THE LOST CASTLE OF COUNT RODRIGO GONZALEZ[1]

EL CASTILLO PERDIDO DEL CONDE RODRIGO GONZÁLEZ

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Abstract: This article suggests that a castle called Toron built in 1137 by Count Rodrigo of Lara, and granted to the Templar Order was in Summil, where remains of a Crusader castles are still visible (*ca*. 25 km from Ascalon, in south west Israel). This opinion opposes a consensual view that the castle built by Count Rodrigo was in Latrun, midway between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. This identification is based on names' similarity and on the universal opinion that Latrun was a Templar castle. In this article it is demonstrated that the geographic setting of Summil fits the Count's castle, whereas Latrun does not; that Toron was a common name in the Crusader Kingdom; and, moreover, it is not certain that Latrun was a Templar castle. The article also suggest that there was a village near the castle, called *Casale Sancti Salvatoris,* and also discusses Frankish fortification and settlement policy during the twelfth century.

Keywords: crusaders; holy land; castles; Rodrigo González de Lara; templars; Toron des Chevaliers.

Resumen: Este artículo sugiere que un castillo llamado Toron, construido el año 1137 por el conde Rodrigo González de Lara, y que fue luego otorgado a la orden del Temple, estaba en Summil, donde todavía permanecen las ruinas de un castillo de los cruzados (a unos 25 km de Ascalon, en el sudoeste de Israel). Esta opinión se contrapone a la tesis general que sostiene que el castillo construido por el conde estuvo situado en Latrun, a medio camino entre Tel-Aviv y Jerusalén. Una identificación basada en la similitud de nombres y en la común opinión que Latrun era un castillo templario. En este estudio se demuestra que la ubicación geográfica de Summil encaja con la del castillo del conde, mientras que Latrun no lo hace; que Toron fue un nombre habitual en el reino cruzado y que, por otra parte, no es cierto que Latrun fuera un castillo templario. Se sugiere también que cerca del castillo de Summil existía un pueblo llamado *casale Sancti Salvatoris*, analizándose asimismo la política de fortificación y colonización llevada a cabo por los cruzados durante el siglo XII.

Palabras clave: cruzados; tierra santa; castillos; Rodrigo González de Lara; templarios; Toron des Chevaliers.

Summary

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1. Preface

The *Chronica Adefonsi imperatoris*[2], composed in the mid-12th century[3], relates that in 1137 Count Rodrigo Gonzalez of Lara went to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. During his stay in the Holy Land, he frequently fought the Saracens and built an extremely strong castle facing Ascalon, Toron. Count Rodrigo Gonzalez subsequently gave Toron to the Templars.

> Comes vero Rodericus Gundisalui, posquam osculatus est manum regis et amicis suis valere dixit, peregre prefectus est Hierosilimis, ubi et commisit multa bella cum Sarracenis fecitque quoddam castellum valde fortissimum a facie Ascalonie quod dicitur Toron, et muniuit eum valde militibus et peditibus et escis tradens illud militibus Templi[4].

In 1994, Rudolf Hiestand suggested that "Toron" mentioned in this source was in Latrun (Israel Grid reference 198.456)[5], near the modern Tel-Aviv –Jerusalem highway, about fifty kilometers from Ascalon. This view, later shared by Denys Pringle, Adrian Boas and Philippe Josserand[6], is based on two premises: the coincidence of names; Latrun was known during the Crusader period as "Toron" or "Toron des Chevaliers", and scholars believe that Latrun was a Templar castle[7].

Yet, this suggestion suffers three fundamental flaws. The first is rather evident; Latrun was near important cities of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, e.g., Lydda, Ramla, and Jerusalem, but far from Ascalon. Therefore, if the anonymous chronicler wanted to describe Latrun, he presumably would have referred to these Frankish cities, rather than to the more remote Fatimid Ascalon. William of Tyre described the building of nearby Castrum Arnaldi (Yālu, GR 202.491, built 1132/3) as:

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[2] Maya 1990, pp. 111-248.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 115; Baloup 2002, pp. 455-458.

[4] Maya 1990, p. 172.

[5] Hiestand 1994, p. 32.

[6] Pringle 1998, pp. 94-95; Boas 2006, pp. 111, 255-256; Josserand 2011, p. 438.

[7] Kennedy 1994, p. 55; Boas 2006, p. 100.

> There, on the slope of the hill at the entrance to the plain, on the road leading to Lydda and from there to the Sea… Here the people of Ascalon were accustomed to fall upon them suddenly… Thus by the grace of God and also because of this fortress, the road became much safer and the journey of pilgrims to or from Jerusalem was rendered less perilous[8].

