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**INTENSIVE COMPOSITE TRAINING IN
GAMIFICATION
TO REWIND THE TOURISM SERVICE DESIGN**

MEDIEVAL TOWN OF RHODES

24-28 October 2022

Rhodes Greece



Dorothea Papathanasiou-Zuhrt M.A, M.A., M.Sc., PhD
ARTIFACTORY

Oratio. oratio Dominus scilicet tuus.
Ut supra. Ad sextam. V. S.
Deus in adiutorium meum intende. **R.** Domine ad adiuuandum me festina. **G.** Gloria. **Hymnus.** emittens
to salutis auctorem. **ut s.** Antiphona
In odorem. **Psalmus.**
De te leuavi oculos
meos qui habitas in caelis.
Ecce sicut oculi seruatorum in manibus
dominorum suorum. **S.**icut
oculi ancille in manibus domine

INTRODUCTION

In 1309 Rhodes becomes home to the warrior monks, the Knights Hospitallers. The Order attracts nobility from all over Europe to serve the cross of the eight stars. They settle down along the ancient street that leads to the port, the Street of the Knights, where they build the assembly places for each nationality: the inns of France, Germany, Auvergne, Spain, England, Provence, Italy, and Castile, still intact today. The red thread on our map leads to twelve places, the pearls in the necklace, connected in one journey, using fantasy as fuel.



Our purpose is to travel through a magnifying glass and look for a new experience and taste. Twelve places in the Medieval City of the Knights in Rhodes, a UNESCO monument today, will lead us to the unknown Renaissance in the Aegean Sea.

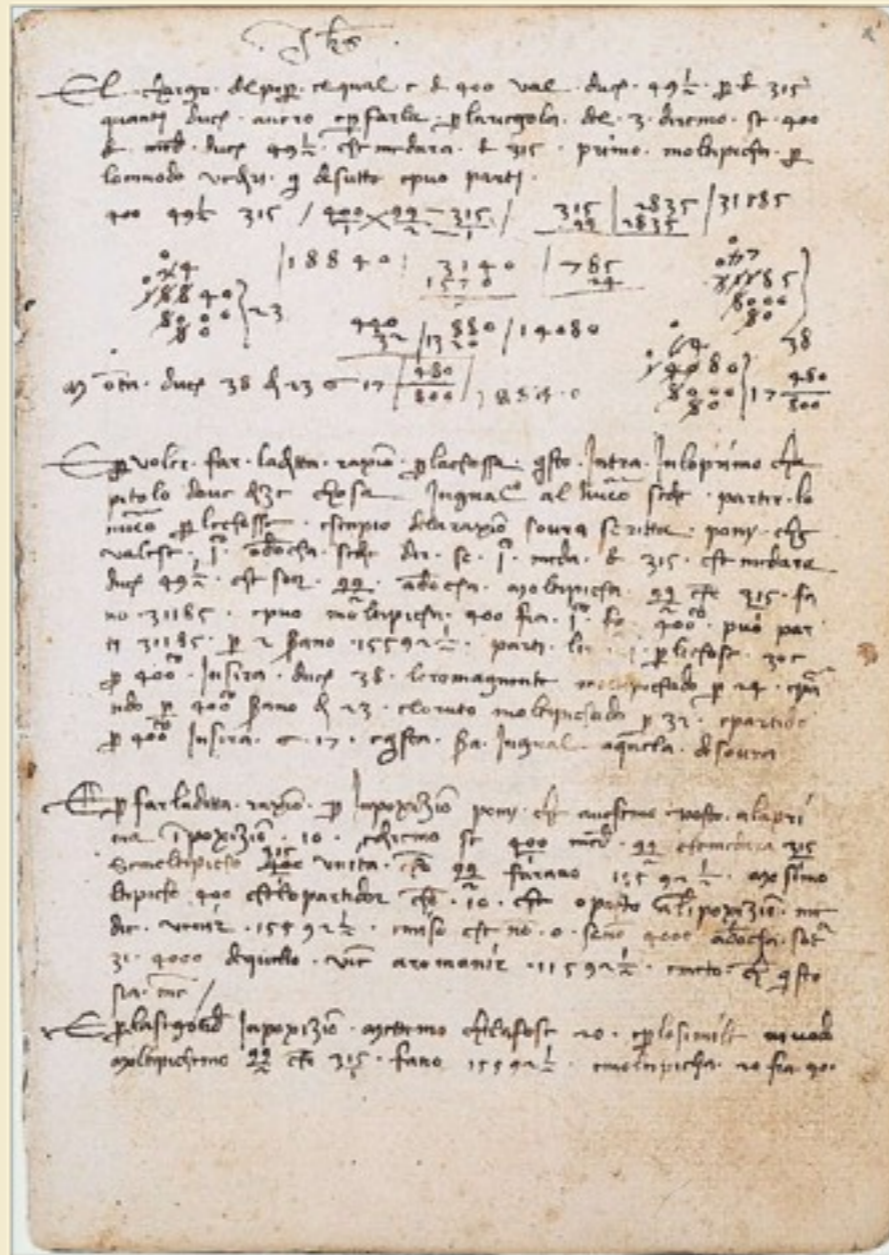
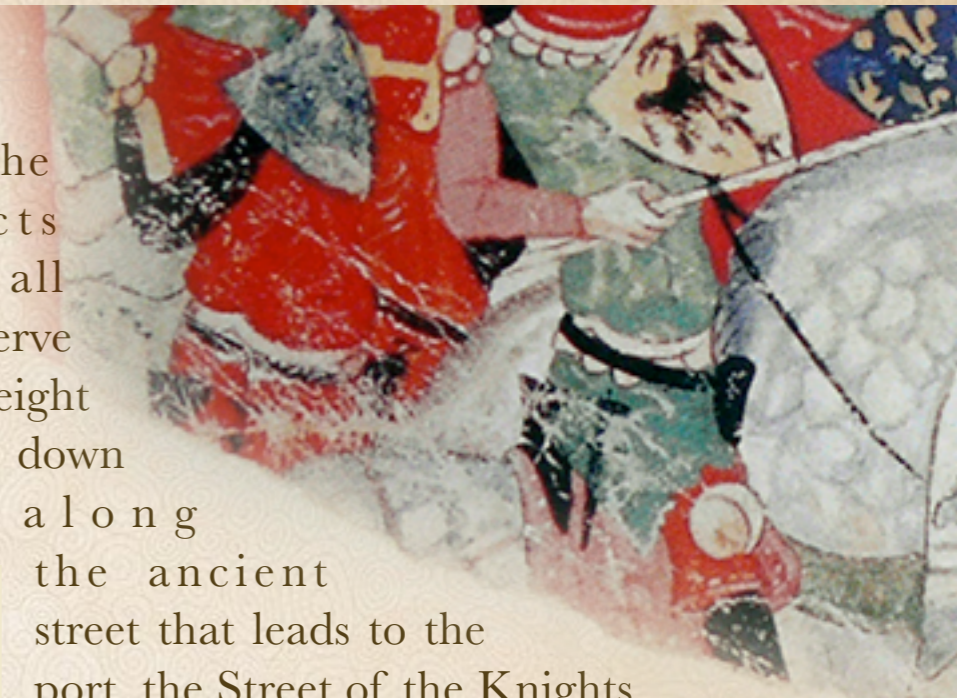
The red thread on the map connects twelve places and their stories like pearls in the necklace, like a journey, that uses fantasy as fuel. Each place becomes a story container and a carrier of narration, able to adjust to our life and shape our common roots. “The UNITED STATED OF EUROPE: Dress Rehearsal: Rhodes 1309-1522” will be the title of our collection of stories.

The red thread is self-consistent with no beginning or end. It is not a road, but a shape: the *shape of our journey*. It doesn't represent the world exactly as it is, but helps us to immerse in the early Renaissance of Europe in Rhodes. Its shape is not in use by ordinary geometry, but is sinuous as the path of memories:

In 1309 Rhodes becomes home to the warrior monks, the Knights

Hospitallers. The Order attracts nobility from all over Europe to serve the cross of the eight stars. They settle down

a long the ancient street that leads to the port, the Street of the Knights, where they build the assembly places for each nationality: the inns of France, Germany, Auvergne, Spain, England, Provence, Italy, and Castile, still intact today. During the rule of the Knights Hospitallers (1309-1522), Rhodes became the European capital of the multinational Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose noble members possessed lands in Western Europe. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, deeply cultured and intellectual people, artists and philosophers have moved to Rhodes inspiring the ideals of the Renaissance, which was already flourishing in Byzantium. Kneaded with western Renaissance elements, this mentality of extroversion has created the '(g)local'



Rhodian style.

The Order is governed by the elected Grand Master, who mints the Order's money. The port of Rhodes regains its international significance and activity. Pepper, the black gold of the Middle Ages, caviar, perfumes, luxury fabrics and carpets, first class olive oil and wines, sugar of excellent quality, soap and slaves were just some of the merchandise handled by the port. Latin, French, Italian and Greek and much more are spoken and written. The Order State is the triumph of a multi-ethnic society that defends a fortified island with a minimum of men and money.

But the social innovation and legacy of the Knights Hospitallers lies in medicine: instead to follow the medieval tradition and prepare the soul to die, they delivered medical care and rehabilitation independently of creed, sex, class and origin. Their ability to care for large numbers of patients with a logistics system, hygiene and disinfection,- worthy of today's standards, the promotion of medical studies and the certification of higher and lower skills in the medical profession, has revolutionized

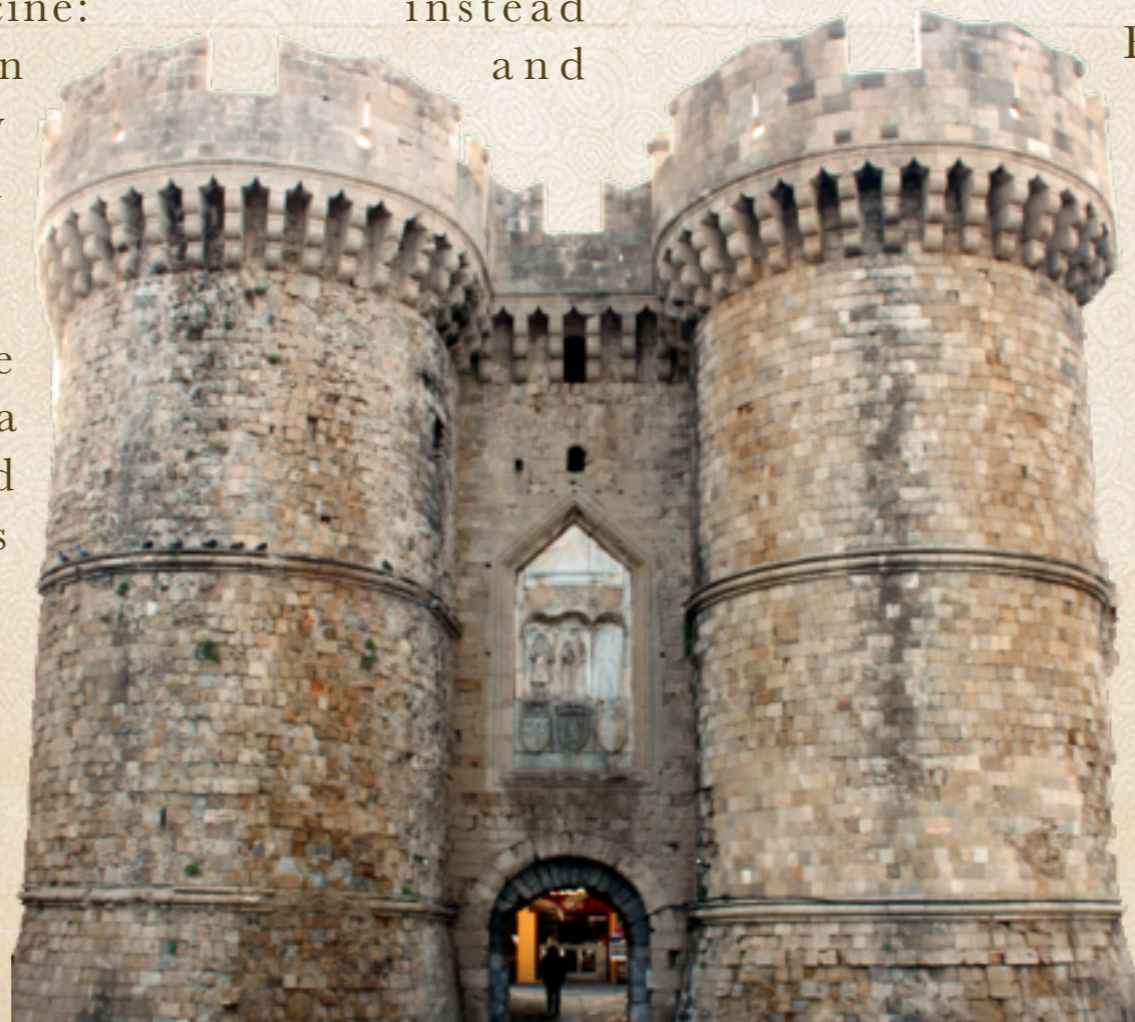
medicine in Europe. The fruits of that commitment are found today in the substantial and effective work they still undertake throughout the world.

Servire infirmis supremum imperium

To serve the sick is the supreme command

The Medieval City of Rhodes is a UNESCO world heritage site and the best preserved, oldest and largest living medieval city in Europe. It is the only European walled town with its landscape maintained intact, 'frozen' in 1522. During World War II Rhodes has been bombarded by the British Airforce and many monuments suffered damages.

Fifteen years of restoration have been celebrated in 2000. Works are still ongoing, the Medieval City is at present being studied, restored, interpreted and visited.



THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

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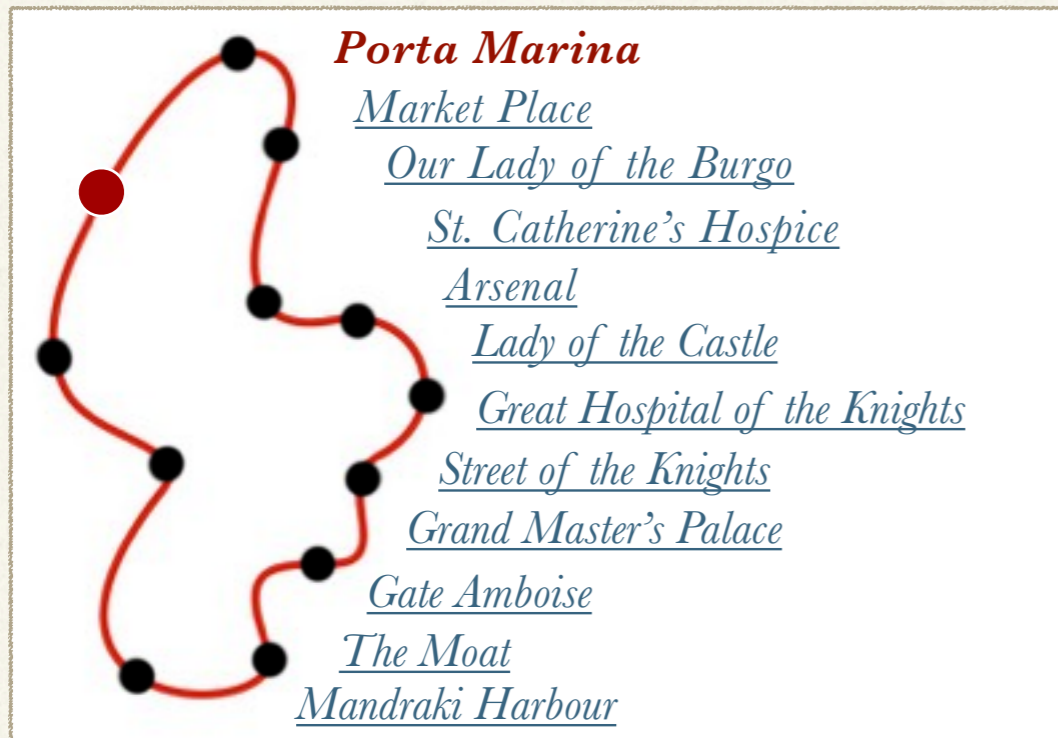
This film has been designed and directed by Aldo Di Russo, pianist Romeo Scaccia. Courtesy of Unicity

Porta Marina

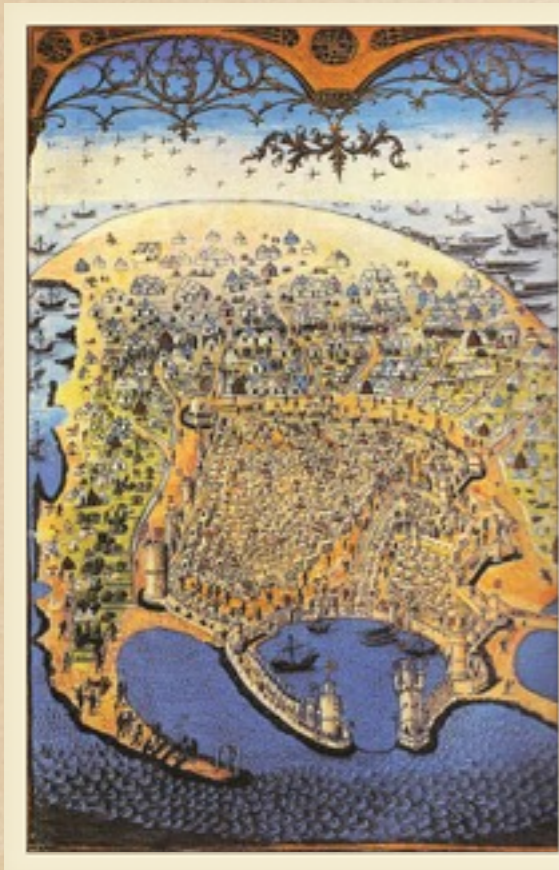
Sailor of Fortune, 1401

Rhodes is the intercontinental port for the luxury trade from Asia to the West. Pepper is one of the expensive commodities traded by the Republic of Venice. *"If 181 kg of pepper is worth 49,5 ducats, what is the value of 142 kg?"* Michael, a Greek sailor from Rhodes concluded that 142 kg of pepper is worth 38 ducats, 23 denari, and 17 piccoli using mathematics!

