

IX

THE HOSPITALLERS AT RHODES, 1421–1523

The deaths in 1421 of the grand master Philibert of Naillac and his mighty adversary sultan Mehmed I provide a convenient pause midway in the history of the Knights Hospitaller at Rhodes. The military order of St. John of Jerusalem by then had been for over a

The sources for the history of the Hospitallers in Rhodes are more numerous and detailed for the period after 1421, and especially from about 1450 on, than for the earlier period, but they remain largely unpublished. Many such documents are preserved in the Archives of the Order of St. John, Royal Malta Library (cited as Malta); some of these are published in S. Pauli, *Codice diplomatico del sacro militare ordine Gerosolimitano* . . . (2 vols., Lucca, 1733–1737), while documents on particular subjects are scattered through such works as M. Barbaro di San Giorgio, *Storia della costituzione del sovrano militare ordine di Malta* (Rome, 1927).

The situation is different with respect to scholarly secondary literature: though much has been published on the Jem episode and the great sieges of 1480 and 1522, there is as yet no satisfactory general history comparable to J. Delaville Le Roulx's *Les Hospitaliers à Rhodes jusqu'à la mort de Philibert de Naillac: 1310–1421* (Paris, 1913), and recourse must still be had to G. Bosio, *Dell' Istoria della sacra religione ed ill. militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, II (2nd ed., Rome, 1629), which utilizes the Malta archives, and R. Vertot, *Histoire des chevaliers hospitaliers de St.-Jean de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1726). To the excellent recent bibliography by J. Mizzi, cited in the bibliographical note to chapter VIII, should be added F. de Hellwald, *Bibliographie méthodique de l'ordre souverain de St.-Jean de Jérusalem* (Rome, 1865); E. Rossi, *Aggiunta alla "Bibliographie . . ." de Ferdinand de Hellwald* (Rome, 1924), and A. Fumagalli, *Bibliografia rodia* (Florence, 1937). See also N. Iorga, "Rhodes sous les Hospitaliers," *Revue historique du sud-est européen*, VIII (1931), 32–51; 78–113, 169–187; R. Valentini, "L'Egeo dopo la caduta di Constantinopoli nella relazioni dei Gran Maestri di Rodi," *Bullettino dell' Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, LI (1936), 137–168; G. Bottarelli, *Storia politica e militare del sovrano militare ordine di San Giovanni* . . . , I (Malta, 1940), 305–358; and C. Marinescu, "L'Île de Rhodes au XV^e siècle et l'Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem d'après des documents inédits," *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, V (Studi e testi, no. 125, 1946), 382–401. More recent studies include those among the publications of Anthony Luttrell, cited in chapter VIII, which extend past 1421, as well as relevant portions of Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (Nieuwkoop, 1967), especially pp. 119–131, 182–184, and appertinent footnotes.

Guidebooks and descriptions of Rhodes under the Hospitallers start with V. M. Coronelli, *Isola di Rodi* (Venice, 1688); later ones of value include B. Rottiers, *Description des monumens de Rhodes* (Brussels, 1828); V. Guirin, *Voyage dans l'île de Rhodes* (Rhodes,

century a principal Christian bulwark in the eastern Mediterranean against the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria, against the Turkish emirates which had succeeded the Selchūkids of Rūm, and increasingly against the rising power of the Ottomans, who had started as a

1856); E. Billiotti and Abbé Cottret, *L'île de Rhodes* (Rhodes, 1881); C. Torr, *Rhodes in Modern Times* (Rhodes, 1881; rev. ed. Cambridge, 1887); G. Sommi Picenardi, *Itinéraire d'un chevalier de St-Jean de Jérusalem dans l'île de Rhodes* (Lille, 1900); Baron F. de Belabre, *Rhodes of the Knights* (Oxford, 1908); G. Gerola, "I Monumenti medioevali delle tredici Sporadi," in *Annuario della R. Scuola archeologica di Atene*, I–II (1914–1916; publ. separately, Bergamo, 1914–1915); A. Gabriel, *La Cité de Rhodes MCCCX–MDXII*: I, *Architecture civile et religieuse* (Paris, 1923); II, *Topographie, architecture militaire* (Paris, 1921); A. Maiuri, *Rodi* (Rome, 1923); Maiuri, "I Castelli dei Cavalieri di Rodi a Cos e a Budrūm (Alicarnasso)," in *Annuario della R. Scuola archeologica di Atene*, IV–V (1921–1922); H. Balducci, *Architettura turca a Rodi* (Milan, 1932), which treats also of the Hospitallers; and G. Jacopi, *Rodi* (Bergamo, 1933).