The landmarks cited by William were Lydda and Jerusalem. William mentions Ascalon in reference to the aggressors' place of origin and not in reference to the castle.

Furthermore, William of Tyre asserted that from 1133 there was a castle about four kilometers from Latrun whose existence significantly improved the security of this particular region[9]; therefore, another castle in the same region less than five years later seems to have been superfluous.

In 1136 Fulk of Anjou, the then King of Jerusalem launched a fortification project of the Kingdom's south-western frontier zone. Fulk first initiated the construction of a Castle in Bethgibelin (GR 190.063 *ca.* thirty kilometers south of Latrun)[10], which marked the Kingdom's southern border for the next five decades. In 1141 and 1142, Fulk built Ibelin (GR 176.192) and Blanche Garde (GR 185.624) in the same area[11]. This fortification project, meticulously studied by prominent scholars, seems to have been thoroughly planned[12]. Latrun was located within the Royal Domain, and the construction of a castle there would have been carried out by the behest of the King or with his approval. Since the alleged construction of a castle by Count Rodrigo in Latrun seems to have ignored the Royal fortification plan, supposedly the Count's castle might have been built elsewhere.

These points cast serious doubts that the castle built by Count Rodrigo was Latrun. Furthermore, the attribution of Latrun to the Templar Order also merits thorough reassessment, especially since there are indications that until 1187, both Latrun and neighbouring Emmaus were Hospitaller and not Templar properties.

I suggest that the castle built by Count Rodrigo was at Summil (GR 180.632) about twenty-five kilometers east of Ascalon. Summil is midway between Ascalon and Latrun and the chronicle specifically emphasised that Toron was built to face the threat from Ascalon. The substantial remains of an

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[8] *WT*, IVX, 8, p. 640; English translation: Atwater-Babcock, Krey 1943, vol. II, p. 58.

[9] *WT*, IVX, 8, p. 640.

[10] *WT,* IVX, 26, pp. 659-661; *Cart. Hosp.*, vol. I, n. 399, pp. 272-273.

[11] *WT,* XV, 24-25, pp. 706-709.

[12] Boas, Maeir 2009, pp. 3-4; Boas 2012, pp. 153-154; Ellenblum 2007, pp. 155-156; Kennedy 1994, pp. 31-32; Prawer 1956, pp. 231-248; Prawer 1980, pp. 105-108; Smail 1995, p. 211.

impressive medieval castle at Summil have been ignored and not been identified by modern scholars. Further, I suggest that near the Summil fortress was a Frankish civil settlement, *Casale Sancti Salvatoris*[13] mentioned in an 1185 document. I would like to propose that this was the name of a civil settlement built near to Summil's fortress during the late 1160s or the early 1170s. Building civil settlements near to pre-existing castles was a common practice in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially in the region of Summil during the reign of Amalric (1162-1174).
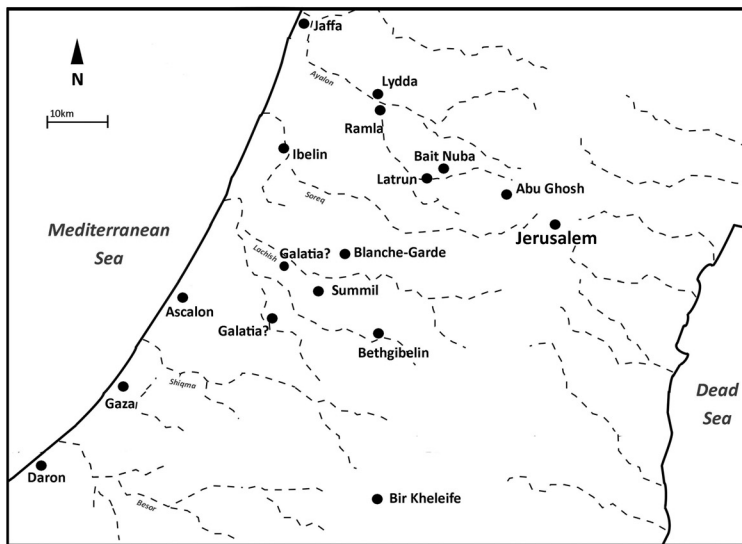
Map 1. South-western frontier area of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

2. SUMMIL

The history of the area of Ascalon, Blanche Garde, and Bethgibelin during the Crusader period has been intensively studied. Gustav Beyer dedicated several pages of his detailed essay about the coastal plain of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, south of Arsur to this specific area[14]. Joshua Prawer wrote twice about the Kingdom's south-western frontier region[15]. Also