In 1401, at the age of 16, Michael of Rhodes signed onto a galley as an oarsman in Manfredonia. For three ducats a month he rowed during calms, at port entrances and in battle with an oar eight m long and sixty kg heavy. For six years he lived in abysmal conditions, exposed to weather, backbreaking labor and



Porta Marina is the main gate to the Medieval City. It stands in the middle of the Commercial Port, today the touristic port, called Kolona Harbor. It was built in 1478 by Grand Master Aubusson, as part of the fortification plan against a much feared Ottoman attack. A chain between the Towers of France and Naillac protected the Port. Porta Marina is a work of art, rather than a defensive structure, as the reduced space between waterfront and walls disabled the launch of any attacks there. During World War II British bombings destroyed Porta Marina, which was restored by the Greek State in 1951.



death risks. Michael sailed forty three times in the war and merchant galleys of Venice. He rose in the ranks, from oarsman to armiraiio, the highest rank a non-noble has in Venetian service, with a dozen galleys and many smaller ships under his command. He took part in five major sea battles serving under legendary captains of the fleet like Carlo Zeno, Pietro Loredan and Andrea Mocenigo. He fought the Turks, carried a papal

delegation, navigated the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to Flanders and England. He lost two wives and a son while away at sea.

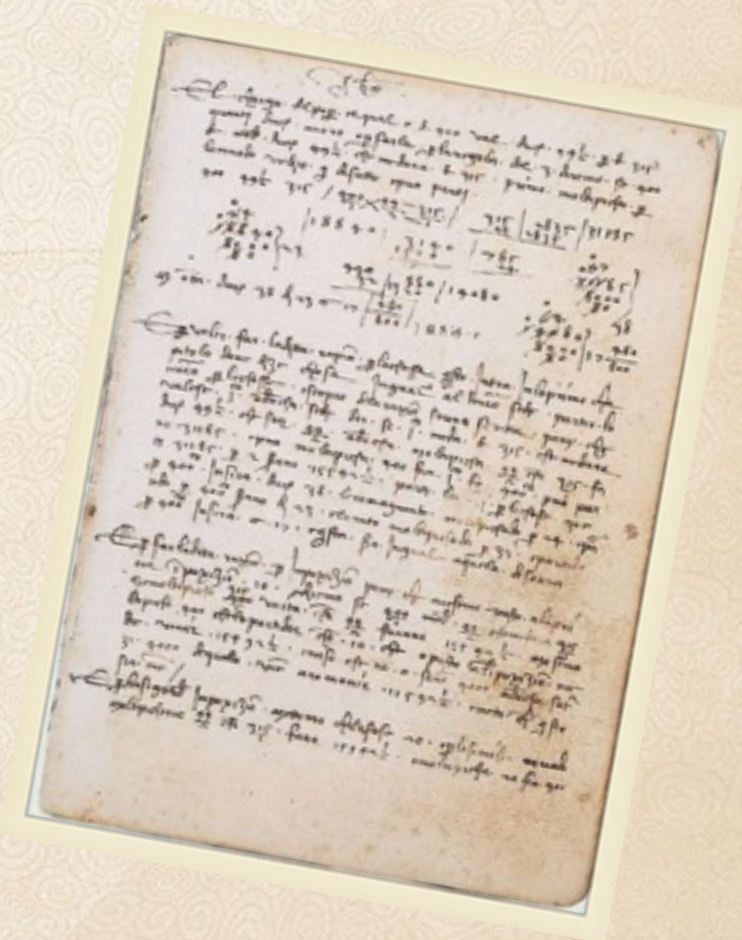
In 1434 Michael wrote the manuscript for which he is remembered: a book about mathematics, navigation and the world's first known treatise on shipbuilding. After his final trip to London in 1443, he never sailed again. On January the 28th 1445, Michael received his pension: one of the eleven available posts of Stadiera, the official weighing station of Venice, but died the same year as a result of his hardships.

His manuscript was lost for four hundred years until it resurfaced in 1966. Michael's manuscript is a book, with individual pages bound between two covers. The handwritten texts are carefully organized subjects. This is an admirable effort considering that in the Middle Ages ordinary people are usually illiterate, let alone the high cost of book production and the labor involved in this case.

Competing with native Venetian mariners, experienced as himself for a high position on long voyages, Michael needed to demonstrate his skills and share the cultural interests of the nobility of his time. The portable book was the proof of concept, that education was his method forward. In his years of grueling labor he must have visited the abacus school in Venice in the winters during breaks between his voyages as oarsman and apprentice. His career is the proof of his determination to learn and study to progress.



Between 1443 and 1445, Michael himself copied part of the text into a second manuscript known as the *Method for Mariners*, -today in the Marciana Library of Venice-, apparently believing that his text would be interesting enough to be sold to investors and merchants. Michael's younger contemporary Pietro di Versi was impressed enough with its contents to appropriate it. He therefore scratched out Michael's name from the manuscript and wrote his own over it. Until 2004 it was thought that di Versi was the author of this text, until scholars looked under di Versi's name with an ultraviolet light and discovered Michael's name on it!



The Dragon Slayer, 1420



In 1332 an enormous creature, living in a morass at the foot of Mount St. Stephen, close to the borgo, devoured in Rhodes sheep and cattle, and young shepherd boys. It is covered with scales impenetrable to arrows and cutting weapons. Several knights tried to slay the creature, and none of them returned. And the pilgrimage to the Chapel of St. Stephen, on the hill above its lair, was especially a service of danger, for pilgrims were believed to be snapped up by the dragon before they could mount the hill. Grand Master Villeneuve forbade all attempts to attack it, as the Order suffered the cost of many knights, who tried to do so.

A young knight though, named Dieudonné de Gozon, was by no means willing to acquiesce in the decree. He went all by himself in quest of the dragon and returned without striking. He has observed its tremendous teeth and the furious strokes of its lengthy tail, but found out that the scales do not protect the beast's belly. He requested leave of absence, and went home for a time to his father's castle of Gozon, in Languedoc. There the young nobleman ordered a model of the dragon to be made. The model's belly was hollow and filled with food to train two fierce dogs to attack it. Mounted on his warhorse, our knight attacked the strange shape without



swerving. As soon as he felt enough trained, he returned secretly to Rhodes to carry out his plan, ordering his two French servants to return home if he were slain.

On the Mount of St. Stephen Dieudonné de Gozon rode down the hillside to haunt the dragon, when his horse started back forcing him to leap to the ground. The dragon has turning upon him, with his undefended belly exposed.

The trained dogs attacked the beasts' belly while de Gozon struck with his sword. The servants found him in his armory lying under the carcass of the dragon, but alive.

Becoming Grand Master right after de Villeneuve, de Gozon was much loved by the people. The dragon's head was on display outside the Porta Marina for the years to come. It was the skull of a large crocodile, which might have been brought over by storms or currents from Africa, and had grown to a more formidable size than usual in solitude among the marshes, while the island was changing owners.



The Market Place

Admiralty

Galley Service, 1333

To defend an island with a minimum of man and money, the Knights of St. John use slave labour to build walls and oblige the local middle class, called the mariners, to serve in the Order's galleys. But life in the galleys is connected to abysmal

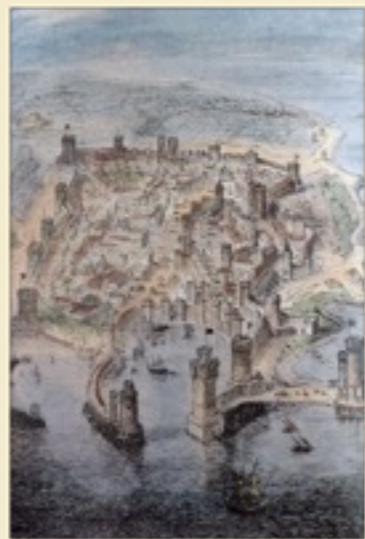


conditions and locals try to escape the duty leaving Rhodes for good. To stop depopulation on the 3rd of August 1333 Grand Master Antoni di Fluvià exempts Rhodian mariners for ten



Around 6.000 people lived in the Medieval City. The Knights inhabited the Collachio, an enclosed space and administrative center. The civil population lived in the lay part of the city with the market, the Borgo. Castellania, the penal court, is located in the Medieval Market. It was built by Grand Master Amboise in 1507. Close by is the Square of Jewish Martyrs and the Kahal Shalom Synagogue. In the north of the Square is located the Greek Bishop's seat, a two storey building erroneously called 'Admiralty' by the Belgian traveler Rottiers in 1825. The Market is the place of compelling stories connecting us with the Europe of the Renaissance.

years from the obligatory galley service. Exempted men offer in return a slave and 25 golden florins, coins of 3.5 grams pure fine gold. Rhodians are often replaced by poor Cypriots who try to make a living rowing in the galleys. The social status of the mariners is inherited to their descendants in direct line, making it difficult for them to rise in the social ranks. All mariners are enrolled in the Fleet's Registry, at the Admiralty, which laid close to the port.



Trustworthy witnesses, 1400

“I am Nikita de Assize, son of Manoli Thomas. My mother Eirini is a Greek from the island of Kos. My ancestors have been Syrians, who participated in the Hospitallers conquest of Rhodes from the Byzantines. Several of my uncles have perished fighting for the Hospitallers at various times and places. I am long and honorably resident in Rhodes and my family and all my lineage were exempted from the service on board of the Hospitaller galleys to which native Greeks of Rhodes are conscripted. I proved my exempt status with trustworthy witnesses, Latin and Greek, who duly summoned to give testimony, and on the basis of their depositions, I was exempt from the



obligation of galley service on the 17th of September 1400”.

The Replacement, 1422

“In December 1422, I, Antoni di Fluvià, Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John in Rhodes, have declared George Beltrami, a servant of the Order, his wife Arfaradena and his three daughters and their descendants exempt from the galley service, as three replacements have been found for them. One was a Rhodian named Bartolomew and the other two were the Cypriots Thomas of Famagusta and his wife Maria, all of whom Beltrami has presented to me, to fulfill the obligation of the galley service in the place of Beltrami and his family. I have specified that the descendants of the three replacements would likewise be reliable to perform the service.

In November 1427 I have freed from the galley service, John, the son of the vintner George Zalapi as well as the children born to John and his wife. In their place John has presented the Cypriots John Trigonari of Famagusta, and his wife Xene Aracliane, who would henceforth be liable for the galley service along with those descendants born to them from that time onwards. However, those children of theirs born prior to the date of which, they undertook to perform the service, namely Theodore, Peter, Orphane and Eirene, were wholly exempt from the galley service. Nonetheless, I have

specified, that Theodore would substitute John Trigonari, if the latter took into his head to flee from Rhodes and not to return here and his children would also be obliged to perform the service. John Trigonari and his family were personally summoned into my presence and the presence of other high officers of the Order, including the marshal, the admiral and the preceptor of Naples, and agreed there without any coercion or deception having taken place, to replace George Zalapi and his dependents as regarding performing the galley service.”

Debt recovery, 1439

“Rhodes is an international port of call, and it needs merchants and mariners for its further flourishing. In September 1439, I, Jean de Lastic Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John in Rhodes, have addressed an appeal in writing to various officers and governors of islands in the Aegean Sea, and particular to the Venetian governor of the island of Crete, Andrea Corner, asking them to assist the Cypriot merchant Stefano di Nicosia, when he came to visit the islands for the purposes of recovering debts owed to him. The merchant in question maintained a depot in the city of Rhodes having been established there for some time selling textiles and other merchandise. On occasion he sold such goods on credit and consequentially there were various persons in a number of places owing him sums of money. He was clearly having difficulties in recovering his debts for he

had written to me imploring my assistance. I hold Stefano in high regard, and wrote to the various officers in the islands, where Stephen’s creditors reside, telling them that this Cypriot merchant had led a reputable existence in the city of Rhodes as a buyer and seller of clothes and other goods and asking them to assist him in recovering his debts.”



More money, 1440

“On the 22nd of April 1440 I, Jean de Lastic Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John in Rhodes, issued a certificate of citizenship to the Syrian Antonio Masota, declaring him to be a Rhodian citizen and recommending him to all and in particular to navigators, so that they might receive him and his goods kindly. As Masota is a merchant and by profession he is regularly travelling back and forth from Rhodes, why not to support him? The more profit he makes, the better for Rhodes.

The merchant Prospero Suriano, requested my assistance, explaining that although he had rendered thorough and effective services and large amounts of money to various merchants he had suffered damages on account of the perils of the sea and had difficulty in paying off his creditors. I was moved by his rightful request. I have conferred a grace period of one year upon him, during which his fixed and movable goods were protected from his creditors demands, so as to enable him to restore his finances, and this protection was made known in writing to all brothers and officers of the Order, secular, officials and creditors.”



Lingua franca, 1450

“Rhodes needs merchants and mariners to flourish. That is why on the 12th of April 1450, I, Marco Salvatore have turned to his Eminence, the Grand Master Jean de Lastic, to write on my behalf a request for safe conduct. Indeed his Eminence has granted my request. He asked those setting eye on the letter with special reference for captains and patrons of the galleys to welcome me and protect me from any harm. He stated that I travel on regular basis between Rhodes, Syria and Egypt with a number of boats and a variety of merchandise on his account. He explained that I am not a Rhodian citizen, but a native of Syria, however he asked those coming into contact with me to treat me as if I were his subject and servant because I have always served the Order faithfully and well. His Eminence concludes his letter by stating that the Order will consider itself obliged to all those assisting me in my affairs. He wrote in Italian, the common mariner language in the Mediterranean, to make sure that his request was comprehensive to the mariners who set eyes on it.

Admiral in love, 1451

“I am Fantino Qurini, Admiral of the Order of St. John in Rhodes. Let me tell you that it is us who transformed Rhodes to a maritime power again. It is us who succeeded to defend Christianity against the Muslims. We use the slaves and all the captives we made in the naval battles to build the walls and have obliged the locals to serve in the Order’s galleys. This is how we defend the Christian commerce.

Still there is a lack of men. We recruited paid work from the local Rhodian population, the class of mariners, the oarsmen, or from poor Cypriots, who wished to make a living in our galleys. It is the Admiral’s duty to get the crews aboard. His secretary must register the oarsmen in the Book of Service and keep the Book updated. All mariners are enrolled in the Fleet’s Registry, at the Admiralty close to the port. I will be very clear about it: The social status of the mariners is inherited to their descendants in direct line. We need to keep this class populous and be ready for war at anytime; otherwise the Muslims will seize the opportunity to expand in Christian lands.

Now, on the 31st of March 1451 I have received an weird order from Grand Master Jean de Lastic, which I had to obey at once: Bernardo de Vilamari has intervened to the Grand Master to exempt Magdalena, daughter of Antonina Macheda, from the class of the mariners. The exemption applies to all her male and female descendants in direct line. I was officially notified immediately not to disturb Magdalena. What can I say of this foolish decision! Vilamari

is the Admiral of the Fleet of King Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bisceglie, Prince of Salerno and husband of Lucrezia Borgia. Magdalena is a mariner, a little more than a slave...”



The Relocation, 1453

I am the doctor George Suriano from Cairo. As my surname indicates I am of Syrian origin. To my knowledge there are residents of Rhodes with the surname Suriano, such as Prospero and his brothers Angelo and Benedetto, who are merchants trading regularly with Egypt and Syria. We are known as White Venetians, meaning the people originating from the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere who are Venetians subjects, and enjoy Venetian protection and certain economic and legal advantages. In May 1453 the Grand Master of Rhodes, Jean de Lastic, addressed a written appeal to Bernardo Villamari, the Admiral of the fleet of King Alfonso of Aragon, in particular and to the captains or patrons of galleys and other ships in general. In his letter, his Eminence, has requested the recipients to assist

me, and refrain from harming me, so that I could implement his wish to come and settle in Rhodes, with my family and become a subject to the Hospitallers. The Grand Master makes reference to the slaves, textiles and other goods I am bringing with me, and asks those setting eyes on his letter to treat me and my dependents as though we were already subjects of the Order.



