during Lent and there were only a priest in the house, and the thirtieth birthday were to extend until after Easter, then one would complete his thirtieth birthday after Easter week.

Chapter III

- (1) We also command that the brothers keep a light burning in the church at all times.
- (2) and that the chalice and the censer be made of silver.

Chapter IV

- (1) We also command that the bodies of pilgrims or other Christians who die after Vespers be kept in the hospital where they died until after Prime.
- (2) The dead should not lie on the bier without light, and after Prime, when the first Mass is sung, the body should be carried to the grave.
- (3) The bier on which the dead are carried should be like the one in Jerusalem.

Chapter V

- (1) The bodies of the brothers should be kept in the church, and the clergy should keep watch there all night, standing on all sides around the bier with burning candles and offering prayers of praise and supplication to our Lord and God for the soul of the brother.
- (2) Of the thirtieths that are given to the priests, the house shall not retain anything but shall give it all to them.
- (3) The house shall keep half of the thirtieth of the foreign brothers.

Chapter VI

In masses sung without solemnity, the priests should have no legal claim to the offering, except as much as the brothers give them voluntarily.

Chapter VII

- (1) Of what is obtained in confession, one should give the priests one-sixth part out of goodwill and not according to law.
- (2) Furthermore, we command that where there are no citizens and only a priest, it is at the discretion of the prior to give or allocate to him as he wishes; only the benefices of the priests he cannot allocate as he wishes.

Chapter VIII

- (1) The testamentary gifts, which are given except for a penny for emergency expenses, shall be returned in half, and everything that is given to the hospital shall be given by the brothers, clergy and laity, without division.
- (2) Here he divides the laws.

**THAT THE CHURCHES
SHOULD BE REGULATED BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRIOR.**

"Hospital Regulations"

of March 14 (1182 or) 1181 Part One

Introduction

- (1) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- (2) In the month of March, on the Sunday of Mid-Lent in the year 1181 after the birth of Christ.
- (3) I, Roger, a humble servant of the poor sick, sat in the Great Chapter (= General Chapter) in the presence of the clergy and laity and the lay brothers who sat around me.
- (4) For the glory of God, the glorification of the saints, the advancement of spiritual life, and the benefit of the sick, we have enacted these laws, to be observed zealously without any distinction.
- (5) We command those who are now living and those who are to come after to obey them.

Chapter I

- (1) Firstly, we command that our churches, wherever we have them, be furnished with beautiful vestments according to the decree of the prior who resides in the house.
- (2) (He shall determine) whose books, clergy for the service, vestments and altar equipment, chalices, censers and (that) an eternal light in the church and other furnishings are needed.

Chapter II

Secondly, we stipulate that there be four learned and wise doctors in the hospital who have knowledge of urine and of many diseases (= ailments) of the sick, that they advise them and give medicine according to the disease.

Chapter III

Thirdly, we stipulate that the beds of the sick shall be of such length and width that they may rest in them, and each bed shall be equipped with its own sheet that belongs to it.

Chapter IV

Fourthly, we command that every sick person in the hospital has a fur coat to wear, two felt shoes to go to and from their toilet, and a (sheep) woollen cap.

Chapter V

Furthermore, we stipulate that cradles be provided for women who give birth in great poverty, so that they may lie separate from their children, so that the children do not suffer any harm from their mothers.

Chapter VI

Furthermore, we command that the dead in the hospital have a bier, like the brothers, and be covered with a red cloth bearing a white cross.

Chapter VII

- (1) In the seventh chapter we stipulate that wherever we have a hospital for the sick in Christendom, the nurses shall serve the sick with a pure heart, and their needs shall be fully met, without any complaint or argument, and shall bear everything in such a spirit that they may receive God's reward for it.
- (2) And if someone should transgress our commandments which we have made for him, then this shall be reported to the superior, and he shall administer the law of the house as it is.

Chapter VIII

- (1) We also stipulate that the Prior of France shall annually give one hundred sheets to the hospital in Jerusalem to renew the bedclothes of the sick.
- (2) He is to offset these cloths against his payments to those he gives as alms from his houses.