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[13] Mayer 1964, p. 69.
[14] Beyer 1949-1951, pp. 162-172, 173-174, 255-258.
[15] Prawer 1956, pp. 231-248; Prawer 1980, pp. 105-108.

other scholars dealt with the history of this area during the twelfth century[16]. None of these studies referred to Summil which was a village, about twenty-five kilometers east of Ascalon, seven km. south-west of Blanche Garde and approximately fifteen km. west of Bethgibelin. This area is characterised by low hills and wide valleys which enable invading forces with many options. Namely, the construction of a castle in Summil could have decreased the threat stemming from Fatimid Ascalon, but was not sufficient to appease the region. In contrast, the area surrounding the castle of Latrun is in the foothills, where invaders' options are more limited. William of Tyre clearly wrote that the construction of Castrum Arnaldi in 1132-133 improved the security in this region[17].

According to the Survey of Western Palestine, remains found there included *a pointed archway of good masonry, apparently medieval work… and the site evidently dates back to Crusading times at least*[18]. Andrew Petersen dedicated an entry in his gazetteer of Islamic Architecture in Palestine to Summil[19]. Yet, Denys Pringle's brief record is more useful for our purposes. *Remains of medieval castle in village (now destroyed), consisting of tower enclosed by roughly square enceinte (>30m E-W) with talus and square corner towers*[20]. This description of the visible remains of an impressive castle atop a low hill, separated from its surroundings, corresponds to the castle at Summil which was larger than the castle at Blanche Garde and at least as large as the castle in Ibelin[21].

Summil is near the western border of the Roman Eleutheropolis territory, i.e. Bethgibelin[22]. The Franks used former Roman administrative borders, in many cases; the Frankish lordship's areas were identical to those of Roman cities' territories. I would suggest that the south western limit of the Royal Domain of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem during the 1130s was the same as to the western border of the Roman Eleutheropolis. Subsequently, until the conquest of Ascalon, a castle in Summil would have enabled the King to exercise his sovereignty to the limits of his kingdom's territory.

Summil's location better corresponds to the "Toron" castle mentioned in the *Chronica Adefonsi imperatoris* than Latrun. Therefore, I suggest

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[16] Boas, Maeir 2009, pp. 3-4; Boas 2012, pp. 155-159; Ellenblum 2007, pp. 155-156; Kennedy 1994, pp. 31-32; Smail 1995, p. 211.

[17] *WT*, XIV, 8, p. 640; *RRH*, p. 152.

[18] *SWP*, vol. II, p. 413.

[19] Petersen 2001, p. 289.

[20] Pringle 1997, p. 97.

[21] Boas 2012, pp. 155-159; Taxel 2005, p. 157.

[22] Beyer 1931, pp. 218 (map), 239-244; Beyer 1942, pp. 176-177 (map), 182-183; Beyer 1949-1951, pp. 255-258.

that the Summil castle was built by the Count. The similarity of the names Toron/Latrun seems to be a coincidence and should not be overrated. Elitzur asserted that an *almost positive identification* has to meet two criteria:

> 1. The description of the terrain and specified distances in the historical sources imply a well-defined geographical indication.

> 2. An Arabic name that parallels the historical name in all or almost all letters and denotes a point at or reasonably near the location indicated by the historical source[23].

Latrun is certainly far from Ascalon, and as such does not meet the first criterion. Further, the similarity between the names is not decisive. The chronicle referred to "Toron"; "Latrun" implies that the Arabic amalgamated the name "Toron" with the function word "le" and changed its sound into "la-Toron" which evolved into "Latrun". Since the Count's castle name appears only once in contemporary sources, without the phonetic addition, the identification of "Toron" built by Count Rodrigo with "Latrun" seems to be not sufficiently substantiated. Moreover, "Toron" was a rather common name in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Röhricht listed twelve place names in the Kingdom which included the word "Toron"[24]. "Toron" was usually not a full place name. The addition of a name or an adjective to "Toron" was, of course necessary to distinguish between different places called "Toron". The only place, of which "Toron" was apparently the full name, is Tibnin in contemporary Lebanon[25]. Yet, it is possible that during the first half of the twelfth century there were people who called a place near Ascalon "Toron", without the addition of another name or adjective. The existence of another "Toron" more than two-hundred kilometres away was irrelevant to the local inhabitants. Notwithstanding, people who lived near a particular "Toron" probably did not bother to distinguish between the "Toron" they knew and other places with the same name. Therefore, although "Toron" was probably not the place's full name, most of the people familiar with this place referred to it as "Toron" without any addition.

Among all the places called "Toron" during the twelfth century, Latrun is apparently the only one in which the name "Toron" was preserved by the site's population after the Crusaders left the region. Therefore, since more than ninety percent of the known cases the name "Toron" did not survive, the preservation of the name in Latrun should be considered an exception.