In May 1453 the horrible sacking of Constantinople by the Ottoman Sultan, made me think of the future and the future of my family. We decided to become Rhodian citizens and enjoy the protection of the Order, as we are Christians. Indeed his Eminence had Rhodian citizenship bestowed on me thereby granting me burgess status along with the privileges and immunities attendant on this and placing me, my family and my goods under the protection of the Order. For this part I had first taken an oath to serve the Order, its officers and their successors in whatever part of the world I might happen to be in and to inform the Order and his officers should I happen to discover any overt or covert plots being hatched against them.”

Shortage of Grain, 1453

“When Rhodes was undergoing a grain shortage, I, Angelo and my brother Benedetto, residents but not citizens of Rhodes, were journeying as factors of the Order to procure supplies of grain. Fearing an attack from the Ottoman Turks, who sacked Constantinople this May, Grand Master de Lastic issued in October a written appeal to all captains and patrons of galleys and other sailing ships requesting them to afford assistance and refrain from harming us in the course of a journey we were about to undertake, along with their goods and textiles, to Damietta in Egypt and other destinations for the purpose of obtaining victuals, goods and other things necessary for human support, which we would bring back with us to Rhodes.”

Letter to the Council of Ten, 1504

The governor of Cyprus writes in February 1504 to the Council of Ten in Venice, that Cypriot serfs escaping from the island settle in Rhodes and in other places, where they marry free women and have children by them. Their return to Cyprus could no longer be expected, but some were prepared to pay sums in Venetian ducats so as to ensure their legal as practical emancipation from servitude, so that they would be able to come and go freely from Rhodes to Cyprus and trade commodities there.





This film is part of "Il Pane Le Ali e la Spada" directed by Aldo Di Russo. Courtesy of Unicity

Castellania

The dowry, 1347



“My mother, Margarita de Negreonte, owns a windmill, located on a hill in the main town of Rhodes. A bathhouse is adjoining it. This property is bounded on three sides by public thoroughfares and on the fourth side by some

hospices including one belonging to a certain George of Cyprus. Thankfully in November his Excellence, our Grand Master in Rhodes Dieudonné de Gozon, has allowed my mother to grant me the windmill, so that I can get married.”

The Great Privilege, 1356

“My name is Jaques Aussais and I am a merchant from Montpellier. I am trading in Rhodian soap, which is of excellent quality and therefore in great demand. I am also active as a banker. My family came to Rhodes after the failure of the Florentine banks in 1340. In July 1356 we, the Narbonnese traders, were granted a privilege in Rhodes: they may choose a consul to judge mercantile and maritime disputes among ourselves. The consul has jurisdiction over us, except those born in the East to Narbonnese fathers by female slaves or by women who belong to the class of mariners, those who must serve as rowers in the Order’s galleys. The consul can put any Narbonnese in prison, just



by notifying the Castellan of Rhodes. The cases brought by others against us are first heard by the consul. The plaintiff has however the right to appeal to the Merchant Court, the *Commerchium*. If we need to sue any non-Narbonnese, then our case goes also to the *Commerchium*.

We enjoy great trade privileges in Rhodes. We may import and export wine, oil, salted meat and grain without

paying taxes. We pay taxes only for the famous Rhodian soap and for slaves who are not domestic. In general we follow the law. We register in the Merchant Court all the sales and purchases, the same way as Rhodian traders do. We have built our loggia in the Borgo, which is free of taxes and other obligations, but we must pay for the upkeep of the harbour. That is correct, if you ask me. Rhodes is giving us the chance to live well and we must defend Rhodes to keep it flourishing.”

Practical minds, 1440

“In 1440, I, Jean de Lastic, Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John in Rhodes, have granted a request submitted to me by jugde Rocundo for remission of an annual payment of five florins owed to the Order for one of his properties located in the citadel of Rhodes. This property consisting of vines, houses, a garden, and other land, had been brought near to ruin on account of the excessive payments exacted from it, which other than the sum paid annually to the Order, included additionally twelve florins annually to the Augustinian convent in Rhodes and additionally six to the church of St. George of the Syrians. Both these foundations have likewise remitted a portion of the payments normally due to them in order to restore the property’s finances. I decided to do the same, not only as to ameliorate the property, but also in view of the judge’s services to our Order.”



Crime of Passion, 1442

“On the 22nd of May 1442, I, Jean de Lastic, Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John in Rhodes, acquitted Michael Turquomano from Rhodes, who killed his wife, because she provoked many scandals. Testimony has proved that Michael was a good citizen and has not premeditated the murder.”

Clemency, 1433

“Our judges in Rhodes, both at the Ordinary Court and the Court of the Appeals serve only for two years. In this way it is avoided to misuse their powers. They can be of Catholic or Orthodox faith, or Knights, but they must have earned their degrees in Europe. Otherwise they cannot become judges. Some take even an annual leave to pursue further legal education in Europe. Some of their past cases have been discussed for generations in Rhodes.

As you know, murder is a crime that leads to the death penalty, especially if not committed for reasons of self-defence. On the 20th of October 1433 our Grand Master Fluvià has acquitted the caulker George Kokkinos, who has mortally wounded the Rhodian citizen Cosmas Crussochiris in a fight. I, Ludovico de Galbis, draper of the Order, the nobleman de Conpyes



and Knight de Gouffry have testified that the act was not pre-meditated and the defendant is set free.”



For profit, 1449

“Justice is not only for the poor. The story of Fantino Quirini, the Venetian Admiral of the Order, who has his own shipyard and rents the ships for commercial profit is known all over Rhodes. Quirini, as any true Venetian, has traded with the enemy for profit. He buys soap, sugar and pepper from pirates, who have seized the goods from Rhodian ships! On the 1st of February 1449 the Admiral denied food supplies to the Knights in Petroumi, the only bastion of the Christian world in Asia Minor. Grand Master de Lastic has lost his patience. He sent me, John de Villalba, Castellan of Amposta, to Kos to find out, if Quirini has obeyed his order to supply Petroumi.”



The oldest profession, 1456

On the 3rd of March 1456 Grand Master Jacques de Milly and the Knights' Assembly decide: *prostitutes should be confined to one quarter and be prohibited from living elsewhere*. 22 years later the situation is not very much enhanced. It seems that commerce and the port are supporting the “oldest profession”. Citizens request once again Grand Master d’

Aubusson in 1478 to restrict the “working girls” and forbid them to live in houses adjoining to those of virtuous women. But, where a prostitute owned her own house, anyone wishing to evict her, had to buy the house from her.



The Blow, 1490

To avoid a blow, the Greek Rhodian Anthony Mavros, held the hand of the Castellan of Trianda. The poor man found himself in no time attached to a wooden framework erected on a post, with holes for securing the head and hands, exposed to public mockery. He received one hundred lashes by the bullwhip, was sent to jail for two months and then he was degraded to the class of metics, just a step above the slave...

The Penal Court, 1507

“I am Nikolaos Roditis, Rhodian by birth. I have spent a year in Venice trading in pepper, and this business has kept my out of Rhodes. I returned in 1507 to find out that Grand Master Emery d’ Amboise has built Castellania, the Penal Court of the Knights, right in the heart of the market. His arms are on the walls as the habit requires. On the ground floor the warehouses and the gallery with cross-vaults call the merchants from all over the world to establish in there. I It seems a great opportunity to rent a shop so close to the port and expand my business selling the famous Rhodian soap to Italy and France.

My eye follows the broad staircase that leads to the first floor and the terrace that overlooks the market place. On the south face there are three water-spouts shaped as crocodiles. Well, I can clearly say that these are almost identical to those at the Inn of France. Actually there is a strong similarity

between the Court and the Inn of France in the Street of the Knights. I think that Grand Master Amboise built both buildings using the same Rhodian stone dressers.”





This film is part of “Il Pane Le Ali e la Spada directed by Aldo Di Russo. Courtesy of Unicity

Jewish Quarter



“The Rhodian Jews Jewish community was part of Rhodes already in the antiquity. In 653 the Arabs ordered the destruction of the remains of the Colossus of Rhodes. It was sold to a Jewish merchant from Edessa who carried away ninety camel loads of bronze. Benjamin of Tudela, the 12th-century

traveler, found some 400 Jews in the city of Rhodes. Fleeing the Aragonese territory during the persecutions in 1280, some Jews went to Rhodes. In the Hospitaller era (1309–1522), the Jewish quarter was next to the city wall near the port. After 1478, expelled by the Spanish Inquisition, again some Jews come to Rhodes.

22 Families, 1482

The Jews fought valiantly in defense of the city during the siege of Rhodes by the Ottomans in 1480. Their houses were torn down to reinforce the wall as the fighting reached the synagogue before the Ottoman troops were forced to retreat. The Grand Master of the Order, Pierre d' Aubusson, erected two churches on the site to commemorate the event and thus the synagogue had to be abandoned. In recognition of their bravery, the Jews were later allowed to rebuild it. Meshullam of Volterra and Badiah Bertinoro have visited Rhodes in 1481 and 1488, respectively, the others have left after the 1481/82 earthquakes which again destroyed the Jewish quarter. Only 22 Jewish families were left in Rhodes living in poverty, mainly on its womenfolk's earnings, which are very skilled in making silk clothes and some men worked in tanning. After the plague (1498–1500), and under the pretext that Jews are corrupting the morals of the young, the decree of the 9th of January 1502 issued by Grand Master Aubusson ordered all adult Jews to baptize, or to leave with their belongings for Nice, in order not to settle in Ottoman territory. Grand Master Aubusson died in 1503 and the decree was not fully enforced. Nevertheless the Jews of Cos were exiled to Nice. In the next 20 years about three thousand Jews captured by the Order's ships, were brought to Rhodes, to work as slaves on fortifications. In 1511 Simeon Granada forms a battalion of two hundred and fifty Jews that display great valor in the Italian bastion. It was Rachel, his wife, who discovered the treason of the Order's Chancellor Amaral to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman.

153 Survivors, 1944

In July the 10th 1944, the German occupation forces arrested and sent and send 1673 Rhodian Jews to concentration camps. Only 153 persons survive. To honour the memory of Rhodian Jews, the central part of the Medieval Town is named to SQUARE OF THE JEWISH MARTYRS.

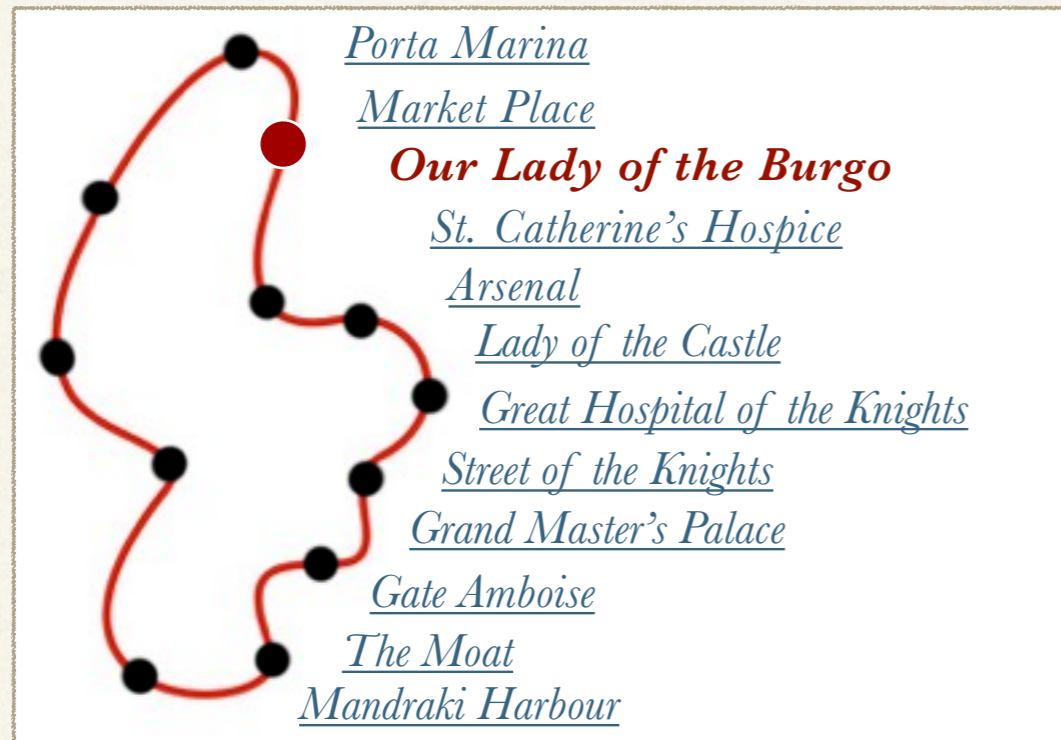


Lady of the Burgo

The Treasure of the Virgin, 1522

In 1996 an excavation of the largest Latin Church in the Medieval Town in 1996 revealed a chapel with over 30 skeletons in a mass grave. The hurried nature of the burying is evident from the position of the skeletons, just piled one over the other. The siege of 1522 explains the disturbed conditions responsible for the mass burial. A purse with 500 silver coins was found on

the waist of one of the skeletons. To be buried in the largest Latin church of Rhodes, the deceased must have been a Roman Catholic. In his purse were 5 European coins of great value from



Built by Grand Master de Villeneuve (1319-1346), the largest Latin Church, *Our Lady of the Burgo*, is located in the lay part of the Medieval City, close to the port. This Gothic cathedral was destroyed by the Ottoman cannons during the siege of Rhodes in 1552. Traveler accounts in 1828 describe that the church was in ruins and houses were built upon them. Under the Italian rule the housing was pulled down in 1930. After the World War II, in 1955, Alhadeff Street and the port have split the church to connect. The monument parts reunited only 40 years later and today a EUROPA NOSTRA prize crowns the restoration.

Milan, Venice and Rhodes minted between 1476 and 1521. The Ottoman coins in the purse, 464 exactly, cover the reign periods of Sultan Selim I and Sultan Suleiman.

But what does the purse content reveal? The coins indicate that the purse owner arrived in Rhodes from the Ottoman territory in 1522 or was this not so? Most of the Ottoman coins then were minted in Novar in Serbia and in Constantinople. Could it be that these coins were given to him by others, like merchants? But where was the owner from? And who was he? A merchant who had strong links to Europe or a double agent? Either merchant or spy, he must have left the Ottoman dominions in a great hurry knowing that Suleiman was planning to attack Rhodes. If he were a merchant, why did he not ship directly to Europe? If he were on a spy on a mission, he must have been ordered to arrive in Rhodes, before the siege began. Or was he a Rhodian citizen worrying for his family? May be an Italian banker at the service of de Medici? Or was he a Catalan captain?

Indeed many spies were active before and during the siege of 1522. A spy with a long record in Ottoman service was I. Battista, a doctor of Jewish origin, who worked in the Great Hospital and who denied his own faith. Battista was already in the service of Sultan Selim the Hard, the father of Sultan Suleiman, who sent his spy to live in

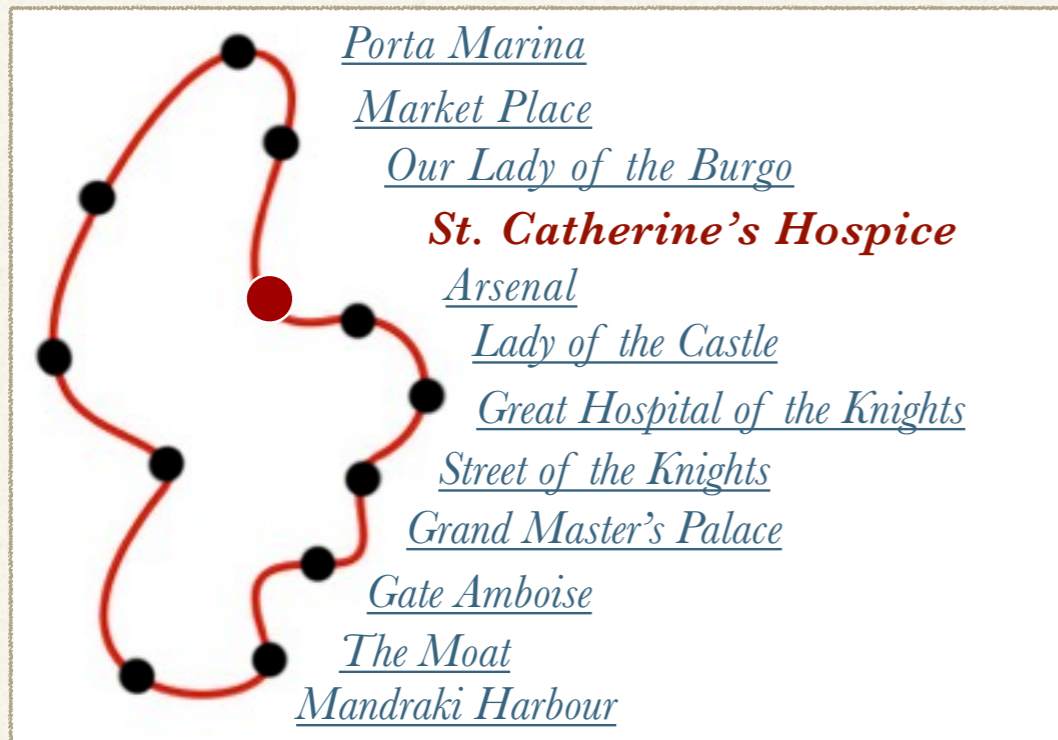


Rhodes. Suleiman found in his father's will the advice that the only way to ensure his possessions in Europe was to conquer Belgrade and Rhodes, otherwise the Christians would bring the war right in the heart of his Empire. Battista was a very capable doctor, willing to help the patients with successful treatments. In this way he infiltrated the upper level of the Knights gaining the trust of the higher officials and he passed on to the Ottomans important information on the weak points of the defence and details on war preparations. He sent all the information to a Greek in Chios, who passed them over to Constantinople. In 1521 Battista managed to inform Sultan Suleiman on daily basis on all matters of military importance. It was Battista, who sent the message that the Bastion of Auvergne was being repaired and that if the Ottoman fleet arrived unexpected, Rhodes would be taken by surprise. During the siege, on July the 28th, Battista has informed Suleiman that he had to destroy the bell tower of Saint John of the Hospital, as this was built on the highest spot of the city and was thus used as an observatory to follow the movements of the Sultan's troops. The message reached Suleiman, who ordered the bell tower to be destroyed immediately. However on September 22, a patrol caught the Battista at the bastion of Auvergne throwing arrows with messages to the Ottoman camp informing on all the problems the defenders were facing. During the questioning Battista admitted being a spy for a long time. He

was condemned to death, his body was quartered as it fits the traitors. Ending miserably like that, it is obvious that Battista cannot possibly have been the one who was buried in the church. We don't know yet who this mysterious man was. And if he has been an Ottoman informant, or just a victim of fate.