Chapter IX

The Prior of Saint Giles (S. Gilles) has all the same rights (duties) as the Prior of France, including with regard to the alms sent for God's sake.

Chapter X

The Prior of Lombardy sends two thousand ells of cotton cloth in various colours annually and donates them together with his chapter.

Chapter XI

The Prior of Pisa also sends that many ells of his cloth.

Chapter XII

The Prior of Venetia also had so much.

Chapter XIII

The bailiwicks located around the (Mediterranean) Sea are to provide the following services:

Chapter XIV

The Prior of Antioch is to send two thousand cubits of calico (cotton cloth) here to also enlarge the bedsheets of the sick.

Chapter XV

The prior of Pilgrim's Mountain (near Athlit) is to send two truckloads of sugar so that syrup, elechiaria, and other medicines can be made from it for the sick.

Chapter XVI

The Bailiff of Tiberias is contributing just as much.

Chapter XVII

The Prior of Compostela (Constantinople) gave two hundred felts.

Chapter XVIII

- (1) Therefore, the brothers should be zealous day and night with a pure heart in the service of the sick, who are our lords.
- (2) We also determine that the sick on the wards
- (3) Nine servants should be at the service of the sick, washing their feet, drying them with towels, making their bed, and bringing them food and drink, performing their service humbly.
- (4) These are the laws that Master Arnul issued in Mergarten.

Confirmation from Master Roger
about the things the house should do

"Hospital regulations"

of March 14 (1182 or) 1181

Part Two

Master Roger's confirmation of what the house should do.

All the brothers of the House of the Hospital, all who are and all who will come, should know that the good customs of the House in Jerusalem must be the following:

Chapter I

- (1) First and foremost, the holy house of the hospital should receive sick men and women, and it should have physicians who would bring healing lungs to the sick, prepare syrup for the sick, and take care of everything that is not necessary for the sick.
- (2) On three days a week, the sick should receive fresh pork or mutton.
- (3) Those who cannot eat that should receive chicken meat.

Chapter II

- (1) Two sick people are said to have a sheepskin,
- (2) which they should wear when they go to the toilet.
- (3) There should be one pair of boots for every two sick people.
- (4) Every year, the hospital is supposed to give a thousand thick lambskins to the poor.

Chapter III

- (1) The hospital should take in and care for all children abandoned by their fathers or mothers.
- (2) Men and women who wish to marry but have nothing with which to celebrate their wedding should be given two bowls or the portions of two brothers by the hospital house.

Chapter IV

- (1) And the house of the hospital shall keep a shoemaker brother who has three servants who repair the old shoes that have been given to them for the love of God.
- (2) And the Elemosynar shall keep two servants who will repair the old clothes in order to give them to the poor.

Chapter V

The Elemosynar is to give each prisoner twelve denarii immediately after they are released from prison.

Chapter VI

Every night, five clerics are to read the Psalter for the benefactors of the house.

Chapter VII

- (1) And every day, thirty poor people shall eat once a day at the table for God's (reward), and the five clerics may be among these thirty poor people, but the twenty-five shall eat before the convent.
- (2) And each of the five clerics shall receive two denarii and eat with the convent.

Chapter VIII

Three days a week they are to give alms to all those who come to ask for bread, wine and cooked food.

Chapter IX

- (1) Every Saturday during Lent, they are to summon thirteen poor people, wash their feet, and give each of them a shirt, new trousers, and new shoes.
- (2) To three chaplains or three clerics from these thirteen (poor people) they shall give three denarii, and to each of the others two denarii.

Chapter X

- (1) This is the hospital's own alms, established within the hospital itself, excluding the armed brothers who are to maintain the house honourably, and several other alms, of which it is impossible to list them all individually.
- (2) And whatever it may be, to see the good men and to bear witness to their glory, Brother Roger, the Master of the Hospital, Prior Bernhard and the entire General Chapter know.