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[23] Elitzur 2004, pp. 12-13.
[24] *RRH*, p. 509.
[25] Piana 2006, pp. 173-174.

Presumably the Arabic name *al-Natrun* which appears in some contemporary sources contributed to the preservation of the Frankish name "Le Toron" as "Latrun"[26]. Therefore, the superficial similarity of the names "Toron" and "Latrun" does not suffice as proof that the "Toron" built by the Count was in Latrun which in 1137 was far from the Kingdom's frontier and Ascalon, and near a recently built castle.

The possibility that "Toron" built by Count Rodrigo in 1137 was in Summil seems rather likely since the site was within the Royal Domain and near the border with Ascalon where King Fulk strove to fortify the region. Although the castle's name was not preserved, the castle site is evidently nearer to Ascalon than Latrun, the visible remains are substantial and, therefore, the possibility that this was the site of "Toron" built by the Count should be seriously considered.

3. *CASALE SANCTI SALVATORIS*

Casale Sancti Salvatoris appears in an 1185 document, which described the properties belonging to the Mountjoy Abbey (commonly identified with Nabi Samwil, the traditional burial place of the Biblical prophet Samuel, near Jerusalem), and includes the following:

> Nihilominus, eidem ecclesiae concede casale nominatim [sic] illud, quod inter Blancam Gardam et Galathiam situm est, cui nomen casali Sancti Salvatoris a domino rege Amalrico avo meo impositum est[27]

Summil, the only known Frankish settlement between Blanche Garde and Galatia (either Karatiyya, GR 173.962 or al-Jaladiyya, GR 176.632), is roughly midway between Blanche Garde and these two locations. Therefore, Casale Sancti Salvatoris might be identified at Summil.

Summil residents believe that the village's name stemmed from the name "Samuel", a Crusader who probably lived there[28]. The popular tradition might be better explained by the attributing the "Samuel" to the Abbey of St. Samuel there during the Crusader period. The German pilgrim, Hans Tucher

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[26] Abu Shama 1998, vol. II-1, p. 293 (in Arabic); Ibn al-Athīr 1867-1874, vol. XI-11, p. 546 (in Arabic).

[27] Mayer 1964, p. 69.

[28] Khalidi 1992, p. 137; http://www.palestineremembered.com/Gaza/Summil/index.html [accessed: 08/06/2015].

of Nüremberg (1479) called the place "Saint Samuel's Castle"[29]. Edward Robinson believed that Hans Tucher of Nüremberg was wrong and wrote a long learned note explaining his view[30]. Victor Guérin, who visited the site during the 1860s, reported that in his days the castle's name was *al-Qal'a*, i.e., the fortress[31]. Evidently, about seven hundred years after its construction, the local population considered the castle an independent feature within the settlement. Perhaps, this was also the case during the Crusader period.

To sum up: there is evidence that Summil was the site of the village, *Casale Sancti Salvatoris*. Yet, the establishment of the village did not coincide with the building of the castle. I suggest that the establishment of the village of Summil was after the Frankish conquest of Ascalon in 1153 and during Amalric's reign (1162-1174), when he was the local landlord and not when he was the Count of Ascalon. During Amalric's reign other civil suburbs were established elsewhere in the region. The castle was constructed in 1137, during Fulk's reign to strengthen the Frankish presence in this area. After 1153, when Ascalon became a Frankish county, castles became practically superfluous and there was certainly no need to fortify the area with new castles. Instead, rural settlements and urban suburbs burgeoned near existing castles as in Bethgibelin in 1168, and probably in Ibelin and Blanche Garde.

Although Summil was on the site of a village called *Casale Sancti Salvatoris,* I would suggest that Summil was also the site of the Toron castle built in 1137. This assumption is based on the nature of the findings in Summil. Evidently, the existing remains in Summil are of a castle. Supposedly, the village was near the castle. Unfortunately, the only clue to the existence of a settlement outside the castle during the Crusader period is a local tradition that the village's mosque stood on the remains of a Crusader church outside the castle[32]. Possible documentation of the mosque of Summil, is an unclear photo of a corner of an otherwise destroyed building which according to an explanatory note shows the mosque's ruins[33]. This photo neither identifies the exact location of the building nor verifies that the building was a church before it became a mosque. Therefore although this settlement probably existed in the area, the determination of the exact location of the Frankish civil settlement of Summil is still unknown.

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[29] Johan Tuchern von Nüremberg 1584, p. 737.

[30] Robinson 1856, vol. II, pp. 33, 513-514.

[31] Guérin 1869, vol. II, pp. 121-122.