St. Catherine's Hospice



The Hospice of St Catherine was built in 1391-92 by the Italian Domenico d' Allemagna, admiral of the Order of the Knights of St. John. The Hospice was exclusively intended for prominent guests and pilgrims from the Holy Lands. It was destroyed in the siege of 1480 and the earthquake of 1481. It was rebuilt in 1516 by the Italian Costanzo Operti, also admiral of the Order of the Knights of St. John. Today the building is fully restored and was awarded by EUROPA NOSTRA for the exceptional restoration work.

“I, Pierrino from Vicenza, arrived at the port of Rhodes in the service of my Master Roberto della Rovere in the spring of the holy year 1468. Bathed in the sun the commercial port was full of merchant ships from Italy, Spain, Aragon, Sicily, Syria and Egypt and vessels of the Ottoman Sultan. Only after the captain pays the ‘chain tax’ the harbor chain comes down and the ship is let in the port. The merchants are upset to pay two per cent on all important goods, but they have no choice. As for me, I am not surprised. The Knights of St. John are trading in the Mediterranean between Cyprus and Portugal. Their port handles pepper, caviar, perfumes, fabrics,



carpets, olive oil, wines, sugar, soap and slaves to name just a few of the merchandise. A Greek sailor at the port told me, that the tax idea comes from his Eminence, Fra Pedro Raymondo Zacosta, the Grand Master of the Hospitallers in Rhodes. But he confined to me the reason: “His Eminence is collecting this money for the island’s defenses. We should not forget that the Ottoman Sultan sacked Constantinople only some years ago”, he said with great sadness. And he added with a shadow in his eyes: “Our turn will come soon”. I started to feel the cold hand of fear grasping my heart, but fortunately the sound of the windmills in the harbour distracted me. I counted sixteen windmills that must be grinding day and night! This island is the triumph of commerce, I can tell.

We set for our hospice, *Santa Caterina*, three steps away from the port. It is easy to find the building. It is big and attracts the attention of the eye looking into the market street. The wheel of torment of *Santa Caterina* is walled above the entrance door. I am happy to see all these shops at the ground floor, so I can get anything the Master wishes for without walking long distances.

My master Roberto della Rovere is joining here noble pilgrims returning from Holy Jerusalem. An hour ago we received an invitation from his Eminence, the Grand Master. We shall meet at the mass in the Church of Our Lady of the



Burgo, very close to *Santa Caterina*. From there we shall go to the Inn of the Spanish Brothers, to eat and discuss the news.

I have settled in the ground floor, to keep close to the storage rooms and the well and buy provisions in the five shops that *Santa Caterina* has. I use the large staircase to climb to the upper floor, where the noble men reside. Heavenly scents arise from the big kitchen that is up there. The Master’s room has a painted ceiling, a large fireplace and a luxurious bed. His window is overlooking the lovely garden and the commercial port. All around *Santa Caterina* are beautiful gardens and rich houses.

A shopkeeper at the ground floor told me that it was the Admiral of the Fleet, Fra Domenico Allemagna, who built *Santa Caterina* in 1392. “The Admiral, bless his soul, was very rich and was in charge of military matters. He left windmills and other properties for the upkeep of the noble hospice and brought important relics from Constantinople to embellish the chapel. *Santa Caterina* was built for the eminent guests of the Order, like your Master”, he told me. I run to my Master to inform him on everything the shopkeeper has confined to me. He smiled and said: Very long ago, one of my compatriots, Master Niccolo Martoni, saw the Hospice in 1394. Indeed he told the truth, when he described *Santa Caterina* as “beautiful

and splendid, with many handsome rooms containing many and good beds".

A young Spanish Knight has just brought an invitation for my Master to meet with his Eminence, the Grand Master. Master Roberto is very honoured and sent me right away to buy new silk clothes for the occasion. The cook in *Santa Caterina* told me that Jewish women sell their handicrafts close by. They are very skilled in making silk clothes and I have four ducats to buy from them.

But I should not forget our horses' needs. I crossed the main street towards the Arsenal, looking for a good blacksmith near the Naval Dockyard. I heard merchants speaking the French and the Spanish tongue. I also saw knights heading for the Arsenal Gate, they seemed German and English to me, tall and blond as they were. No layman is allowed to enter neither the Arsenal, nor the Collachium, where the Knights live in a second fortification within the walls. But I am lucky, because Master Roberto will take me with him to visit his Eminence at the Inn of the Spanish Knights. I, Gandolpho from Vicenza, son

of a peasant, will enter as the servant of Roberto della Rovere the impregnable city.

After the mass, my Master went to rest and I crossed the street towards the market to buy Rhodian sugar and soap, the best in the word. I carry twelve ducats with me and a knife as I know that some people look pious and virtuous but are not. The merchant is Greek and asked for ten ducats a quintal. I deposited the sum and took the receipt. Everything is well organized under the eye of law in this island.

Crossing the market I saw from a distance slaves and stone workers working at the military harbour. It seems that Rhodian skilled masters are in charge to build the walls and strengthen the towers working day and night, I can tell by the language, which is a new sound for me. The Order guards walls and towers, no spy shall enter Rhodes. I asked the soap vendor how things stand with Sultan Mehmet after the fall of Constantinople. He whispered

that "the illustrious Grand Master called Jean de Bourbon, who fought the English with King Charles and Bertrand de Clouet, Grand Prior of France, to come to Rhodes.



Commander Aubusson is rebuilding the walls, God bless his soul, who knows what the future brings.”

The Earthquake, 1481

On 23rd of May 1480 an Ottoman fleet of 160 ships appeared before the city, along with an army of about 70,000 men. For the next three months a bloody and violent siege ensued, with large casualties on both sides. After three unsuccessful attempts against Rhodes the Turks withdrew on

the 17th of August 1480 leaving about 9.000 dead and 15.000 wounded. Fortifications and buildings are demolished. The villages are raided and the population brought into slavery. Trees, fields, land are all burnt. Locals, or whatever is left of them, are starving. In the following year a series of earthquakes ruined whatever the Ottoman artillery weapons left half standing after the siege. The earthquake 1481 in Rhodes, which caused an approximate 30.000 casualties and half of the city left in ruins,

is described by an eyewitness: Guillaume de Caoursin, Knight of St. John and Vice-Chancellor of Grand Master Pierre d' Aubusson.

“On the 17th of March 1481 the first strike takes place at three o'clock in the afternoon. On May the 3rd of May 1481



a strong quake follows a large tidal wave around 9 o' clock in the morning. Various buildings are flooded. A commercial ship anchored in the harbor is sunken.. On the 17th of December 1481 awakened by the tremor at midnights, some people run to churches to pray, some seek refuge in open spaces, some in the vaults under their houses.

On the 18th of December 1481 a stronger tremor occurs at 4 o' clock in the morning and a much stronger follows at 6 o'clock. The Grand Master's Palace, and three harbor towers are destroyed. Churches and houses are leveled to the ground. Many people are killed. A final tremor in the afternoon brought wind and rain. People removed their belongings to wooden shacks. The damage caused by the sea waves was greater by that of the earthquake. The sea waves caused a large ship break free from its moor and another ship to sink with its crew on board after running onto a reef ”.

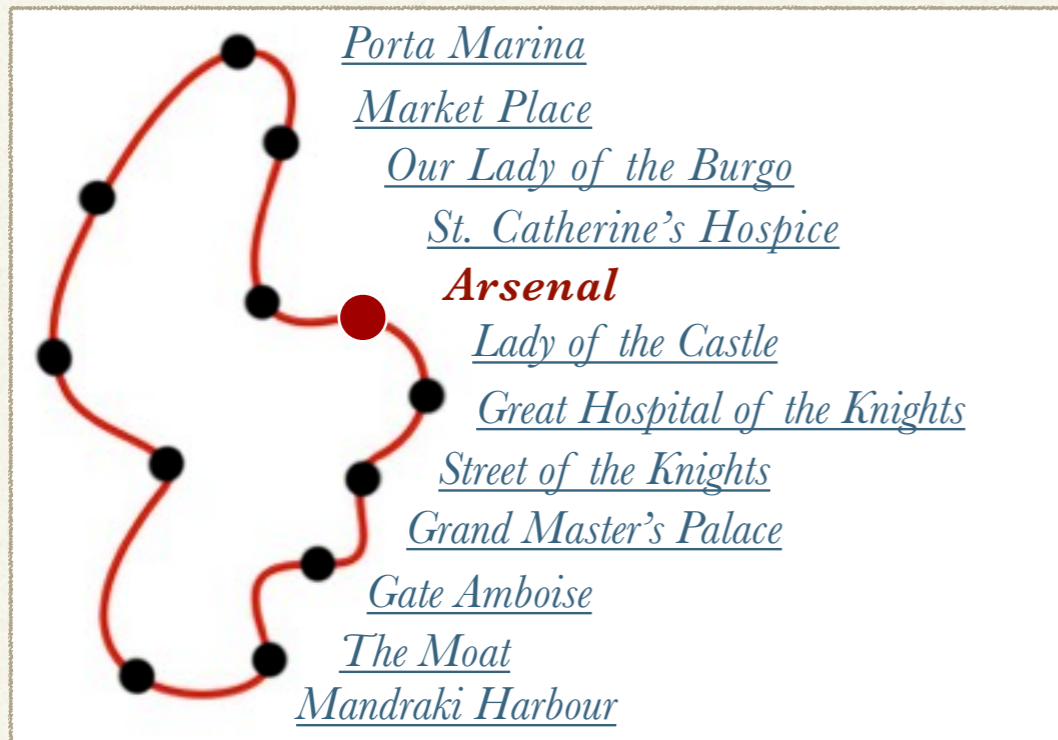
The damage caused by the earthquake led to a wave of rebuilding: all the houses in the burgo, all the buildings along the High Street, which crosses the town from the Gate of St. George to the Gate of St. Catherine and all the public buildings in the Collachium, the administrative center of the Knights, were literally rebuilt. Rhodes becomes the port of call for maritime trade journeys to Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor, and an important city for the major trading houses in the West, that installed therein. It attracts Venetians merchants and establishes consulates and bank houses. In 1483, foreign trade reached such a volume, that J. Gaetani

comes to Rhodes to request more commercial facilities for his Florentine compatriots.

Arsenal of the Knights

Supreme Command, 1364

Slavery all throughout the ancient and medieval world, including the Renaissance was standard practice worldwide. But slavery in the Muslim world was not race but religious slavery. Slaves are infidels and deserve any cruel punishment their masters can think of. At least 80% of those captured by Muslim slave traders die before reaching the slave markets. Slaves are so



The Arsenal Gate, the Armory and the Gunpowder Magazine, attached to the First Hospital, defined the Arsenal area, close to the shipyard. The Armory is a functional storehouse to serve the military needs of the Order. One of the oldest buildings of the Knights in Rhodes, it is built by Grand Master de Milly (1454-1461) and rebuilt by Grand Master degli Orsini (1467-1476) to better withstand siege warfare after the advent of gunpowder. Across the street is the First Hospital, built by Grand Master de Pins (1355-1365). Replaced in 1489 by the Great Hospital, the First Hospital was then used as the Arsenal of the Knights.



plentiful and inexpensive that owners work them to death and buy replacements. Slaves destined for the Muslim Middle East and Africa were for

labor, sexual exploitation and military service. Young African boys are used to create eunuchs, where only one of ten survives the mutilation. Children born to female slaves are killed at birth. Slaves are infidels and deserve any cruel punishment their masters can think of. At least 80% of those captured by Muslim slave traders die before reaching the slave markets. Slaves are so plentiful and inexpensive that owners work them to death and buy replacements.

The Knights Hospitallers retain the charitable and medical function that root in their rule until today: servicing the sick independently of race, creed and origin is the supreme command. With an enriched medical knowledge after 200 years in the Holy Land, the Hospitallers offer high quality medical services in times where human rights are unknown.

Instead of merely preparing the soul to



die, the First Hospital of the Knights in Rhodes cures and restores the sick. It receives both sexes independently of creed, origin or class and cares for the needy and poor. During the earthquake of 1364 and the plague that followed Grand Master Roger de Pins offers his own fortune to assist the local population.. He earns the name “The Charitable”.

Raids and Piracy, 1530-1780

Between 1530 and 1780 about 1, 5 million white European Christians are enslaved by the Muslims of the Barbary Coast. In 1554 in Vieste in Italy 6.000 captives were made in one raid. In the same year in another raid at the Bay of Naples 7.000 captives were made. According to the intensity of the raid, the price per slave head can fall so low, that buyers exchange a Christian for an onion. When in 1535 king Charles V liberated Tunis he set free 20.000 Christian slaves. In 1566 Granada in Spain counts 4.000 captives in a raid. In the Discovery Age these tactics go on unchanged. During Muslim raids in Christian lands the churches are desecrated and the bells stolen for the value of the metal and for silencing the Christian voice. Piracy forces Spain and Italy to turn away from the sea and to lose their traditions in trade and navigation with devastating effects for economy and society.

112 million deaths

Male slaves destined for the Muslim Middle East were castrated, and most of the children born to the women were killed at birth. While the mortality rate for slaves being transported across the Atlantic was as high as 10%, the percentage of slaves dying in transit in the Trans Sahara and East African slave trade before reaching the slave markets was between 80 and 90%. While the Atlantic slave traders are responsible for 12 million deaths, it is believed that the 14th century toll by Muslim slave raids into Africa is over 112 million deaths. When added to the number of those sold in the slave markets, the total number of African victims of the Trans Saharan and East African slave trade could be significantly higher than 140 million people.



Bastinado

The slave's mission is to work himself to death. There is no escape, no anti-cruelty laws, no human rights, no benign opinion, and no state protection. Any kind of torture was thinkable. Bastinado has been extensively utilized in the Muslim Middle East as a punishment for slaves and not only. A man or woman was put on his or her back, the ankles clamped together and held waist high for a sustained beating on the soles of the feet. With 150 or 200 blows being the usual rate, a person is left crippled.

Child Levy (Devshirme)

What differentiated the Ottoman military-governmental slave system from its Muslim predecessors was the child-levy. The Ottoman Turks introduced a very particular form of human taxation to recruit their army from the populations of the enslaved nations. Young males are forced from outside the Ottoman domains to become soldiers, officials and administrators. The recruitment of children took place every three to four years and at times even annually, according to the needs of the Sultan's army and the cost for the collection was enforced on the community. Periods with frequent military expeditions and campaigns, imposed a disproportionate high toll on the Christian populations. The largest loss of children coincided with the peak of Ottoman power in the 15th century during the reign of the Selim I and Suleiman I, whose main aim and achievement was the

territorial expansion. The agents of the Sultans extracted this tribute, thus depriving the Christian lands, most especially the Balkans of their strongest and most intelligent children, and making the Devshirme, the child levy, the most hateful manifestation of Turkish rule. This cruel practice caused a brain cleansing among the Christian populations, thus becoming the most most inhuman legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Jews and Gypsies were exempted from the devshirme and so were all the Muslims with the exemption of the Bosniaks, who were also conscripted. The advantage gained by those chosen for conversion and a so-called better life in the court of the Sultan cannot offer any equilibrium against the crime of taking children away from their parents to feed an army with expendable units.



Change of Fortune, 1549

Jean Parisot de la Valette, the future 49th Grand Master of the Order of St. John (1495-1568), lost his galley *San Giovanni* to Kust Ali in 1541. He has been made a row slave in an Ottoman galley for two years. Turgut Reis, the greatest of all corsairs after Barbarossa, secures La Valette for slightly better conditions, until the Order has bought him free. In 1549 Turgut Reis (1485-1565) himself was captured by the Admiral Doria, La Vallette who happened to be present, said to him: *"It is custom of the war."* And he replied: *"And change of fortune."*



We are six men chained to a bench naked as we were born, one foot on the stretcher, the other lifted and placed against the bench in front of us. We support a vastly heavy oar with hands stretching our bodies backwards while our arms push the loom of the oar clear of the backs of those in front of us. We are rowing ten, twelve, even twenty hours at a stretch, without rest. The officers go around and put pieces of bread soaked in wine into our mouths to prevent us from fainting. There are no doctors and many suffer from frostbite that leads to amputation. If one falls exhausted, he is flogged until dead and then thrown overboard."