Epilogue

The Second Vatican Council states in Article 2 of its decree on the contemporary renewal of religious life "perfectae caritatis" from October 28, 1965:

" A contemporary renewal of religious life means: a constant return to the roots of all Christian life and to the original spirit of each institute, while at the same time adapting it to the changed conditions of the times. This renewal should be realized under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the Church, according to the following principles: "

- a. *The ultimate norm of religious life is the imitation of Christ, as described in the Gospel. It must be the supreme rule for all institutes.*
- b. *It is to the benefit of the Church that the institutes have their individuality and their special tasks. Therefore, **they must the spirit and essential intentions of the founders** , as well as the sound traditions which together constitute the heritage of each institution, **are conscientiously researched and preserved** ..."* ⁵⁵²

The latter was the aim of this work. I do not claim to have fully described the charisma of my patron saint, Blessed Gérard, nor do I imply that there is no room for revision in what I have written. Therefore, I am extremely grateful for any suggestions for further study and any proposals for improvement. If I have succeeded in elucidating the indispensable foundation of all service under the Maltese cross, as it was lived and established by the founder and his first successors, my great wish to make a small contribution to the renewal of this Order, to which I feel so deeply connected, would be fulfilled.

Looking at the nature and work of the Order today, we can happily note that this renewal was not only initiated with great energy at the Second Vatican Council. Renewal, however, is not a one-time event, but rather a continuous process of change, a constant adaptation to the needs of the times. Renewal also means, but not only, an external transformation, but also, and essentially, a lasting inner change. This means that every member of the Order and every employee in the Order's works must be prepared to constantly reflect on themselves and, if necessary, to be ready to repent regarding the nature, content, purpose, and nature of their service. Especially in our time, when we often lament secularization, the decline of faith, selfishness, and so on, each individual, keeping the Order's purpose in mind, must continually ask themselves why and how they perform this service: Is it truly pure love of God and neighbour that motivates them to selflessly encounter the suffering Christ in their fellow human beings in need? The future of all who serve under the Maltese cross will be shaped and determined by the answer to this question.

Only if we can answer this question with a clear "yes" have we remained true to the intentions and goals of the order's founder.

⁵⁵² Second Vatican Council , Decree about the contemporary Renewal of religious life *Perfectae Caritatis* (October 28, 1965), No. 2. In: Rahner, Karl / Vorgrimler , Herbert (eds .): Kleines Konzilskompendium . Sämtliche Texte des Zweiten. Vatican Council , 35th edition , Freiburg: Herder 2008.



Closing remarks

"Follow in his footsteps" – this was the exhortation Archabbot Notker Wolf O.S.B. ⁵⁵⁴when he bestowed upon me the religious name of Blessed Gérard in 1982. It was a promise that would shape my life. From my admission to the Order of Malta Relief Service in 1969 until my solemn commissioning to Zululand on Epiphany in 1987, my path led me ever closer to those on the margins of society.

←Image ⁵⁵⁵

In light of the immeasurable suffering I encountered in South Africa, I founded the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in 1992**. We didn't want to devise a theory on the drawing board but rather give a "courageous response" to the cry of the poor.

Today, our work at [Blessed Gérard's Care Centre](#) encompasses a wide range of assistance that those in need require for body, mind, and soul:

- **Health Care Projects:** [AIDS Treatment](#), [Palliative Care Centre](#), [Poor-Sick-Fund](#).
- **Child care projects:** [Early Childhood Development Centre](#), [Child and Youth Care Centre](#), [Malnutrition Clinic](#), [Bursary Fund](#).
- **Emergency Relief and Social Project:** [Emergency Relief Fund](#)

We see ourselves as modern heirs of the original Brotherhood of St. John. Our goal is to glorify God by serving "our Lords, the poor." It is an attempt to translate the vision of Blessed Gérard into the present day: a service of love that begins where the need is greatest.