[32] Khalidi 1992, p.137.

[33] http://www.palestineremembered.com/Gaza/Summil/Picture47334.html [accessed: 08/06/2015].

The existence of castle with a nearby civil settlement, each with a different name was common in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Thus, the castle of Latrun and the civil settlement of Emmaus were less than a kilometer away from each other, and yet they bore different names[34]. In most cases, the settlement and the castle belonged to the same lord. Yet, there were exceptions. For example, although the distance between Castrum Arnaldi and Bait Nuba was less than a kilometer, Castrum Arnaldi belonged to the Templars while Bait Nuba did not. Furthermore, the Templars did not build Castrum Arnaldi's and, as far as it is known, they did not hold substantial property in its vicinity. The main landlord of this area was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre[35]. The circumstances in Summil might have been similar; perhaps the Count only granted the Templars the castle he built, but not the surrounding area. Moreover, during the 1130s, the Templars were probably more dedicated to pilgrim protection and the defence of Latin Kingdom's of Jerusalem, and not in settlement activities.

As previously stated, during the 1160s the Summil region underwent major settlement changes. For example, in 1168 the Hospitallers established a new civil nucleus in Bethgibelin. Perhaps Summil underwent a similar change and there were two neighbouring settlement nuclei; Count Rodrigo established the castle in 1137 and granted it to the Templars. King Amalric established the secular settlement after 1162 which belonged to the Royalty, until King Baldwin V granted it to the Abbey of Saint Samuel in 1185.

4. LATRUN

Latrun was neither the only "Toron" in the region, nor even the only "Toron des Chevaliers". Moreover, evidence suggests that this specific castle did not belong to the Templar Order. Until recently, most scholars maintained Latrun was a Templar castle; whereas nearby 'Amwas [Emmaus] was Hospitaller property[36]. Recently Pringle adopted Vincent's and Abel's view that both sites belonged to a single owner, and presumes that since Latrun was Templar so was 'Amwas[37].

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[34] Pringle 1993-2009, vol. II, p. 5

[35] Ehrlich 2006, pp. 280-282.

[36] Benvenisti 1970, pp. 349-351; Ellenblum 1998, pp. 101-104; Pringle 1993-2009, vol. I, pp. 52-53.

[37] Vincent, Abel 1932, pp. 366-374; Pringle 1993-2009, vol. IV, p. 249; Pringle 2000, pp. 215-218.

Although Latrun was a large fortress, Frankish documents and chronicles, as well as Christian and Muslim pilgrims did not mention Latrun before 1187. Surprisingly, the single possible reference to Latrun prior to the Frankish defeat at Hattin appears in one of the versions of the Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela's account, who mentioned a place called *Toron de los caballeros*, a Spanish version of the subsequently known French name[38]. Latrun appears several times in post-Hattin accounts (1187-1188) and in sources of the Third Crusade (1189-1192). Frankish sources which list Frankish losses during the aftermath of the battle of Hattin refer to a site called: *Turrim militum*[39], *Turun-as-chivalers*[40], and *Turon*[41]. None of these mention the Templar Order.

Two Muslim sources describe the ransom terms of the Templar Master, Gerard of Ridefort, both referred to a place called *al-Natrun*, apparently Latrun. According to Abu Shama (1203-1267), the terms included *the Templar fortresses Gaza, al-Natrun and Bait Jibril*[42]. According to Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233) *forces conquered Ramla, Darum, Gaza, Hebron, Bethlehem, Bait Jibril, al-Natrun, and all the Templar properties*[43].

The Abu Shama listing of Templar properties includes also the Hospitaller castle of Bait Jibril. The Ibn al-Athīr list includes Templar settlements like Gaza, but also non-Templars settlements, such as Ramla, Hebron, and Bethlehem. Therefore, these sources are unreliable for deciding whether Latrun belonged to the Templar Order.

While some Third Crusade's sources called Latrun Toron, others use Toron des Chevaliers. Yet, there seems to be also other contemporary castles with those same names. Both versions of the Continuation of William of Tyre referred to *a Templar castle called Toron des Chevaliers*[44] which seems to imply that Latrun belonged to the Templars. Yet, a closer look into this source might raise some doubts about this identification.

> Pui que l'ost fu venuz et le roi ot rescosse Japhe, un grant descort sorst entre Salhadin et ses amiraus. Dont noz genz ne s'aparsurent jousque il se deslogierent devant Japhe et se herbegier entre Lidde et Rames. Et noz genz alerent herbergier au chastel des Plains. Salhadin oÿ dire que le roi venoit apres lui, si douta son frere et

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[38] Adler 1907, p. 26, n. 26.