Galley Slaves, 1585

Narration of the Huguenot Jean Martin de Bergerac, condemned to the galleys after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1585.

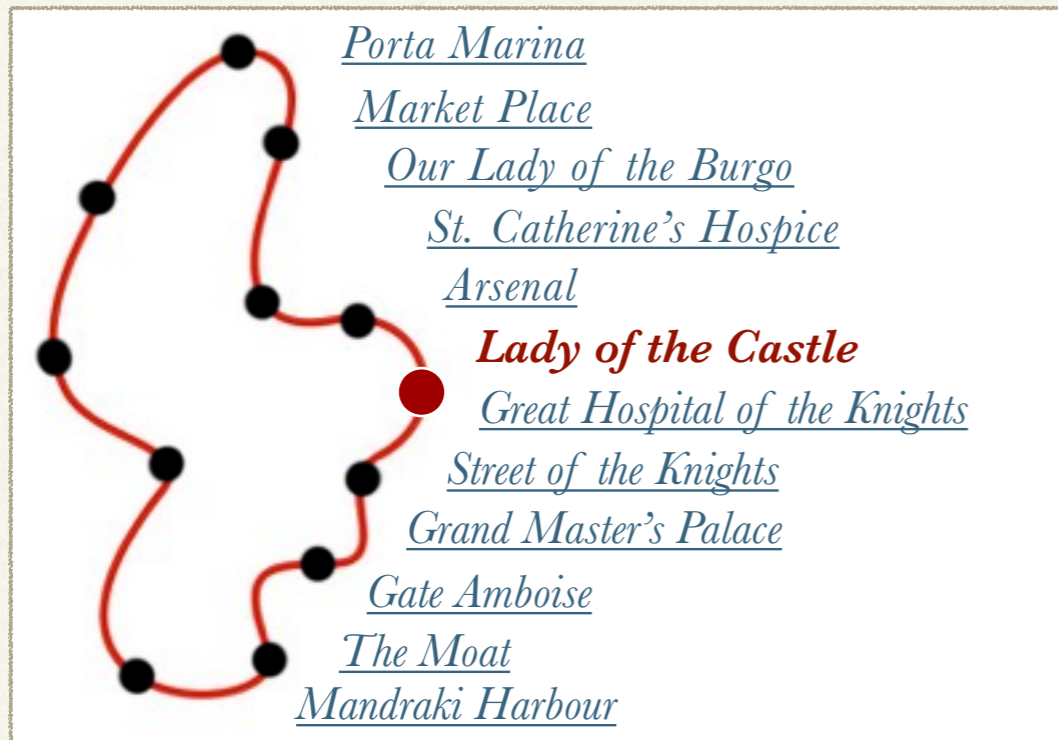
The galley slaves are chained six to a bench, these are four foot wide covered with sacking stuffed with wool, over which are laid sheepskins that reach down to the deck. The Galley Master stays aft with the captain from whom he receives his orders. There are also two under-officers, one amid-ships and one at the prow. Both are armed with whips, with which they flog the naked bodies of the slaves. When the captain gives the order to row, the officer gives the signal with a silver whistle which hangs on a cord round his neck; the signal is repeated by the under-officers, and very soon all fifty oars strike the water as one.



Lady of the Castle

A race of traders

Before the advent of the Knights in Rhodes, *Our Lady of the Castle* was the Greek metropolitan church. It is located at the foot of the Street of the Knights, its central apse is next to the sea wall. Safely built within the walls of the *Collachio*, the administrative part and the internal fortification of the Knights in the Medieval City, at short distance from Grand Master's Palace and the Conventual Church of St. John, it was the optimal choice for the Latin Cathedral. For reasons of economy *Our Lady of the Castle* is transformed from a Byzantine building into a seemingly Gothic one. Still, the Latin archbishop has no



The oldest and biggest surviving church of the Medieval City is located at the Museum Square next to the Inn of Auvergne and opposite of the Great Hospital of the Knights. It was built in the 11th century but the changes of fate have dictated different uses. Originally it was an Orthodox metropolis dedicated to Virgin Mary. Then the Hospitallers modified it to become the Catholic metropolis with the name *Sancta Maria Castelli Rodi*. In the Ottoman period it was transformed into a mosque known as *Enderum*. Fully restored today it hosts the Byzantine museum of the Medieval City.



jurisdiction over the Hospitallers. His flock is from Western Europe and lives in the Burgo: merchants, manufacturers, bankers, ship-owners: a race of traders.

The Venetian Silvestro Mauroceno, overseer of the State Soap Factory in 1437, became money lender of the Order without interest rate. The Genoese Antonio Cataneo, who lent in 1442 to Grand Master Heredia 3.000 florins, received in return land for 29 years renewable twice.

In 1445 the Order granted permission for the monopoly of sugar to the Martini brothers for 4 years.

In 1448 Grand Master de Lastic granted permission to the ship owner Louis Beltram from Barcelona and his North African merchants on board to commerce in Rhodes enjoying the benefits Christian merchants do.

Antonio Villadana from Cremona launched in Rhodes a 'fashion business': *Ars fustanorum* is the ready-to-wear factory of men's and women's clothes that starts operating in 1439. The Order forbade import of clothes to protect this business from competition for 5 years. After Villadana's death, Marco Osio from Bergamo operated the successful enterprise.

Of special value to the defense was the bow factory of Ugo Poggetti. On the 3rd of August 1437 Grand Master Antoni Fluvià rewarded the manufacturer with land.

All the money from the Order's real estate flows to Avignon. The deposits manage the Florentine bankers de Medici. The Florentine Banks of Peruzzi, Bardi, Altovitti, Capponi, Federoghi, Quaratesi, Acciaiuoli have also representatives in Rhodes. The letters of credit with the seal of the Order is drawn in Rhodes and cashed in Avignon. Not to return as bad checks and harm the reliability of the State, the bankers pay interest $\frac{1}{4}$: they lend 4,000 ducats and owe 5,000. The Order pays the difference at the earliest opportunity. Rhodes becomes the triumph of commerce and economy.



Great Hospital of the Knights

Ramon Berangeur de Fluvià, 1437

“In 1413 I served as a counsellor and captain of Jacob II, Duke of Urgell, supporting him to take the throne of Aragon. My uncle, Antoni di Fluvià, who was a lieutenant of the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers in Rhodes, Filibert de Naillac, was also a supporter of the cause. However, after the insurrection failed, we were obliged to leave the country. My uncle has then joined the Order of the Knights Hospitallers in

Rhodes, to which some of my relatives already belonged. In 1421 Antoni di Fluvià has succeeded Grand Master de Naillac. It



Crowning the Street of the Knights, this Gothic building with Renaissance elements, was a hospital indeed. Its construction lasted 52 years (1437-1489), as different war intervals stopped the work flow. The Great Hospital served the sick independently of sex, creed, origin and social class, functioned as a social institution, and regulated public health. After the Ottoman conquest in 1523, it ceased to care for the sick and wounded and became a barracks for the Ottoman troops. In 1914, under the Italian rule, it was restored and converted to the Archaeological Museum of Rhodes.

was him who built the Inn of Spain and strengthened the fortifications. Right after his election he immediately started to collect funds for an old dream: a brand new hospital. In 1437, the pious man, donated ten thousand golden florins to build the Great Hospital. You can imagine what the donation means, if I tell you that an oarsman in the galley service is paid about three florins a month.”



Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson, 1489

“We managed to inaugurate the New Hospital only in 1489, although the construction started with the inheritance of Grand Master Antoni di Fluvià in 1437. If you notice, above the main entrance, there is an inscription. Two marble angels are holding his arms commemorating his donation: ten thousand golden florins. However, the construction has lasted fifty two years because of the frequent attacks of the Turks and the repairing needs of the fortifications. The terrible siege in 1480 has delayed the construction for many years ahead, but, thank God, our victory has saved Christianity. Right after the siege the devastating earthquake in 1481 has obliged us to rebuild half of the City. My

Chancellor Guillaume de Caoursin has documented everything in his book “The Siege of Rhodes”. We have sent this book to His Holiness, the Pope, and the Emperor Maximilian.

Our Great Hospital receives men and women independently of creed, origin and class and supervises the public health. Women that give birth are having the best treatment in the Hospital to recover quickly. Amputated patients receive certificates that

are not criminals. I underline, that all the Tongues, the nations of our Order, contribute to the acquisition of high quality drugs, so that we never suffer any shortage,

especially during the sieges. Our Hospital is a welfare institution: We distribute daily and weekly food to indigent persons. Amended clothes and shoes are given to the poor. We donate a wedding present to young couples to help them start their families. Each man coming out of jail receives 12 dinars to begin a new life.”



Grand Hospitaller, Guy de Melais, 1490

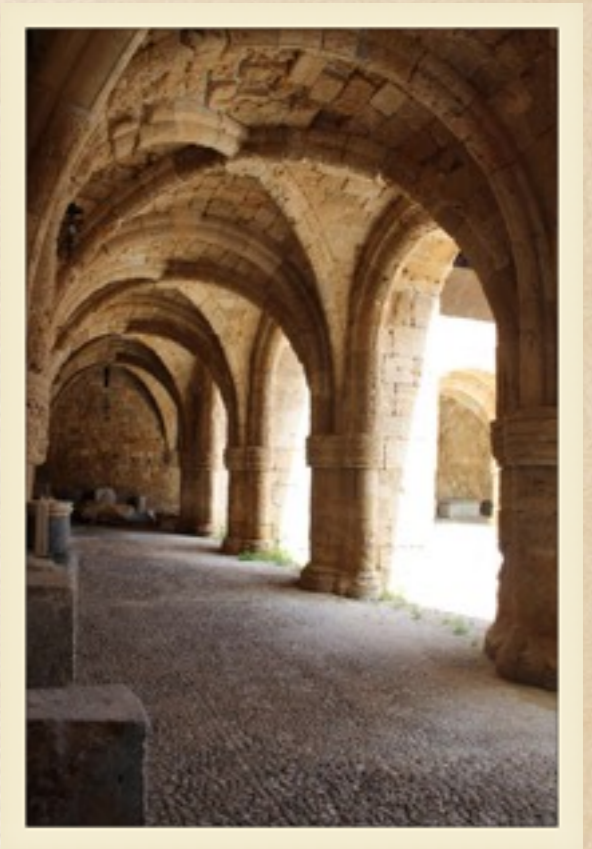
“Being the senior of the Tongue of France I assumed the office of the Grand Hospitaller. Not even the Grand Marshall who is in command of the forces can be admitted to the Infirmary without the consent of the Grand Hospitaller. I live in the house right opposite of the Great Hospital; in this way I can respond very quickly each time I am needed.

All the knights that belong to the Order must obey to the supreme principle, which is the service to the sick.

Servire infirmis supremum imperium

We, the Knights of St. John, have started our history in Jerusalem. We were organized as a religious Order. Raymond du Puy was our first Grand Master (1120-1160). Since then the Hospitallers give care and comfort to sick and wounded. We maintain mobile clinics to assist warriors wounded in battle. We accept Christian, Moslem, Jewish patients and women. After the Christian forces liberated Jerusalem in 1099 the number of pilgrims increased considerably. Our Order gained then strength and took the character of a military body under the control of the Church. Grateful lords healed in our hospitals made generous grants. Our Order is today a sovereign power in Rhodes. We mint coins and establish diplomatic relations with other states. We are now fighting the Turks at sea and land. But we never forget our original calling to service the sick. We established three hospitals in Rhodes for pilgrims to the East and a separate Infirmary for the brethren.

Our Hospital equally nurses men and women independently of creed, origin and class. The Hospital staff is under the oath of indigence, purity and obedience. The acceptance of presents is forbidden and punished. Doctors swear before our Order and the officers of the Eight Tongues: France, Provence, Auvergne, Italy, Spain, Portugal, England and Germany. The Grand Master is personally responsible towards the Order so as for the poor and the patients to be taken care of as defined by the spirit of our Order. The Great Hospital cares for the poor, the abandoned children and is servicing the needy: old clothes and shoes are amended and given to the poor; three times a week anybody can receive food, bread and wine; thirty indigent persons receive food on daily basis; twelve dinars receives each man that comes out of the jail to start a new life; young couples with low income get a present on their wedding day.”



Grand Infirmarier, Jacques de Bonpart, 1493

“I have been chosen to serve as Grand Infirmarier by the Grand Hospitaller Guy de Melais, who has presented me to the Grand Master and his Council to obtain their consent. I am serving a two-year term with the possibility to renew my office. My duties are to take care of the Hospital’s daily operation and visit the sick twice a day. All my activities are monitored by two advisors. I am the one in charge of bed linen and supplies. Every morning I go around the wards to ensure that all Hospital staff is fulfilling their duties and that all patients are receiving proper care.

We receive patients of both sexes, and care for the abandoned infants. We regulate the public health and the procurement of medicine. Here we don’t simply prepare the soul to die. Our mission is to save and cure the sick. Therefore all staff is under a triple oath: indigence, purity, and obedience. I must underline that any kinds of gifts are strictly forbidden. The brothers shall serve the patients smiling without complaining. Otherwise they are punished by the Grand Master according to the Hospital rules.

We are at the forefront of medical science: we employ only staff with certified medical education: surgeons, male and female nurses, midwives and wet-nurses as well as the



brothers of the Order, who act as nurses, orderlies, and priests. It is my duty to write together with the Scribe the medical instructions and look that they are properly followed and make sure that cleanliness and hygiene are practiced in all Hospital spaces.

Qualified doctors with different skills and two surgeons attend the sick under my supervision. Eight brothers, one from each Tongue of the Order are present at this inspection. Doctors are paid two hundred and fifty and surgeons one hundred and twenty florins yearly. About seven thousand florins is the annual Hospital revenue, not including costs for lepers, nurses and orphans. For payments we use our own golden ducat, or the currency of the Republic of Florence because of its steady value of 3.5 grams of pure fine gold. We also use the Venetian ducat, the “zecchino”, that is a golden coin of the same weight and

quality.

Medicine is for free and its cost is born by all Tongues of the Order. Pharmacists who sell inferior drugs or provide for unskilled compounding are imprisoned.

We keep a maternity wing and a crèche for orphans. Small cradles for the infants, which are born in the hospital, allow them to sleep separately from their mothers. In this way

mothers are freed from broken sleep and recover quickly. Amputated patients receive certificates that are not criminals. Very important patients have their individual rooms with large fireplaces.

The Czech Pilgrim, 1493

I have entered the Great Hospital from the main entrance, above which there is an inscription with two marble angels holding the arms of Grand Master di Fluvià, who donated ten thousand golden florins to build the Great Hospital. I am informed that the Hospital is open to all men and women regardless of class, race or creed with the exception of lepers who are taken care by the Order of Lazarus.

Gateway of hope

At the Hospital's entrance a large gateway with cross vaults led me into a passage. I felt like taken from the busy life entering a holy silence. I reached the inner Court Yard, which is roofed with ribbed cross-vaults. In the Ground Floor are located the store houses for all kinds of supplies that the Hospital needs: food, water, medicine, office supplies, and eight shops which pay rent to the Hospital. All eight shops are accessible from the Street of the Knights. The water



tower in the Ground Floor connects the drinking well and the Patient Ward. By pulling the bucket up, water supplies reach the Upper Floor.

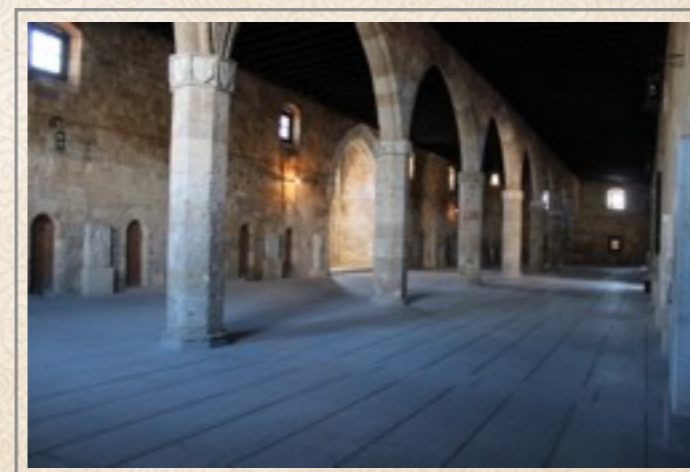
Wool, Fur and Linen

A large staircase leads to the Upper Floor. There is the Patient Ward, a hall 154 foot long and 40 foot wide! A colonnade divides the Ward into two parts. Stone columns support the archways. Columns and roof timbers wear the coats-of-arms of the Hospital's three founders: Antoni di Fluvià, Jean-Bonpart de Lastic, Pierre d'Aubusson. It looks very much like the monastery halls in the Empire of the Romans that has now fallen to the impious Turks...

