KNIGHTHOOD OF CHRIST

The Order of St. John had no Master when the Christians lost the Battle of Hattin and the city of Jerusalem. Roger des Moulins had been killed at Sephoria, and the administration of the Hospital was in the hands of the Grand Commander, Borrel, whose headquarters were in Tyre.¹ By October 1187, three months after Hattin, he had been joined by a senior brother called Armengaud d’Asp,² who had been ruling the Castellany of Amposta in Spain since August 1180. In 1182 he had been appointed Prior of S. Gilles and general administrator of the Hospital in Provence and Aragon.³ He seems to have been replaced in S. Gilles for a short time in 1185;⁴ but by the end of the year he was again prior and was combining this office with the castellanship of Amposta.⁵ Armengaud seems to have been entrusted with the general administration of the whole Order at some date after May and before October 1188.⁶

The Chronicle of the Deceased Masters and all historians of the Order have believed that Armengaud became Master of the Hospital.⁷ The Chronicle of the Deceased Masters is a corrupt document, probably compiled over a century after the events here described.⁸ If it

¹ Regesta, nos. 665, 675.
² Regesta, nos. 665–6. He must have just arrived, because in the same month he seems to have been in the south of France (Cart. no. 835).
³ Cart. nos. 586–8, 592, 597, 598, 601, 619, 677. There seems also to have been a subordinate Castellan of Amposta.
⁴ Cart. nos. 721, 760; Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, pp. 415–16 and n. 7.
⁵ Cart. nos. 765, 781, 818, 820, 822, 829, 835.
⁶ Cart. no. 860; Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, p. 101.
⁷ ‘Cronica Magistrorum Defunctorum’, p. 797; Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, pp. 100–4; King, Knights Hospitallers, p. 136.
⁸ Cf. Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, p. 34, n. 3; King, Knights Hospitallers, p. 312. In the chronicle Armengaud is to be found governing the Order before Roger des Moulins; and the loss of Jerusalem is placed within his magistracy.
is to be believed, he was the only Master in our period who enjoyed high office in the Order after his resignation or deposition, for by 1190 he was no longer Master but was again Castellan of Amposta. Other ex-Masters, Gilbert d'Assailly, Alfonso of Portugal and Fulk de Villaret, seem to have lived on after their magistracies only as simple brothers. It should be noticed that in documents Armengaud called himself not Master, but ‘Provisor’ of the Hospital; an uncommon title, but one that could well have been used by an officer who was temporarily governing the Order. On the other hand, he certainly called himself custos, the normal magistral title, on his only surviving seal. It must remain uncertain whether he was Master or whether he was appointed administrator until such time as a Master would be elected and then, after the accession of Garnier de Naples, returned to his old post in Spain.

Garnier de Naples became Master in late 1189 or 1190. He may have been a member of the important Frankish family of Milly, which had held the lordships of Neapolis and Oultrejordain and had already provided a Master of the Temple. His career in the Order had been distinguished. He was probably Castellan of Bethgibelin from 1173 until 1176. He was then appointed Grand Commander and remained in this office until 1184 or 1185 when he became Prior of England. He seems to have been combining the posts of Prior of England and Grand Commander of France at the time of his election

1 Cart. nos. 901–2, 908; Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, p. 104; King, Knights Hospitallers, p. 139.

2 Cart. no. 860; letter in ‘Historia de expeditione Friderici’, pp. 4–5. In Cart. no. 871 he is called Master, but this is an eighteenth-century French notice of a lost document. John de Joinville (p. 134) used the title of Provost for John de Ronay, who, we shall see, was Lieutenant Master. For seal, F. Chandon de Briailles, ‘Bulles de l’orient latin’, in Syria, xxvii (1950), p. 296.

3 Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, p. 106.

4 Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers, p. 105; King, Knights Hospitallers, pp. 139–40. Philip de Milly was Master of the Temple 1169–70. J.H. Round (‘Garnier de Nablous, Prior of the Hospital in England and Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem’, in Archaeologia, lviii (1905), p. 384) suggested that he may have belonged to the family of the vicomtes of Neapolis.