[39] Stubbs 1876, vol. II, p. 56.

[40] Stubbs 1967, vol. II, p. 23.

[41] Kedar 1982, p. 121.

[42] Abu Shama 1998, vol. II-1, p. 293 (in Arabic).

[43] Ibn al-Athīr, vol. XI, p.546 (in Arabic).

[44] Morgan 1982, pp. 147-149; Edbury 1996, p. 118.

les autres amiraus, si ne l'osa atendre. Ainz s'en ala escheriement
vers la Surie Sobal… Le roi et l'ost alerent herbergier pres d'un
chastel dou Temple que l'on nome le Thoron des Chevaliers…
les Bedoyn qui orrent espié un rich caravane le firent savoir au
roi…
Car ne demora gaires qu'il li firent savoir que le carevane estoit
pres de lui a la Cisterne Rouge. Le roi et l'ost murent a prime soir
et chevauchierent tote nuit, si qu'il furent a l'aube dou jor la ou
estoient cil de la caravane herbregié… Li roi s'en retorna a Japhe
sain et sauf…

According to this description, Richard's army rode all night from
Toron des Chevaliers and assaulted the caravan at dawn. The only hint that
Richard's army was near Latrun is the reference to a Templar castle called
Toron des Chevaliers. Yet, if this castle was in Latrun is dubious. Peter Ed-
bury aptly commented that Cisterne Rouge is well south of the routes linking
Jaffa and Jerusalem[45]. In other words, it would take much more than a night's
ride to arrive from Latrun to the presumed battlefield somewhere in southern
Israel. For instance, Amos Kloner suggested that the encounter took place
near Bir el-Kheleifeh (GR 180.048)[46] nearly fifty km. (as a crow flies) and
more than seventy km. by modern highways from Latrun.

The *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi* gives an alternative version of the ca-
ravan assault. In this version, King Richard left Latrun –Bait Nuba area during
the day, rode all night, and camped near Galatia. From there, the King sent
people to Ascalon to bring supplies. While the King was in Galatia, he learned
about the location of the caravan and assaulted it[47]. William of Tyre's conti-
nuation states that the caravan assault party left from the Toron des Cheva-
liers' area, and according to the *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi*, version the caravan
assault party left from Galatia. Presumably, the Templar castle of Toron des
Chevaliers was near to Galatia, and not near Latrun.

Moreover, there was also another Toron des Chevaliers just outside
of Jaffa. In 1255, during the siege of Jaffa, the Muslims climbed a hill called
Toron des Chevaliers, a lookout from which Jaffa was easily seen[48]. This hill
must have been near Jaffa, and certainly not in Latrun, which is about forty
kilometres away. Therefore, there was at least one other place somewhere
between Jaffa and Ramla called Toron des Chevaliers, Although its precise
location is not known, the existence of a second place with the same name, in

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[45] Edbury 1996, p. 119, n. 203.
[46] Kloner 1982-1983, pp. 58-60.
[47] Stubbs 1864, p. 385; Ailes, Barber (eds.) 2003, pp. 166-167.
[48] *RHC, Historiens occidentaux*, vol II, p. 631.

an adjacent area, refutes the argument that Toron des Chevaliers always refers to Latrun.

5. 'AMWAS AND LATRUN

'Amwas is a few hundred meters from Latrun. Therefore, if 'Amwas was a Hospitaller settlement, the nearby castle also probably belonged to the Hospitaller Order. Had the castle belonged to the Templars, the opposite would be assumed. Whereas there is ample evidence to associate 'Amwas to the Hospitallers, there are no references to associate the site with the Templar Order.

Whether 'Amwas and Latrun were Templar or Hospitaller is closely related to the identification of 'Amwas during the Crusader period to the biblical Emmaus which seems rather reliable. Yet, scholars have suggested that during the twelfth century the Franks began to identify Emmaus as Abu Ghosh[49].
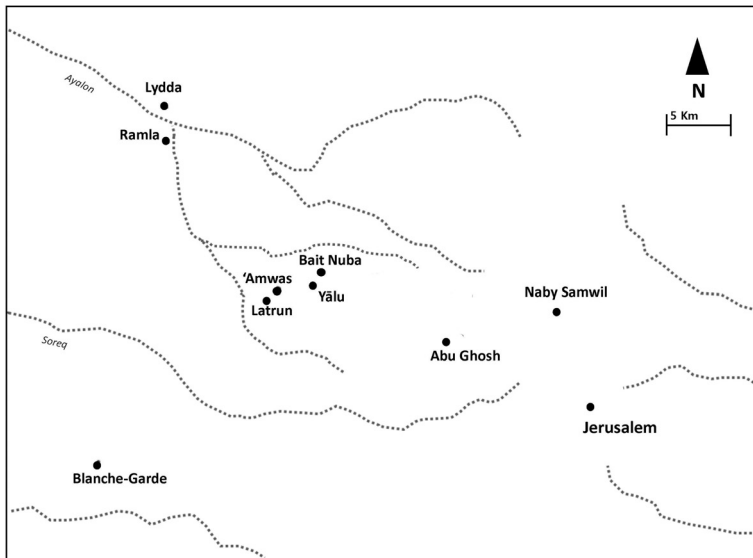
Map 2. Main Frankish sites between Lydda and Jerusalem.