In the south side of the Patient Ward a large fireplace warms the sick. Opposite of the entrance door is the Chapel. Each morning the Chaplain celebrates the Mass. The Chaplain administers the Holy Communion and the last rites and sings the Requiem Mass in the case of death, but not in front of the sick, I was told. On the two long sides of the Ward, the east and west, a series of small vaulted areas is visible. Curious as I am, I have asked the Grand Infirmary what the use of it is, and he explained that they support the structure and serve to separate patients with incurable diseases from all the others.

In Prague two patients occupy one straw mattress. Here I see that each patient occupies a separate bed with its own balcony for fresh air, good rest and privy. The beds are long and wide enough in order to be comfortable. There is a lavatory by each bed. Each patient receives a woolen hat, a fur-lined coat, slippers and a servant! Linen sheets and covers are changed three times a week. In this way the sick avoid transmission of disease and recover quickly.

All patients admitted to the Hospital, wash, confess, take the Holy Communion, and write their will in the presence of the Chaplain and a Scribe. Patients are not allowed to infringe any of the doctors' instructions, nor change their diet; they are obliged to be silent, to desist from playing cards and dice, and refrain from reading books not associated with the Christian faith. I have noticed that the rules are written on a parchment suspended from a chain in the Patient Ward.



Silver for rich and poor

Northwest of the Dining Hall is the Hospital Kitchen. I noticed that it is roofed by a cross-vault with an aperture through which the smoke escapes. To my great astonishment all instruments and kitchenware are made of silver! I have expressed my admiration, but the Grand Infirmary has explained to me that the reason for this richness is the safety of the patients. Only then I realized that the use of silver contributes greatly to the dignity of the Grand Infirmary and to the cleanliness of the Hospital. Plates, covers and bowls, even the small boilers, from which the soup is served, are made of silver to avoid infections.

A smaller Chamber with a pillar at the centre supporting two arches, and a wooden roof is used as refectory; the Dining Hall. It connects the Patient Ward with the kitchen. The large fire place on the side wall is warming the atmosphere. The roof is timbered and the pillar column bears the coats of arms of the three Hospital founders, exactly like in the Patient Ward.

The eating rules of the Great Hospital encourage a nourishing and healthy diet which is vital for the recovery of the sick and helps the human nature against infection. Patients eat the luxurious white bread which is baked especially for their needs. Two patients share daily one loaf of bread. The food I saw being prepared in the kitchen was poultry, lamb, boar (during the winter, I was told this), goat, milk, barely, broth, gruel, white bread, lentils, beans, apples, pears, plums, figs, grapes, pomegranates, almonds, wine

syrups, oxymel. I was told that forbidden foods are eels, cheese and the pork during the summer.



Payments and Fines

The Pharmacy reserves a large apartment on the Upper Floor. The Grand Hospitaller is responsible for the procurement and the quality of drugs. To my great astonishment the Grand Infirmary has explained to me that all the Tongues of the Order, France, Auvergne and Provence, Italy, Castile and Aragon, Germany and England pay for the supplies of drugs, just as they are obliged to pay for the maintenance of the fortifications. Pharmacists and

apothecaries who come to the idea to sell inferior drugs are punished and imprisoned.

The same fine applies for unskilled compounding. I also saw that all kinds of herbs needed for foods and pharmacy are cultivated in the Hospital garden. The Surgery reserves a large room in the Upper Floor. In case where an amputation was necessary, the Hospital issues the patient a certificate that the loss was not a punishment for a crime.

Garden of Eden

A small courtyard, surrounded by vaulted magazines, has let me to the Hospital garden.

Descending the stairs a secret passage leads again to the Ground Floor. All known herbs and medicinal plants are cultivated in the garden of this really great Hospital. I noticed that patients walk around, breathe the fresh air full of the scent of flowers, and enjoy the sun. Some patients have favorite spots. I was enchanted by the garden's harmony and did not wish to leave the beautiful scene."



The Curtain, 1523

In June 1522 an army of about 200.000 Ottoman Turks and 400 ships laid siege on Rhodes against 700 knights, 400 archers and 7.000 armed men. All Ottoman efforts remain fruitless until December 1522. The betrayal of the Vice-Chancellor Andrea d' Amaral and pressure from civilians, who erroneously thought that their lives would be spared, led to negotiating the surrender of the island. 50 Christian ships with the remaining Knights, men at arms and those civilians who opted for the Knights sailed out to the unknown on the 2nd of January 1523. The Great Hospital of the Knights in Rhodes ceases to care for the sick and wounded and becomes a barracks for Ottoman troops. Under the Italian rule the Great Hospital of the Knights becomes the Archaeological Museum of Rhodes in 1914 and ever since it hosts precious collections expanding in a period of time over 2.400 years.



Street of the Knights

The Eight of Europe, 1309

In 1309 Rhodes becomes home to the warrior monks, the Knights Hospitallers. The Order attracts Knights from all over Europe. Latin, French, Italian and Greek are spoken and written. The multinational composition of the Order favored further the ethnic mix and the diversity of the peoples who inhabited the island. The Knights inhabit the *Collachio*, the inner



The Knights were a European institution with a highly cosmopolitan ruling élite. The Street of the Knights, 200 m long and 6 m wide, was built on the ancient road that led to the port. It is the main official street in the Collachio, the inner fortified part of the Medieval City, connecting the Palace of the Grand Masters with all major administrative and religious buildings. Standing in a row on their cobble stone carpet, the Inns of France, Italy, Provence and Spain, are cutting the sky. The Inn of Auvergne is next to *Our Lady of the Castle* and the Inn of England is facing the *Great Hospital*.

fortified part of the Medieval City with all major establishments, and did not mix with the lay part of the City, the *Burgo*, which laid outside of the *Collachio*. The Street of the Knights hosts the assembly places for each nationality, called *Lingue* or *Tongue*. Each *Tongue* inhabited its own *Auberge* or *Inn*. Knights from France, Germany, Auvergne, Spain, England, Provence, Italy, and Castile are committed to defend Rhodes. Each *Tongue* is responsible for the maintenance and defense of the own battle post across the walls and the moat. The Order State is the triumph of defending a fortified island with a minimum of men and money. The Street of the Knights is the heart of this triumph.

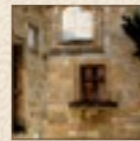
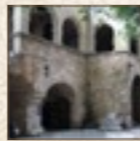
The Order of Saint John was composed of three main classes: the knights, the chaplains and the serving brothers or

fighting squires who followed the knights into action. Supreme command was exercised by the Grand Master, elected by the members of the Order for life, and he was assisted in his tasks by a council, composed of the bailiffs of each *Tongue*, which had legislative and

disciplinary powers.

To qualify as a Knight, an applicant had to be 18 years of age, and he had to prove his noble lineage over time periods ranging from four generations to four hundred years, depending on his *Tongue*. During his first year, the Knight was a novice and received religious and military training. After satisfactory completion of the year, he took his vows of obedience, poverty and chastity and was given a cloak adorned with the Order's cross.





The Window, 1436

In 1436 the French Knights dispute with the Italian Knights. The reason is the new window at the Inn of Italy. The French say that through this window the Italians can watch their activities. The Italians say that they cannot live in a house without air and sun. The Council decides that the Italians cannot be deprived of common goods like air and sun, which all people enjoy. Therefore they may build their window, opposite of which, the French Knights may build another structure, but not in the free space between the two Inns.



A multiethnic and prosperous society with good governance was not necessarily a myth. It was the Hospitaller achievement.

Expensive Captive, 1481

The historic two-storey mansion, adjacent to the Inn of France, has hosted the Ottoman Sultan Cem in 1482. This house is the starting point for the story of a prince in captivity. Several famous Renaissance personalities eye witnessed the developments:

Pierre d'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers, 1481

“The Ottoman Sultan Mehmet was on his way to another campaign when he suddenly died on the 3rd of May 1481 in Maltepe, just outside Constantinople. Contrary to the Islamic law, which prohibits the delay in burial, Mehmet's's body lay for three days in Constantinople. His Grand Vizier, Mehmet Pasha from Karaman, hoped that the younger son, the “purple-born” Cem, would arrive in Constantinople prior to his older



brother Bayezid and claim the throne.



However, Bayezid, was supported by influential generals, two of whom were his sons in law, the infantry, -the Janissaries, and all those who suffered damage by the deceased Sultan and his Grand Vizier. The attempts of Mehmet Pasha for secrecy failed and his plan was discovered by the Janissaries, who had been kept out of the capital after the death of the



Sultan. The Venetians reported that they have rebelled, entered Constantinople, lynched the Grand Vizier and started rioting. The gravity of the situation led the former Grand Vizier Ishak Pasha to proclaim the eleven year old Prince Korkut as a regent, until his father Bayezid arrives in Constantinople and claims the throne. We have to wait and see what happens next.”

Cicek Hatun, mother of Sultan Cem, 1482

“While the messengers sent by the Grand Visier Karamani Mehmet Pasha to Cem disappeared, the ones to Bayezid arrived on time. Therefore it is Bayezid who was declared Sultan of the Ottomans on the 21st of May 1481. Civil war began. My son, the purple born Cem, had defeated Bayezid's army and declared himself Sultan of Anatolia with Bursa his capital. He then proposed dividing the Empire between them, leaving Europe to his older brother, of whom it is said that he poisoned Sultan Mehmet, because he knew that Cem was his favorite for the throne. But Bayezid denied the offer and marched on Bursa. When Cem lost the battle of Yenisehir we had to flee with our family to Mamluk Egypt. In Cairo Cem received a letter from his brother, who was offering to him a million silver coins to stop competing for the throne, but Cem rejected the proposal. He returned to Anatolia for a military campaign, but he was betrayed. Disappointed as he was, he decided to give it all up and return to Cairo to reunite with us, but all of the roads to Egypt were under Bayezid's control. It was inevitable to turn to the Hospitallers in Petroumi to save his life. Then news arrived to me that Cem along with thirty-five of our closest relatives, friends and officers and twenty slaves, disembarked in Rhodes from a Hospitaller galley on the 15th



of October 1482. Shortly after I received a letter from Cem who wrote to me that in return for the overthrow of Bayezid, he was offered perpetual peace between the Ottoman Empire and Christendom. He emphasized that the Knights treated him according to his rank and that their Grand Master, Fra d'Aubusson, started building a house for him and that a French knight, Jean d' Aussays, is supervising the construction works. But I cannot stop worrying as long as Cem is among the infidels and I am trying to convince him to come to Egypt. His life is in danger, I feel that, in fact know that.”

Haydar Bey, Secretary of Prince Cem, 1483

“We sailed for France on the 1st September 1482. We stayed in Nice for four months and our Sultan has amused himself quite well. I was escorting him to the balls and entertainments witnessing their strange customs. At the balls they bring the beautiful maidens of the city, and they cavorted around like cocks. In their customs, the women do not cover themselves decently, but on the contrary are proud to kiss and embrace. If they grow tired of their games and need to rest, they sit on the knees of strange men. Their necks, ears and shoulders are uncovered! In Nice our Sultan was going very often to balls with beautiful women, with whom he had several affairs. He even composed a couplet:

What a wonderful place is this city of Nice

A man who stays there can do as he please!



In the meantime we heard that Bayezid sent a messenger to France and requested that our Sultan be kept there; he agreed to make an annual payment in gold for his brother's expenses. Indeed we

stayed in Nice until February of 1483, when, using the fear of the plague as a pretext, the commander Blanchefort, the nephew of Grand Master Aubusson, took us to the Duchy of Savoy, where we spent a year. We knew that the King Louis of France refused to accept a Muslim in his lands, but after his death in 1483, the Knights of Rhodes transferred us to Limousin, the place of descend of their Grand Master Aubusson. They built a prison-like tower in Bourganeuf to keep our Sultan.”

Kayitbay, Sultan of Egypt, 1487

“Cicek Hatun, the mother of Sultan Cem has just informed me that Bayezid is paying the Knights of Rhodes a large amount to keep Cem captive. Those infidels took the money and betrayed Cem, who thereafter became their prisoner. For years now Bayezid is paying an annual fee of for five thousand ducats to keep Cem from pressing his claim to the throne. It is clear, that with Cem in Christian hands an invasion is out of question. Cicek Hatun, is urging me to free her son and to bring him to Egypt. Unfortunately the letters between Cem and his mother carried by the Cypriot Nicolas de Nicosie, were brought to Bayezid's attention through his despicable spies in Cairo. From the other side the infidel Aubusson is using Cem to control his mother. Up to now he has wielded from her twenty thousand golden coins pretending to bring Cem to Egypt. The poor woman is her son's principal ally ceaselessly struggling to liberate him from the European captivity he encountered after he set foot on Rhodes. I asked the banker Lorenzo di Medici to intervene on our behalf, but it seems almost impossible to obtain Cem from the kings of Europe.”



Lorenzo di Medici, Banker, 1488

“In his attempts to obtain Cem, the Mamluk Sultan has contacted me, apparently because he knew of my influence in the courts of France and the Papacy, as well as my extensive banking operations. In November 1487, when the Egyptian ambassador arrived in Florence, I tried at first to limit the negotiations to the commercial sphere, seeking to avoid offending the Ottomans, with whom Florence had developed an extensive trade during the last twenty years. However, I did not hesitate for long to seize the opportunity for financial profit and the trade privileges which the Mamluk Sultan had promised me in return for my efforts to obtain Cem. Also Mathias Corvinus, the King of Hungary, wanted to ally with Cem in a Crusade against his brother Bayezid.

In the spring of 1488, Lorenzo Spinalli, one my agents in France, offered the French King one hundred thousand golden ducats in the name of the delivery of Cem was French to Rome, as it that this was interest of



Christendom. The Pope argued that Rhodes and Italy were under serious threat of an Ottoman invasion and that only the presence of Cem in Rome could deter Bayezid. The French chancellor agreed that only the Pope could restore peace and unity among the Christian nations and lead a crusade against the Ottomans. Therefore both the Egyptian and Hungarian requests were declined.”

Guy de Blanchefort, Grand Prior of Auvergne, 1489

“Until it is decided, what is in the best interest of Cem, we managed to save his life against all the threats posed by his brother Bayezid. We built for his protection a thick-walled tower, where he stayed for five years. However in November 1488, happens what, Cem hoped to be his liberation: his departure for the Vatican court. Sultan Bayezid has payed his Holiness, the Pope, to keep Cem in Rome. The sum is equal to the annual papal revenue of all sources combined

and allowed Cem to live the life of the nobility in Rome. Much of the costs associated with the Sistine Chapel were paid with funds from the Ottoman ransoms. Later Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who was elected pope in 1492, entrusted the decoration of the rooms in his apartment to a certain Pinturicchio. I was told that there is a certain painting called “St. Catherine’s Disputation” made in 1494 with Cem and Lucrezia Borgia in the middle of the scene. We know that Cem met with the Pope a couple of times to discuss religious issues, but I cannot tell for sure, if he met with Lucrezia Borgia too.”



Mustafa Pasha, Envoy of Sultan Bayezid, 1490

“When prince Cem was transferred from the lands of the King of France into the custody of the Pope, it was clear, that our Sultan lost the guarantee under the pact agreed with the Grand Master Aubusson in Rhodes that the prince will not be delivered to enemies of our faith. Our Sultan thought that preparations had to be made to consolidate an agreement with the Pope. Therefore the Christian monk, Leonardo di Chiavari, who lived in Pera was employed as an envoy of the Sultan. He was granted the greatest honor of acquaintance of our Sultan. In the late spring 1490 sent with an official envoy to Rome to negotiate these were the preliminary steps of the Christians before sending an agreement. That is how I came personally to Rhodes in 1490 to conduct talks with the Grand Master Aubusson, while waiting to board the ship to Italy. On my way to Ancona I was accompanied by the Knight Blanchefort, the nephew of the Grand Master who kept an eye on the prince, while in the dominions of the Grand Master in France. I need to find out, if I can approach the Master of the Ceremonies of the Pope, Johannes Burkhart,



because I am informed that seven years ago he has bought his office for four hundred and fifty ducats. In all cases the Pope needs money, so our Sultan agreed to pay him forty five thousand golden coins annually for the subsistence of the prince.”