When Hayne Clark, the director of our children's home, summarized our service after more than 30 years of membership: "It's not a job, **it's a vocation!**" and when Wiseman Zulu, a member of the Zulu royal family who has been actively serving with us since 1997, said: " **I would die to be able to continue helping,** " I thanked the Lord that the seed sown by Blessed Gérard had been allowed to bear fruit ⁵⁵⁶

Yours sincerely

Father Gérard

Image ⁵⁵⁷ →



⁵⁵⁴ https://youtu.be/tfvc47_ZzwM

⁵⁵⁵Image source: St. Ottilien Archabbey

⁵⁵⁶ <https://youtu.be/F9hRovIHblM>

⁵⁵⁷Image source: Own photo by Maresi Rehder

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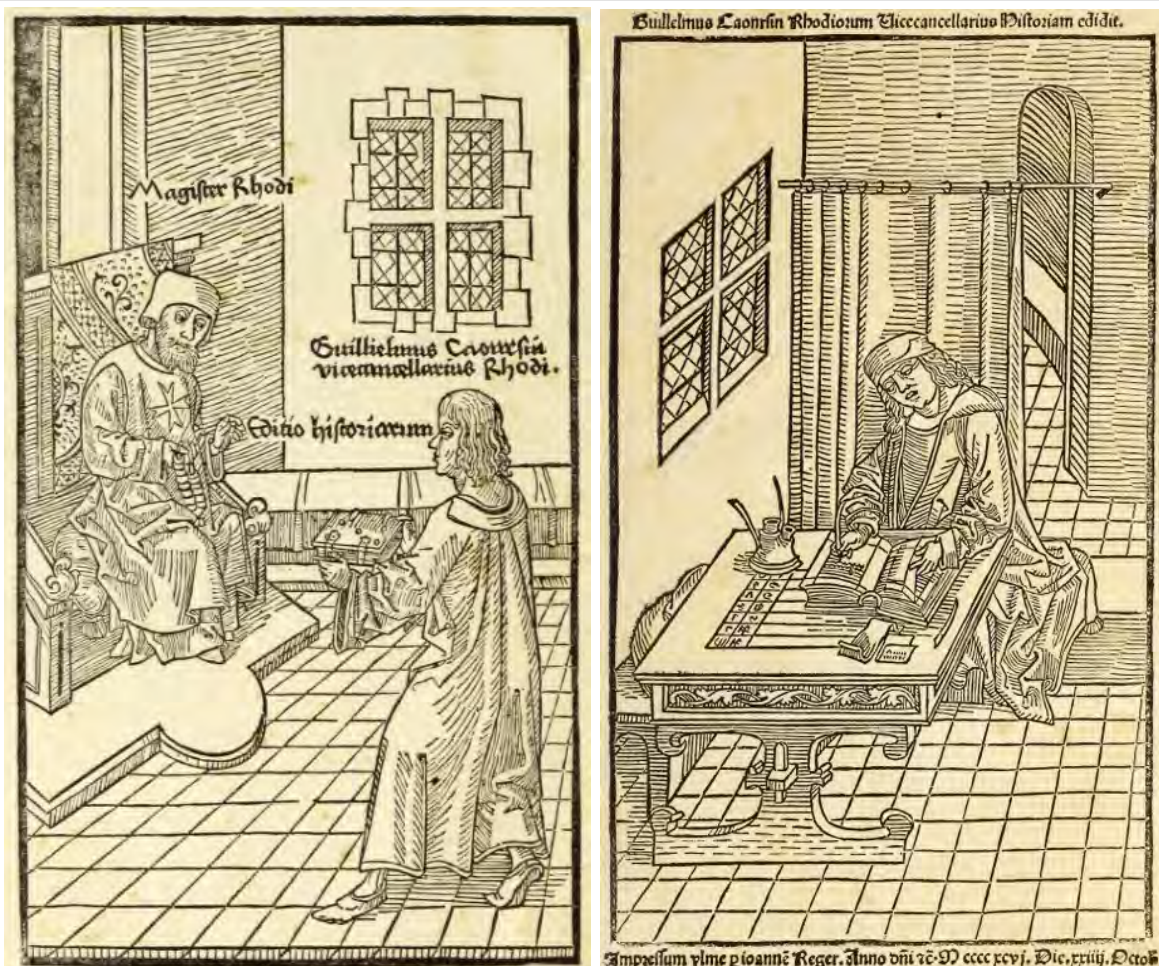
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The Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa

At the founding of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard on October 28, 1992, we established our mission statement:

“The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard sees itself as a revival of the Brotherhood of St. John founded by the Blessed Gérard. It wants to revitalize the charisma of these origins and adopt them and the brotherhood’s spirituality into the context of our present time and life situation..”

Here and now in Zululand, South Africa, we want to be the sisters and brothers who come forward to protect the faith and to serve those in need. We want to be servants of the Lord, who encounters us in the sick, and to make God's love tangible to those in need through our charitable service, thus fulfilling the Church's missionary mandate in living deeds.

To this end, we established and provide a comprehensive and holistic system of care through [Blessed Gérard's Care Centre](#) by running:

We help ...



Poor Sick Fund
We provide poverty relief by helping sick people from our local community, if they cannot afford urgently needed medical treatment.



Relief Fund
We provide poverty relief by helping people in our local community in genuine cases of immediate need.

Relief & Social Care



Bursary Fund
We provide poverty relief by giving bursaries to poor pupils and students of our local community.



Antiretroviral Treatment

We provide free Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment (HAART) as comprehensive medical care including regular medical examinations, blood monitoring, on-going prevention or treatment of opportunistic infections, medical and psychosocial counselling and dispensing of the drugs.



AIDS Treatment



Child Care

... in any case



We provide residential Palliative Care for terminally ill patients in our Inpatient Unit. We can admit up to 40 patients, which makes us the largest inpatient hospice in South Africa.



We send out mobile home-nursing teams, which supplement and support the family's home based care through hands-on-training and additional aids in the home situation of the respective patient. This includes the assessment of patients at home and proper medical home care.

Palliative Care



Malnutrition Clinic
We provide a health care service to poor and needy persons by running a clinic, where we examine, treat and feed malnourished infants and teach their parent/carer in proper baby care and nutrition.

Child and Youth Care Centre
We look after, counsel and give a home to sick and healthy "Orphans and Vulnerable Children" (OVCs).



Early Childhood Development Centre
We provide "edu-care" and an early childhood development service for underprivileged pre-school children.



We serve the needy irrespective of their creed, colour of skin, sexual orientation, and political affiliation.

We serve an impoverished community. Therefore, we render all our services free of charge and **have to rely solely on donations and grants to finance our work.**

How you can help

All the work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard has to be financed by donations because the patients are so poor that they cannot contribute to the costs. We depend on your help and are very grateful for every donation, big or small.

Help us to help ...

- through your supporting membership, if you are willing to support our ministry regularly through donations.
- by donating in support of our work.
- through a bequest in your last will and testament.
- by your prayer that God may bless our ministry and those entrusted to our care.

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SOUTH AFRICA: You may donate directly into our banking account:

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Thanks to the generosity of the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska, we can now offer you a convenient way of making donations towards our work, inside the **United States**, with the possibility of declaring your donation on your tax return.

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Brotherhood
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et obsequium
pauperum
of Blessed Gérard

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The Prayer of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



Lord Jesus Christ,

Through your grace
you have called me to serve you
as a member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

I thank you for counting me worthy of this task.

I ask you humbly, with the intercession of Our Lady,
St. John the Baptist, Blessed Gérard and all the Saints
that the spirituality of our Brotherhood
may pervade my life and my actions
to be always dedicated to your service
to whoever needs my help.

Trusting in your help
I always want to protect the faith
and have an open heart for my neighbour,
especially the Poor, the Sad, the Lonely,
the Handicapped and the Sick.

Grant me the strength needed
to live according to this resolution
as an upright Christian
selflessly in the Spirit of Your Gospel,
for the honour of God,
for the peace of the world
and the benefit of our community.

Amen.