[49] Vincent, Abel 1932, pp. 371-374.

The alternative identification of Emmaus with Abu Ghosh stems from a short quotation from Theodoric's Holy Land description (*ca.* 1170): *This place is near the mountains of Modin… This mountain area is now called "Belmont". These mountains are beside the castle Emmaus which people now call Fontenoid*[50]. This source neither explains why or when people began identifying Emmaus with Fontenoid, nor when Fontenoid was established.

Pringle believes that the lack of evidence about Templar ownership of 'Amwas *would be unsurprising in view of the general paucity of information about Templar properties in Palestine in the twelfth century*[51]. Nevertheless, *argumentum ex silentio* is only valid as long as explicit contradictory evidence does not exist. In the case of Emmaus, two Hospitaller documents mention Emmaus, thus this argument does not apply. An earlier document, dated 1141, related to the "Land of Emmaus" which included also six unidentified villages. Due to the lack of a clear identification, scholars suggested that this reference alludes to Abu Ghosh and not to 'Amwas[52]. Nonetheless, suggesting that Emmaus was in Abu Ghosh implies that there were those who identified Emmaus in Abu Ghosh prior to 1141, more than thirty years before Theodoric wrote his account.

Another document from 1186 refers to a Hospitaller bailiff in Emmaus. This reference clearly suggests that Emmaus was an administrative center, and not only a church[53]. Benvenisti and Pringle suggested "Emaus" [sic] in this 1186 document should be identified with 'Amwas and not Abu Ghosh because of Abu Ghosh's proximity to the Hospitaller castle Belmont which would made a bailiff in there superfluous[54]. However, Pringle has revised his view and now assumes that ʹAmwas and Latrun both belonged to the Templar Order. Pringle explained: *However, it is equally possible that the offices of bailiff of Emaus [sic] and castellan of Belmont were one and the same*[55].

The premise that both places belonged to a single owner seems reasonable, but given the documented link between the Hospitaller Order and 'Amwas, the logical conclusion would suggest that Latrun also belonged to the same owner. A precondition for this possibility is to cut the Gordian knot between *a Templar castle called Toron des Chevaliers* and Latrun. The discussions about Toron des Chevaliers and Summil indicate that there was more than one *Templar castle called Toron des Chevaliers*. Therefore, the assump-

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[50] Huygens 1994, p. 184. English version: Wilkinson 1988, p. 308.
[51] Pringle 2000, p. 218.
[52] *Cart. Hosp.*, vol. I, pp. 113-114, n. 139; Ellenblum 1998, pp. 109-111.
[53] *Cart. Hosp.*, vol. I, p. 496, n. 783.
[54] Benvenisti 1970, p. 350; Pringle 1993-2009, vol. I, p. 53.
[55] Pringle 2000, p. 218.

tion that the bailiff of Emmaus was in Abu Ghosh is no longer necessary. Even if Emmaus was identified in Abu Ghosh from the 1160s, an official document should have referred to "Fontenoid" and not to Emmaus, exactly as the adjacent castle was called "Belmont" and not "Modin"[56].

The existence of a castle like Latrun and a civil settlement like Emmaus was common in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. In fact, the castle and the civil settlement constituted a single settlement unit. Fortifications were typical defensive features of most Frankish settlements. During raids, skirmishes, or in more serious attacks until reinforcements arrived, fortifications provided civilian shelter. Settlements with a nearby castle had no need to build a fortification within their civil settlements, civilians could find shelter in the castle and its garrison could intervene quickly.

In some locations, such as Bethgibelin, Mount Thabor, Mountjoy, etc., which belonged to ecclesiastical institutions, civil nuclei were built near but not too near the monastery/castle. Thus, the military or the monastic order concentrated on its own affairs, leaving routine daily issues to civilians. I propose that this was the case in Latrun and Emmaus. While Hospitallers resided in the castle which fulfilled a military and perhaps, a charitable role, civilians administered the surrounding area and lived in the nearby settlement. In most cases, the castle and the settlement belonged to the same owner. Yet, there were exceptions; Castrum Arnaldi was a Templar fortress, but nearby Bait Nuba was not.