Ermaolo Barbaro, Venitian ambassador in Rome, 1490

“We have intelligence that the Ottoman envoy’s, - Mustafa Pasha is his name- real mission is to assassinate Cem. We immediately took action to warn the Pope about the danger before his arrival. Mustafa is bringing large sums of money with him, one hundred and twenty thousands golden ducats, to be used for the conspiracy against Cem’s life. We also have no trust and faith to the English Turcopolier John Kendall, the Chief of Infantry of the Rhodian Knights. We do know that he already represented Rhodes and England in Rome in 1484, 1485 and 1487. However all of a sudden in 1489 he became the custodian of the Sultan’s brother Cem! We

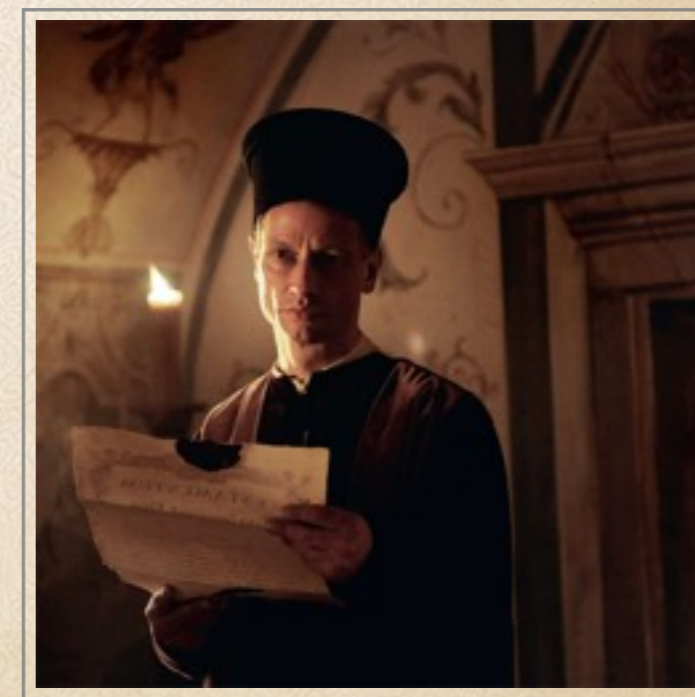
wonder why and how... We very much fear that John Kendall might be tempted by the money Mustafa Pasha is bringing with him. The secret personal correspondence between Bayezid and



Mustafa, which our intelligence managed to intercept, reveals that Bayezid’s only purpose is the elimination of his brother. If Mustafa returns to Constantinople with a sworn agreement that Bayezid is not to attack Italy, as long as the Pope keeps Cem in custody, is not clear. But we do happen to know by experience that the Ottomans make easily verbal and sworn agreements that have no value whatsoever, when “the wind turns”.

Johannes Burkhart, Master of Ceremonies, 1495

As a Master of Ceremonies of the Pope for a quarter of a century, I witnessed the adventures of the Muslim Prince Cem, as I was close to him on a daily basis. In 1490, Mustafa Pasha, was sent as an ambassador of Sultan Bayezid to Rome. As instructed by his master, Mustafa, asked the Pope to meet with Cem and see if he was alive before the payment was made. Despite the concerns expressed by the Rhodian Knights about the risks of this encounter, an extra favor from the Sultan to the Pope pushed his Holiness to allow Mustafa to see the home sick Cem. It was



agreed to honor the pledge and keep Cem guarded and not let him fall upon Islamic territories as long as the Sultan and the Pope live. In return, the Sultan promised to never attack the Pope and consider him one of the rulers with whom the Sultan was in sworn agreement. Another ambassador was sent to the Sultan to request the payment and define the payment modalities a fortnight after Mustafa's audience with Cem.



The pension should be paid in Venetian golden ducats every year on December the 1st. The dispatch of an ambassador to the Sultan is the proof of the verbal and secret agreement reached between the Pope and Mustafa. However, Pope Innocent died in 1492 and his successor Alexander Borgia, counted only sympathizers to the sultan Bayezid, and enemies to France, among his allies. In 1494, Charles of France, who intended to take possession of his kingdom of Naples, received as an inheritance, demands that the person of prince Cem be consigned to him by the time his troops would pass in the city of Saint Peter. On the 25th of February the prince dies in Capua while kept by Charles, who was on a military expedition to conquer Naples. He was thirty six years old and in very good health.”

Philippe de l'Isle Adam, Grand Master, 1522

“There” is no doubt, that Mustafa Pasha has secretly instructed the man who came into Cem Sultan's service as a chief barber and tellak, -bath attendants the Turks employ, to secretly place a deadly poison at the back of the razor. When he shaved Cem with this poisoned razor it caused a fatal disease and the demise of Cem, who until that time had been a healthy and strong man. Upon Cem's death Sultan Bayezid declared mourning for three days!

While Cem was residing in France and later in Italy, Murad, his oldest son, was instructed in Rhodes. We taught him weapons, language and medicine. He converted to Christianity and took the name of the greatest Apostle, Peter. Peter, who has seen his father in Rome, returned to Rhodes in 1504. Our General Chapter by a decree issued on the 17th of December, has entrusted the Grand Master with the keeping of Cem's son. The castle of Ferraclos was therefore allocated to the prince with numerous servants, and had Fra Jean Rafhno as a butler. After having lived there peacefully with his family for nearly twenty years, Murad moved to Rhodes during the siege of 1522, and attempted to board on one of our ships. But Sultan Suleiman, who knew that Cem's son is on the island, managed to find him and ordered him and his sons to be strangled on the very day of their arrest. We heard later that the spouse and the daughter of Murad were locked in a seraglio in Constantinople for the rest of their lives.

Grand Master's Palace

The Palace is the administrative center of the Knights and last line of defense in war time. It is a strong structure directly linked with the fortifications. It played an active role in the defense of the city, forming the last refuge of the population in the event the enemy entered the city. The manuscript of the Frenchman Guillaume Caoursin, Vice Chancellor of Grand Master d' Aubusson (1430-1501) describes how the palace looked like.



Caoursin is one of the knights who fought in the Great Siege of Rhodes in 1480. As eye witness he writes all the facts in his account "*De Obsidionis Rhodiae Urbis Descriptio*" that is kept in the "Bibliothèque



The Byzantine acropolis on the hill becomes the Grand Master's Palace and the administrative center of the island: 80*75 m. around a central outdoor courtyard 50*40 m. The palace is built at the highest point of the medieval city, to the northwest, and its volume dominates the city and its harbour. Built at the end of the 7th c. to act as the citadel of the Byzantine fortress, it continued to play this role throughout the Byzantine and the Hospitaller period (1309-1522) as the administrative center of the Knights within the fortified walls of the internal city, the Collachio.

Nationale de France” in Paris.

The Palace is a roughly square building (80×75 m) designed around a large courtyard (50×40 m). The building is divided into three levels. The main entrance is in the south façade, flanked by two imposing towers. The ground floor was occupied by small and large vaulted rooms, set around a square courtyard, which were used as ancillary rooms. Kitchens, warehouses, stables are in the ground floor. The Council Chamber, the Dining Room, the Chapel and the private apartments of the Grand Master, called daisies, are upstairs.

The west facade is pierced by a gate, in front of which rises a tall, square tower. On the north side there are underground rooms that served as storerooms; it was probably in these that civilian population took refuge in the event of an enemy attack.

Eye Witness, 1480

"On the 23rd of May 1480 an Ottoman fleet with one hundred and sixty ships appeared before Rhodes carrying seventy thousand men. We were reinforced from France by five hundred knights and two thousand soldiers under Commnader Anroine, the brother of our Grand Master d' Aubusson. The enemy's plan was simple: the town would be encircled and the access to the sea disabled. Their



commanders thought that we would soon run out of supplies, and this would be the right moment for their infantry to attack and assault the the sea wall. Indeed by June the enemy cannons have inflicted heavy damage to the city. But there was a common accord between Greeks and Latins and all the others against the Turks as Rhodes is the key to all Christendom. Every creature in Rhodes in all manners of age, both men and women of all manners of states put and applied themselves and their goods with great will and great devotion in defense of the city of Rhodes.

To the defense of the tower of St. Nicholas every man with own voice cried that the tower should be diligently and manly kept. On the 9th of June 1480, the first order of the Turkish commander, Mesih Pasha, a descendant of the imperial family who betrayed his Christian faith to serve the impious Turks, is to take the tower of St. Nicholas. Until the 17th of June 1480, the shower of stones against the town and St. Nicholas continued without a pause. With boats and barrels the attackers constructed a pontoon bridge with a line fixed at one end. They dropped the line, which was guided through the ring of an anchor secretly fixed on the rocks around the shore, into the water. By pulling this line from the opposite shore the bridge would stop at the rocks and the troops would jump on the shore. On the night of the 17th of June, just before the operation was launched, the English sailor,

Roger Jervis is the name of the brave man, dived into the sea unobserved and cut the line holding the bridge. Set free and carried by the currents the bridge drifted away from the shore to the open sea with the entire enemy troops on it.”

Guillaume Caoursin, Chancellor of the Order, was born in Douai, and spent forty years in the service of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, as vice-chancellor and secretary to the grand-masters Pedro Raimonds Zacosta, Giovanni Battista degli Orsini and Pierre d' Aubusson. He distinguished himself as a defender of Rhodes during the Turkish siege in 1480. His work includes the siege of Rhodes in 1480, the earthquake in 1481, the author's speech before the Hospitallers concerning the death of Sultan Mehmet II in 1481, the conflicts over the succession between the brothers Beyazit and Cem, the alliance between the Knights of St. John and Beyazit, the translation of the reliquary with the hand of St. John the Baptist from Constantinople to Rhodes, his own famous speech of before Pope Innocent VIII, and the appearance of Cem before the same Pope in 1485.

His major work was the compilation of the Order's rule, entitled *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum militum* (1495). His final published work was an illustrated collection of histories of the order, the *Rhodiorum historia* (1496). For his services and brave behavior during the siege of 1480 Caoursin was admitted as a Knight into the Order. His report on the siege helped increase the Order's prestige in the

West and his *Stabilimenta*, which were printed several times in 1490, were used as an important handbook by the Order's members and administration for the future.

In 1480 Guillaume Caoursin, writes the manuscript, which he is remembered for: *The Siege of Rhodes*. The illustrated description of the siege becomes a best seller throughout Europe. It is first published in 1480, in Rome, by Eucarius Silver with no illustrations. Eight more treatises were added including editions published in different cities. Illustrations from the 1496 edition are printed in Ulm by Johannes Reger. Between 1481 and 1489 the book is published in Venice, Ulm, Salamanca, Paris, Brugges and London.

In the Council Chamber of the Grand Master's Palace, Guillaume Caoursin presented his book to Pierre d'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers, Victor of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. Pierre d' Aubusson gave the German Emperor Frederic III a special edition of the book as a gift. On the 24th of June 1489 Pierre d' Aubusson was crowned Cardinal and Papal Legate for Asia.



The Mint, 1332

Pope Clement V had given his blessing and confirmed the possession of Rhodes by the Hospitallers by grant, thus preventing Philip IV of France from attempting a repeat of the destruction of the Templars in order to lay his hands on their wealth. In fact, Clement V decreed that all the Templars possessions be turned over to the Hospitallers, a fact which explains how and why the Knights of Rhodes had the means to impose themselves as a major force in the eastern Mediterranean, thus offering useful resistance for several centuries against the expansion of the Ottoman Empire.

The basis of the Hospitaller monetary system is the dinar. Grand Master de Villeneuve has reorganized the mint in 1332 with small change of billon and copper and large silver coins, but it is Grand Master Antoni de Fluvià (1421-1437), who issued the first proper Hospitaller ducats. The Mint was next to the Palace of the Grand Master. Besides facilitating transactions and earning profits, the minting of money was gainful for both the issuing authorities and their subjects. It was also a major political statement and useful to merchants on whom the local ruler depended. The merchants were well placed to influence its appearance and they may have provided technical assistance.

Rhodes traded perfumes, drugs, egg, wax, pepper, caviar, woolen and silk

textiles, oil, wine and sugar, for which Rhodes was famous. Basic food products were imported, since local production was insufficient to feed the residents. Greeks engaged in commercial activity as representatives or interpreters of the Order in their negotiations with the Ottomans. The flourishing commercial activity benefited the Greek element, especially during the 15th century and wealth was concentrated in their hands. By joining the new social system they occupied positions and were assigned to subtle diplomatic missions as they were multilingual and well educated.





There are 11 gates to access the Medieval City. The most impressive gate of Rhodes from a military viewpoint is built in 1512 by Grand Master Amboise close to the Grand Master's Palace. Gate Amboise is designed to face the Ottoman canons and protect the access to the city. It has a triple defensive belt with chemins de ronde, two round towers and covered entrance. Remains of the ancient studded wood doors are still visible. The pentagonal bastion of Saint George close by covered with its cannons the access through the gate.

Gate Amboise

Impregnable Fortress, 1500

In the 16th century the Knights Hospitallers consolidated once again their defensive walls so as to meet the new defense requirements resulting from the use of gun powder at war. The thickness of the walls increased and interior corridors were created for a freer flow of siege, the number of gates was reduced, and each was reinforced by two towers. Some walls and bastions in their upper portions include kinds of glazes or

canted so that cannon balls do not hit full force but are amortized and deviated from their path. The walls form an enclosure 4 km long with a thickness



ranging from 5.30 m up to 12 m. Since the previous Ottoman siege of 1480 the Rhodian walls received many upgrades from the new school of trace italienne, which made it successful



in resisting artillery. The exposed land-facing sectors were awarded with a thickening of the main wall, doubling of the width of the dry ditch, coupled with a transformation of the old counterscarp into massive outworks (tenailles), the construction of bulwarks around most towers, and caponiers enfilading the ditch and the old battlement parapets were replaced with slanting ones suitable for artillery fights. European and Greek masons, laborers and slaves worked in the constructions, the Muslim slaves were charged with the hardest labour.

The Sword of King Louis, 1512

The future Grand Master of Rhodes, Émery d' Amboise, is born in 1434 in the chateau of Chaumont-sur-Loire. His father is Chamberlain of Charles VII and Louis XII. His brother is Cardinal and Minister of King Louis XII of France. Émery serves the Order as Treasurer and

Commander of the Galleys. On the 10th of July 1503, he is elected Grand Master. On his departure for the island of Rhodes in Greece, King Louis XII gave him the sword that King Louis the IX, known as Louis the Saint, (1226-1270) had used on his crusades.

Two large round towers support the scarp wall: the most impressive gate of Rhodes from a military viewpoint is built in 1512. The Arms of the Order of Saint John and Grand Master Amboise are walled on the curtain between the round towers. Gate Amboise is designed to face the Ottoman canons and protect the access to

the city. The the Collachium, the Hospitaller administration. the enemy outer gate, he access the city. Master Amboise the design of the that three gates city: A bridge crosses the moat to the outer arched entrance the gate of St. Antony



Gate leads to the Grand Master's Palace. For this reason, the Ottomans called this system 'Egri Kapi' (twisted doors).

Gate leads to the heart of But even if reaches the cannot Grand has modified ramparts so defend the with arches and is leading gate. An follows. Then

Mogarbina, 1507

100 cannons, 40 m. long, 12 m. wide, 5 decks, 1 bakery, 1000 sailors, that is Mogarbina, the pride of Egypt. Not far away from the island of Crete, one of the Order's galleys, armed to the teeth, is lying in wait for her. The galley's mast barely matches the height of Mogarbina's poop deck. Three times the galley's Captain Fra Gastineau asks the Egyptians to surrender. Three times the Egyptian Captain laughs aloud from his bridge. The fourth time a bullet hit him right between the eyes...

Mogarbina is the Order's biggest spoil ever. The receipts from the ship, renamed to Santa Maria, helped building the fortifications that continue in a frantic way.

High Treason, 1522

In the siege of 1522 the Knights, who used to be so well prepared for battle and so careful in administering the supplies, all of a sudden, run out of gunpowder...

On November 1522, Blas Dias, the servant of the Portuguese Chancellor Andrea d' Amaral is shooting messages to the Ottoman camp from the battlements of Auvergne, next to the Gate Amboise. Little sheets of papers, wrapped around arrows saying that the city ammunitions run out, the defenders are discouraged and the Turks should not leave. After he was caught he was brought to the dungeon, where he confessed and was hanged immediately after. His master, Andrea d' Amaral, denied his guilt, but his treason had been discovered by Rachel, the wife of Simeon Granada, the Commander of the Jewish Battalion. D' Amaral was tried in the Cathedral of St. John, where the insignia of the Order

were taken away from him. He was beheaded in public and his head is stuck on a pole on the top of the tower of St. George for all to see and especially for the enemy. His body is quartered as it fits all traitors and decorated the bastion of Auvergne, the Tower of Spain, the walls of France and the Tower of Italy.



60 years old and is wounded five times. On the 28th of July the battle in the Italian sector is decided in three hours: the Ottoman soldiers are hacked to death by the defenders of the city. This is the final episode: the enemy losses were so high that the siege was lifted. On the 17th of August the Ottoman forces withdrew leaving 9,000 dead and 15,000 wounded behind.

If Pierre d' Aubusson had lost Rhodes in 1480, the Ottoman Turks might have reached Italy a year later.

Revenge, 1510

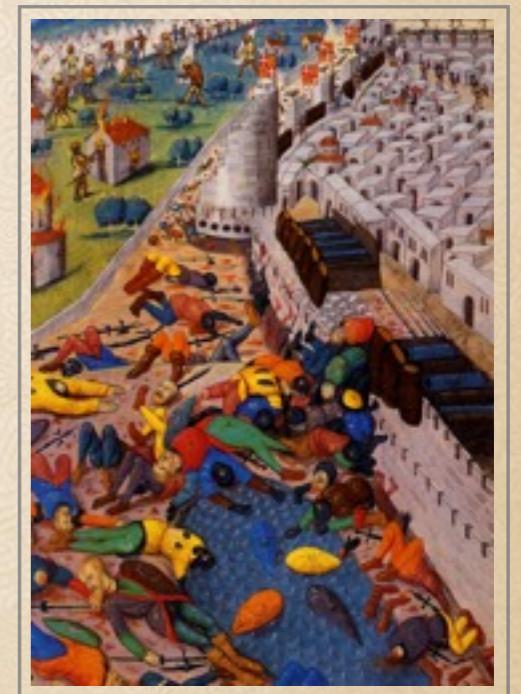
Until 1437 the gate of St. George led directly from the countryside to the market place. After the siege of 1480 the gate was closed by the Grand Master d'Aubusson. In 1496 it was transformed into a strong bastion.