On the siege of 1444 see L. Nicolau d'Olwer, "Un Témoignage catalan du siège de Rhodes en 1444," *Estudis universitaris catalans*, XII (1927), 376–387, and C. Marinescu ["Marinescu"], "Du Nouveau sur *Tirant lo Blanch*," *Estudis romànics*, IV (1953–1954), 137–203. On the siege of 1480 see G. Caoursin, *Obsidionis Rhodiae urbis descriptio* (Venice, 1480; several times reprinted, and translated together with other writings of the same author). The reprint made at Ulm in 1486 is noteworthy; cf. Hellwald, *op. cit.*, p. 49. A recent translation by E. Mizzi appears in his *Le Guerre de Rodi: Relazioni di diversi autori sui due grandi assedi di Rodi, 1480–1522* (Turin, 1934). An account sent by grand master Peter of Aubusson to emperor Frederick III was published by M. Freher, in *Scriptorum rerum germanicarum*, II (1602). Another account, by the Frenchman Mary Dupuis, is in the appendix of Vertot's *Histoire*, pp. 598–616. Two accounts by German pilgrims were published by Iorga in his *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV^e siècle*, V (Paris, 1915), 64 ff. An account by Giacomo de Curti is found in translation in Mizzi, *Le Guerre di Rodi*; an account by Bernard of Breydenbach, *De Rhodiae urbis obsidione* (Mainz, 1486), is discussed in H. W. Davies, *Bernhard von Breydenbach and his Journey to the Holy Land, 1483–4* (London, 1911). See also, now, E. Brockman, *The Two Sieges of Rhodes: 1480–1522* (London, 1969).

On the siege of 1522 see Jacobus Fontanus (Jacob Fonteyn), *De bello Rhodio libri tres* (Rome, 1525; often reprinted and translated, e.g. in Mizzi, *Le Guerre di Rodi*); Th. Guichard, *Oratio habita coram Clementem VII P.M. in qua Rhodiorum expugnationis et deditionis summa continetur* (Rome, 1523); J. Bourbon (le Bâtard), *Relation de la grande et merveilleuse et très cruelle expugnation de la noble cité de Rhodes* (Paris, 1527; also in Vertot, *Histoire*; translated in Mizzi, *Le Guerre de Rodi*); M. Tercier, ed., "Mémoire sur la prise de la ville et de l'île de Rhodes en 1522 par Soliman II," in *Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, XXVI (1759), an extract from an account in Arabic by the sultan's physician; and P. Baudin, *Le Siège de Rhodes: Chronique du XVI^e siècle* (Constantinople, 1871). Turkish sources are covered in E. Rossi, *Assedio e conquista di Rodi nel 1522 secondo le relazioni edite e inedite dei Turchi* (Rome, 1927), and Rossi, "Nuove ricerche sulle fonti turche relative all' assedio di Rodi nel 1522," *Rivista di studi orientali*, XV (1934), 97–102.

For the affair of Jem Sultan see L. Thuasne, *Djem-Sultan* (Paris, 1892); G. Zippel, "Un Pretendente ottomano alla corte dei Papi: il Turchetto," in *Nuova antologia*, Nov. 1, 1912; Arm. Sakisian, "Djem Sultan et les fresques de Pinturicchio," *Revue d'art*, 1925, pp. 81–91; F. Cognasso, "Il Sultano Djem alla corte di Alessandro VI," *Papoli*, II (Milan, 1942), 96–103; A. Refiq, *Jem Sultan* (Istanbul, 1924); "Cem Sultan" in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, III (Istanbul, 1944), 69–81; and F. Babinger, *Mahomet II, le conquérant... (1432–1481)* (Paris, 1954). Hospital activities are covered by H. Karl Zwehl, *Nachrichten über die Armen-*