Yet, when the presumed neighbours were Templars and Hospitallers such symbiotic relations were unlikely. Therefore, although there were precedents to reciprocal relations between a military order castles and secular settlements which belonged to different owners, this was probably not the case in Latrun.

6. Fulk's castle building policy

In his monumental work on the Crusader kingdom's history, Joshua Prawer described Fulk's reign (1131-1143): *une ère de calme et de prospérité pour le royaume*. Prawer explained that the Franks were satisfied with the Kingdom's geopolitical situation, and therefore rather than to expand his kingdom the King decided to fortify its borders[57]. However, the situation was more complex. Fulk's defensive policy was the result of domestic and exter-

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[56] *Cart. Hosp.*, vol. I, n. 403, pp. 276-277; Huygens 1994, p. 184.
[57] Prawer 1969-1970, vol. I, p. 328.

nal constrains. By the second half of 1130s, Fulk had become a political lame duck. One of the most significant results of the revolt against him was the sharing of the royal power with his wife, Queen Melisende[58]. Outside of the Kingdom's borders, Fulk witnessed the rising power of Zengi which made the Kingdom's expansion towards the north and the east impossible. By building fortresses in the kingdom's south western frontier, King Fulk tried to deal with his domestic and external challenges. Before he built these castles, the Kingdom's effective southern border was near the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem through Ramla. Thus, when Fulk built castles in the south-western frontier area of his kingdom, he expanded his territory without the use of force.

The construction of Toron castle took place in 1137, a year after the construction of Bethgibelin[59]. The castle built in Summil which is located between Bethgibelin and Ascalon, diminished the threat stemming from Ascalon to the Kingdom's south-western frontier region. Toron, whether located in Latrun or in Summil, was definitely within the Royal Domain. It seems unlikely that a foreigner could have disregarded the King's plan by building a castle within the Royal Domain and to transfer it to a third side, shortly after the King survived a revolt. In other words, the Count must have asked the King where to build a castle and subsequently needed his approval to grant Toron to the Templars. While building a castle in Summil perfectly suited to the Royal fortification plan, it is difficult to understand how the building of castle in Latrun served the King's interests.

Scholars have suggested that Fulk implemented his policy by building the castles of Bethgibelin, Blanche Garde, and Ibelin. Nonetheless, the remains of the castle in Summil clearly indicate that there was a fourth castle in this region, which I identify as Toron built by Count Rodrigo in 1137. Even if "Toron" was not in Summil, the existence of a fourth castle in this region demands a fresh understanding of Fulk's policy. The existence of four castles in this region implies that the strategic plan employed by the Franks was different than hitherto understood.

Having a castle in Summil completes the puzzle of the south western area fortification and suggests that during the first stage the King initiated the construction of Bethgibelin. Summil was built near the Kingdom's western frontier by Count Rodrigo with royal consent. Later, the King built the northern castles in Blanche Garde, and Ibelin. The building of Bethgibelin and Summil was to limit the threat stemmed from Ascalon. The building of Blanche Garde and Ibelin was intended to further to limit the threat.

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[58] Mayer 1972, p. 106.
[59] Hiestand 1994, pp. 31-32. As stated above, Hiestand suggested that this castle was in Latrun.

7. Summary

Although inconclusive, the possible identification of the castle built by Count Rodrigo Gonzalez in Summil might better explain events of the 1130s in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem's south-western frontier zone. Summil was nearer to Ascalon than Latrun, and therefore, its geographical position fits the only existing description of the castle built by the Count in 1137. The castle's location was determined by the King's interests; namely, to the west of Bethgibelin, near to the limit of the Royal Domain. Thus, the King could have expanded his sovereignty without being involved in belligerent actions. The Count handed over the castle to the Templars, because they were best able to maintain two important functions of the castle. They were well-trained soldiers and their loyalty to the King was considered irrefutable at thit time. Therefore, having them in the frontline seems to have been a wise choice and did not jeopardise the King's domestic position. Another advantage was that since the King granted Bethgibelin to the Hospitallers, it was wise to give the next fortress to the Templars. Summil was probably also the site of the village of the Holy Saviour which belonged to the Abbey of St. Samuel. This village was somewhere between Galatia and Blanche Garde. Yet, Tucher's description strongly suggests that this village was in Summil.

Therefore, I suggest that the castle found in the ruins of Summil is "Toron" built by Count Rodrigo. Apparently, a civil settlement, which belonged to the Abbey of Saint Samuel, was established there about thirty years later. Hopefully, future archaeological excavations will provide further details on the history of this Frankish castle.

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