On the 10th of August 1510 outside of the bay of Alexandretta Andrea d' Amaral from the Tongue of Portugal, Grand Chancellor of the Order, quarreled violently with Philippe Villiers de l' Isle Adam from the Tongue of France, Captain of the Galleys. It is about how to attack 22 Mamluk ships. The opinion of de l' Isle Adam for an open sea battle has prevailed and in the end the Knights won a victory with eleven



captured vessels towed to Rhodes.

In 1520, Basilio dalla Scuola, chief engineer of Emperor Maximilian, arrives in Rhodes. His mission is to turn the island into an impregnable fortress that will stop the Ottoman expansion. In January 1521 Philippe Villiers de l' Isle Adam is elected Grand Master. Chancellor Amaral, who lost the election for just a few votes, is heard to whisper that “de l' Isle Adam would be the last Grand Master in Rhodes”. In 1521 the bastion of St. George at the battle post of Auvergne took its final form when Grand Master Phillippe Villier de l' isle Adam applied the plans drawn up by Basilio dalla Scuola, thus making it one of the most impregnable positions in the fortification. Just a year later, on the 26th of June 1522, the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman arrives with 400 ships and 200,000 men. The defenders are 300 knights and 6,500 men-at-arms. Despite the size of his army and his many spies working undercover, the Ottoman Sultan is stuck for months before the walls of



Rhodes, unable to seize the island. In November 1552, Blas Dias, the servant of Chancellor d' Amaral, is caught in the battlements of Auvergne to shooting messages at the enemy's camp. Little sheets of papers, wrapped around arrows are saying that ammunitions run out, defenders are discouraged and Suleiman shall not leave. The treachery discovers Rachel, the wife of Simeon Granada, the Commander of the Jewish Battalion. Blas Dias is hung. On November the 15th, Chancellor d' Amaral is beheaded in public. His head is stuck on a pole on the top of the tower St. George. His body is quartered and decorated the bastion of Auvergne, the tower of Spain, the walls of France, the tower of Italy as it fits all traitors.



Bastion of Italy, 1516

The siege in 1480 and the earthquake in 1481 have severely damaged the fortifications. Rhodes could not withstand a new siege without extensive repairs. The Knights mobilized all resources to rebuild in a record time a solid defensive line. Grand Master Fabrizio del Carretto fortified in 1516 the tower of Italy with a bastion to hold cannon emplacements. Built after the advent of gunpowder, the bastion has a magnificent backhand washer for the fire and an angled curtain. To reimburse the owners of the demolished houses the Knights spent 4,104 florins (each golden florin weighs 3,2 gram of fine pure gold).

In 1520, Basilio dalla Scuola from Vicenza, chief engineer of Emperor Maximilian II, is sent to Rhodes. He applied the most advanced techniques to the old layout. He converted all existing towers into bastions. He deepened the moat and strengthened the walls of the counterscarp, which became a third wall. Basilio received 400 ducats by the Spanish Emperor Charles V and left Rhodes in 1522. From this moment his traces are lost forever.



Gabriele Tadino di Martinengo, 1522

Sultan Suleiman, by divine grace King of Kings, Ruler of the Rulers, Supreme Emperor of Byzantium and Trapezus, Mighty King of Persia, Arabia Syria and Egypt, Ruler of Europe and Asia, Prince of Mecca and Aleppo, Lord of Jerusalem and Master of the Seas, is stuck in front of the Rhodian walls for 4 months.

On the 4th of September 1522, Suleiman issued his last order to the Janissaries: to take Rhodes and have 3 days of plundering. Retreat is out of the question. The general attack lasted from the dawn until the late afternoon. The corpses of 15,000 Ottoman soldiers turned red the Bay of Acandia. The Janissaries scaled the Tower of Spain and fortified themselves there, urging the the Knights to besiege their own tower.

Inside the fortified city of Rhodes, the chief engineer Gabriele Tadino da Martinengo, has asked tthat all the shaving bowls be collected from the barbershops. He suspended a small clapper over each shaving bowl, and placed them at the most crucial locations of the wall, as he knew by experience that the slightest underground vibration, would cause the bells to ring. He run up and down with a tightly stretched tambourine, which he placed on the ground to hear where a mine is dug out. Then a countermine had to be dug out as well. In October 1522 Gabriele Tadino di Martinengo is shot in the head and although not mortally wounded, he was confined in the Hospital for 6 weeks. The disablement of the chief engineer in a sinister moment, where the Turks were

doubling the mining efforts below the defenses was a tragic turn of fate...

Traitors, 1522



In 1357 it was decreed that the Hospitallers in the Convent were not to use Turkish slaves to take their horses out to seek hay or grass. The reason? Defense, defense and again defense, -what if the slaves, who knew how the fortifications look like, escape, or give information to Muslim merchants?

In 1465 Grand Master Zaccaria divided the defense lines around Rhodes in battle stations according to nationalities. He assigned to each nationality, the Tongue, certain parts of the walls and the town to defend and maintain. Each Tongue became responsible for the own battle post. In 1521 Rhodes possesses the strongest fortifications of the Christian world. The moat is 5 km long, with 12 meters high and 12 meters thick walls and about 50 meters wide. It is always kept dry to trap the assailants, thus fighting in the moat was particularly bloody.

The battle posts around the moat withstood two Ottoman sieges. The siege of 1480 ended victoriously and saved Europe from an Ottoman expansion. During the second siege in

1522, 8 battle posts defended Rhodes: France, Germany, Auvergne, Spain, England, Provence, Italy, and Castile. The Tongue of England defended the wall section between the Gates St. Athanasios and St. John, there where in 1444 Grand Master Jean de Lastic has built the tower of the Virgin to protect the battle post.

In 1520 Basilio della Scuola, the chief engineer of Emperor Maximilian II, arrived in Rhodes. He converted all existing towers into bastions. Sultan Suleiman found the tower of the Virgin surrounded by a polygonal bastion. It seemed hopeless to capture it. On the 4th of September 1522 two gunpowder mines exploded under the bastion of England and brought down 12 meters of the wall. The Turks immediately assaulted the ramparts and soon held the gap. The English and German Knights under Fra' Nicholas Hussey held an inner barricade. They were soon joined by Grand Master de l' Isle Adam. The Knights regrouped and charged the Ottoman position. They drove back the enemy and captured their standards. Twice more Mustafa Pasha repeated his assault on the badly damaged bastion of England and twice more the English and German brothers drove him back. The enemy lost in a day over 2,000 men. And all of a sudden the gunpowder disappeared. Sultan Suleiman has conquered Rhodes with the help of traitors.



Anastasia, 1522

“On the 24th of September the general attack began and lasted from the dawn until the late afternoon. I saw the janissaries scaling the tower of Spain and fortify themselves there urging our men to besiege their own tower. During the day the tower of Spain changed hands twice. The corpses of fifteen thousand cursed behemoths turned the soil red. Suleiman called off the attack and condemned Mustafa Pasha to death for his failure to take the bastion. His life was saved only because others appealed on his behalf...



My husband was slain like the others, when they tried to recapture the tower, four arrows penetrated his body and his hand was chopped off. There was no time to mourn, I grabbed his body and carried him all by myself until I found a place close to the battlement to bury him, which I did as quickly as I could. Only one prayer, while digging under the horrible screams of the janissaries, those blackened souls coming from the hell. I took his sword and armory and rushed home, close to the wall it was. Home... for how long would that be my home... Days, hours may be...

The assault was going on, I could hear mines exploding, bones crushing, smelled burned flesh and bit my lips to go on. For four months are these seeds of the satan stuck in front of our walls. Deserters said that Suleiman's last order to the Janissaries was to take Rhodes, promising them three days of plundering. Retreat is out of the question.

We, the women, are at the forefront of the siege. We run to every side of the battle with bread and wine. We throw rocks and boiling water to the enemy over the walls. We are wounded and killed...

The end was approaching and I had to act as a loving mother. My children shall not fall in the hands of those beasts for the fate of Christian slaves is unspeakable. I rushed home, where my son was waiting to comfort me with water. When he turned his face away from me, I stabbed his thin body with the large battle knife. He fell on the floor without a sound. I found my daughter in her bed, ill and feverish as she was. I used the same knife to penetrate her heart. I hurried to dress in the armory of my dead husband and run back to the town of Spain. What else do I have to hope for now? To slay as many of those demons as I could, until one of their twisted swords sends me to reunite with those who had to be sacrificed. “

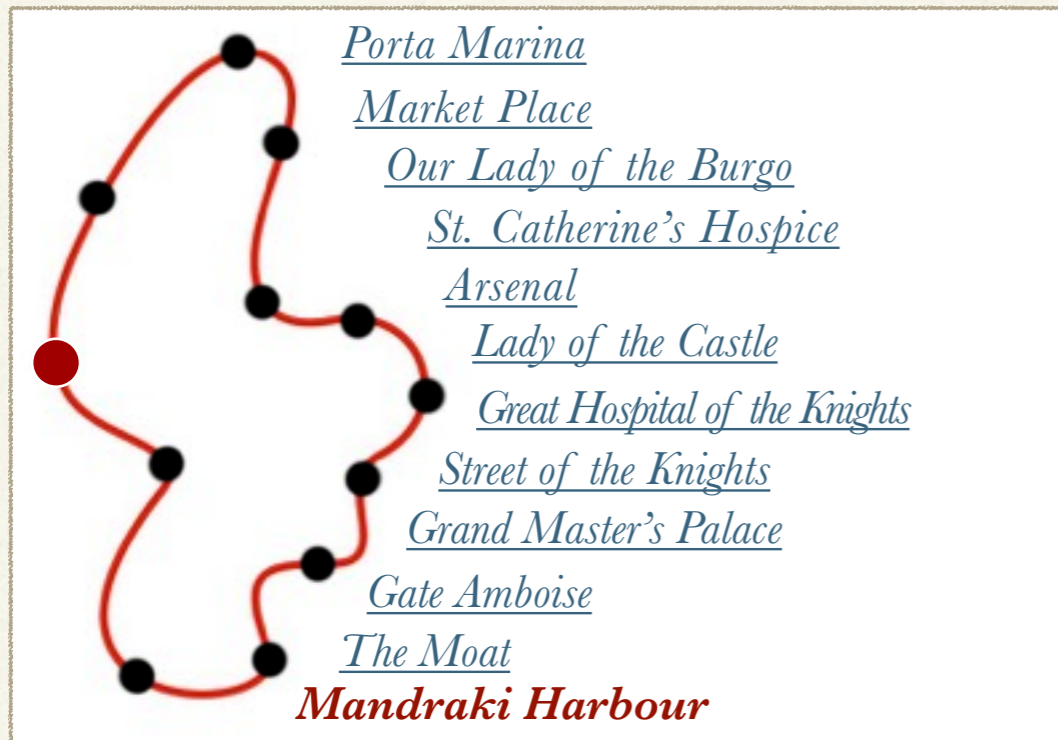
Anastasia hurried against the enemy with her sword until she fell on the besieged battlements of her home. Outside of the Palace of the Grand Master a commemorating plaque is telling the story of Anastasia.





This film has been designed and directed by Aldo Di Russo, pianist Romeo Scaccia. Courtesy of Unicity

Mandraki Harbour



Mandraki was the war port of Rhodes. It is believed that it hosted the great statue of Colossus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. At the end the mole, along the three medieval windmills, the Fort of St. Nicholas dominates the scene. Built in 1464-67 by Grand Master Zacosta, the tower was the object of vicious Ottoman assaults because of its important defensive position. After the siege in 1480 it was turned it into a fortress. The two gracious deer sculptures at the port entrance became the emblem of Rhodes. Close by is the Church of Evangelismos, built in 1930 as a copy of St. John of the Hospital.

St. John of the Hospital, 1310

The foundation stone of the Conventual Church of St. John of the Hospital is laid on the feast day of the patron saint, on the 24th of June 1310. St. John is connected to all religious and political activities and major ceremonies of the Order State, the regular general meetings of the Order every five years, elections and burials of Grand Masters and dignitaries. St. John was located on the highest point of the Medieval Town, opposite the Pa-



lance of the Grand Master. It was a basilica blending Gothic and Romanesque styles. The bell tower served as a watch tower patrolling western and eastern

coasts.

On the 24th of December 1522, while everybody was in church, the Ottoman troops rushed Rhodes, tortured the faithful to reveal hidden money and valuables. Rape was rampant, not even hospital patients have escaped rough handling. Churches were cleaned out, holy relics were destroyed and defiled. Hoping to find buried treasures the Ottoman troops destroyed the graves of the Grand Masters. Right after Suleiman set foot in Saint John, he converted the cathedral into a mosque, which was soon the fate of all other churches.

In 1825 Colonel Bernard Eugène Antoine Rottiers and his painter Witdoeck stayed in Rhodes for 5 months to study the medieval monuments. Illuminated by Witdoeck with numerous engravings the *“Descriptions des monuments de Rhodes”*, published in 1830 in Brussels, became an international bestseller. Rottiers is the last Christian traveller to have seen St. John. In 1856 a gunpowder magazine underneath the bell tower is struck by lightning and exploded. It is rumored that the gunpowder was stashed there by the Order’s Vice Chancellor, Andrea d’ Amaral, who betrayed Rhodes to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman in 1522. Under the Italian



rule, a copy of St. John, in Liberty Square, Mandraki harbour, is built after 1930. It was again a gothic basilica where byzantine and gothic elements blend: The Church of the Annunciation of Virgin Mary.

Grand Master Pierre D’Aubusson, 1480

“Right after the Turks have camped around the city, they started to scout sites for the siege. It was evident that they had plans to bombard the city from every possible angle. Therefore they surrounded the walls with bombards and mortars, destroying nine towers and knocking down our beautiful boulevard running up to the Master’s palace. Their major effort, however, focused in the mole of St. Nicholas, as they thought

that they would easily capture Rhodes, if they got hold of the tower. Thankfully, Grand Master Zacosta, built this tower, which stretches northward into the sea up to the mouth of our military harbor, and is protected by the chain, as a citadel in itself. Realizing the suitability of the tower to block the entrance of ships, the Turks decided to destroy it. They placed three bronze bombards of incredible size and power close by that fired round stones nine



palms in circumference. Indeed a big part of the tower was cast down after a continual barrage siege of three hundred stones for six days. It was clear to us, that if we wished to save the city we had to save the citadel. We employed a thousand men to work night and day to cut a trench, after which we built a wooden rampart at the head of the mole around the tower, making the mole at a small cost impregnable. We stationed a garrison from our bravest knights and another one facing east and west at the foundations and at the foot of the mole. In this way we made sure the Turks could not attack us from behind. We set up bombards on the city, which fired against the enemy throughout the battle. Thinking that the half ruined tower would be easily taken, the Turks have attacked us with their weak units from before dawn until two hours after noon. Meanwhile they were using their galleys to attack the citadel, but our men manfully protected the position and made the enemy withdrew. When the siege was over, deserters reported that the impious Turks left behind nine thousand dead and fifteen thousand wounded.”

Robert Jervis, 1480

“Pedro Raymondo Zacosta, God bless his soul, Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers in Rhodes, built in 1464 at the end of a natural mole a tower to guard our military harbour: the tower of St. Nicholas. The Duke of Burgundy,



Philipp the Good, supported the Grand Master in his plan and has sent him ten thousand escudos for the construction. The rest came from the tax which Grand Master Zacosta imposed on foreign merchants: two percent on all imported goods. Unless the tax was paid, the harbor chain did not come down and the ship did not enter the commercial port.

The Grand Master has predicted their coming and here we are today besieged, just sixteen years later. The impious Turks have arrived with one hundred and sixty ships and seventy thousand men. From our part only five hundred Knights and two thousand soldiers are available to defend Rhodes and our Christian faith. Their plan was simple: our city should be encircled and the access to the sea disabled. They thought that we would definitely run out of supplies. Then started to attack the sea wall, because they thought that this was the weak point of our defense. They started with a merciless bombarding of the tower of St. Nicholas and then they assaulted it. The sea turned red by the blood of the wounded men. We took actions against the enemy every night. Small bands of Rhodians were sent out from secret passages to short and quick hacking missions. They had spies everywhere, one was caught last minute before poisoning the food of our brave Grand Master Aubusson. One night I secretly observed how they built a pontoon brid-

undened men. We took actions against the enemy every night. Small bands of

Rhodians were sent out from secret passages to short and quick hacking missions. They had spies everywhere, one was caught last minute before poisoning the food of our brave Grand Master Aubusson. One night I secretly observed how they built a pontoon brid-

ge with boats and barrels with a line fixed at one end. The line was dropped into the water and, guided through the ring of an anchor, was secretly fixed on the rocks around the shore. I immediately realized their vicious plan: by pulling this line from the opposite shore the bridge would stop at the rocks and their troops would jump on the shore. On that night, the 17th of June 1480, just before the operation was launched, me, Robert Jervis, a sailor from England, decided to act. I dived unobserved in the sea water and cut the line holding the bridge. I reached the tower swimming and from there I saw the bridge drifting away from the shore to the open sea with all the enemy troops on it.”