local emirate in Bithynia, but had expanded rapidly at the expense of the other emirates and the waning Byzantine empire.¹ The order, which had held castles in the Holy Land as fiefs from the kings of Jerusalem until 1291, and which had been the guest of the king of Cyprus from 1291 to 1306, had become at Rhodes an independent state, recognized as such by the pope, and by many states, Christian and Moslem. Subject to constitutional limitations on his power, its grand master was lord of Rhodes and its dependent islands, treating with other heads of state, sending ambassadors, coining money, naming consuls, and, at least in theory, controlling the men and property of the order throughout Latin Europe.

When Anton Fluvian (1421–1437) succeeded Philibert of Naillac as grand master, a treaty negotiated in 1403 between the Hospital and the Mamluk sultan (known as the “soldan of Babylon”) Faraj still governed relations between Rhodes and Egypt. Its terms, which were in French, give a clear picture of the scope of the order’s activities in the eastern Mediterranean in the early fifteenth century.² It provided that: (1) the peace of 1370, concluded after the sack in 1365 of Alexandria, should be observed; (2) the order might maintain a hospital at Jerusalem and a consul at Ramla, to help all pilgrims visiting Jerusalem; (3) Hospitallers and their suites might freely traverse the sultan’s lands, on horse or on foot, without impediment or tribute; (4) pilgrims visiting the Holy Sepulcher or the monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai should pay no dues other than those—precisely enumerated—prevailing before the capture of Alexandria; (5) brethren assigned to the hospital might enlarge the building for the better accommodation of pilgrims, and make repairs at the Holy Sepulcher and other holy places to prevent the ruin of those churches; (6) the

und Krankenfürsorge des Ordens vom Hospital des Heiligen Johannes (Rome, 1911), and *Über die Caritas im Johanniter-Malteser-orden seit seiner Gründung* (Essen, 1929). On the Hospitaller navy, see C. Manfroni, *Storia della marina italiana dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla battaglia di Lepanto* (Rome, 1897); A. Guglielmotti, *Storia della marina pontificia* (10 vols., Rome, 1886–1893); and E. Rossi, *Storia della marina dell’ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, di Rodi e di Malta* (Rome, 1926). Reviews and periodicals which have published articles of importance on the Hospitallers at Rhodes include *Annuario della R. Scuola archeologica di Atene* (1914 on); *Clara Rhodos*, organ of the Istituto FERT di Rodi (1928–1941); and *Rivista illustrata del sovrano militare ordine di Malta* (Rome, 1937–1943), now the *Annales [Revue] de l’Ordre*.

This chapter was translated from the Italian by the late Theodore F. Jones, and edited by Harry W. Hazard after Professor Rossi’s death.

1. See above, chapter VIII; cf. Paul Wittek, *Das Fürstentum Mentesche* (Istanbul, 1934) and *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1938; Royal Asiatic Society Monographs, no. 23). A chapter on the Ottomans is planned for volume V of this work (in preparation).

2. Malta, cod. 332, fol. 170, published in Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 108–110.

order might station a consul at Damietta, (7) ransom Christians from slavery, and (8) buy victuals free of duty; and (9) its vassals in Damietta, Alexandria, Jaffa, Beirut, Damascus, and Tripoli should pay the usual customs duties and no more. The parties promised to give each other three months' notice of any warlike activities, so that Christians or Moslems living in each other's territories might have time to remove themselves and their goods without hindrance. Although the terms of this treaty were not always observed, it is important because the order appears in it as guarantor and representative of the other Christian states, assuming in the Holy Land the role of protector of all pilgrims and maintainer of the holy places, a role later to be assumed by the Franciscans. The principal source of trouble with Egypt was the incessant piratical activity based on Rhodes and directed chiefly at Egyptian and Syrian merchant shipping.

Relations of the Hospital with its other Moslem neighbors were rather less amiable than with Egypt. The Selchükid sultanate of Rūm had collapsed, and by 1300 a number of small emirates had arisen on its ruins. Of these emirates, those which had seacoasts, and thus faced the increasingly seafaring Hospitallers, included—moving clockwise from the remnant of Cilician Armenia—Tekke (ancient Pamphylia) with the port of Adalia, Menteshe (ancient Caria) with the port of Palatia (Miletus), and Aydin (ancient Lydia) with the ports of Smyrna, until its capture by the Latins in 1344, and Altoluogo (Ephesus). All these had sheltered Turkish pirates, whose suppression was one of the Hospitallers' principal functions; all (except Smyrna) had fallen to the Ottoman ruler Bayazid I about 1390; all had been reestablished by Timur after his victories at Ankara and Smyrna in 1402; all were again in danger in 1421 from the revived Ottoman state. This aggressive power was the enemy of all within its reach, Moslem and Christian alike. Now that the brief respite following Bayazid's defeat at Ankara was past, the Ottomans were once again the chief threat to the order's future at Rhodes, though not immediately recognized as such.³

In 1426 the new Ottoman sultan, Murad II (1421–1451), put an end to the quasi-independent emirates of Aydin, Menteshe, and Tekke, and again directly faced the Hospitallers at Bodrum, Cos, and Rhodes. In the same year, the Mamluk sultan Barsbey invaded Cyprus, laid waste the Hospital's commandery at Kolossi, and took king Janus prisoner.⁴ The king was ransomed for 120,000 scudi, and

3. Valentini, "L'Egeo," pp. 137–139.

4. See below, chapter XI.

agreed to pay tribute. The order, which had joined in the defense of the island, and had contributed 15,000 florins for the ransoming of the king, renewed its truce with Egypt in 1428.⁵ The remainder of Fluvian's tenure was comparatively uneventful; Catalan-Aragonese influence increased markedly. At his death in 1437 he bequeathed a legacy to the order for the reconstruction of the huge new hospital at Rhodes, which was further enlarged by his successor John of Lastic (1437-1454) and by Peter of Aubusson (1476-1503); it is now an archeological museum, and one of the finest monuments of the order on the island.

The structure of the order at Rhodes under Lastic, in 1447, was based on a division into seven *langues*: (1) Provence, whose chief (*pilier*) held the post of grand preceptor or grand commander; (2) Auvergne, under the marshal; (3) France, under the hospitaller; (4) Italy, under the admiral; (5) Spain, under the draper; (6) England, under the turcopolier; and (7) Germany, under the grand bailiff. In 1462 the *langue* of Spain was split into that of Aragon and Navarre (still called Spain), under the draper, and that of Castile and Portugal, under the chancellor; the number of *langues* remained at eight for the rest of the order's stay at Rhodes. The grand master was elected for life by the Convent of the order, and governed with the advice of his council, including the chiefs of the seven (or eight) *langues*. The Hospitallers living in Rhodes or its dependent islands formed the Convent, but many stayed in the west at the various priories and commanderies, under the obligation of coming to Rhodes when summoned by the Convent.⁶ While the order was at Rhodes, the office of admiral became so important that it rivaled that of marshal, the commander of the land forces.⁷ The Hospital's ships were repaired, and sometimes built, in the arsenal (*tersenal*) at Rhodes, but more commonly were constructed at Genoa or Marseilles. Terms of service (*carovane*) on the ships were obligatory for the Hospitallers, while the crews were usually recruited at Rhodes.

The hospital activity for the sick and for pilgrims journeying to the Holy Sepulcher, which at its beginning in Jerusalem had been the principal mission of the order, had dwindled to secondary impor-

5. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 146.

6. On this subject, see J. Delaville Le Roulx, *Les Hospitaliers en Terre Sainte et à Chypre (1100-1310)* (Paris, 1904), pp. 285-434, and R. Valentini's article, "Un Capitolo generale degli Ospitalieri . . . tenuto in Vaticano nel 1446," *Archivio storico di Malta*, VII (1936), 133-168.

7. See Rossi, *Storia della marina*, *passim*, and now A. Luttrell, "The *Servitudo Marina* at Rhodes: 1306-1462," *Zeitschrift für Neogräzistik* [forthcoming].

tance, both because the knights were busy fighting on land and at sea, and because the new situation in the Levant had reduced the number of pilgrims to the Holy Land, and not all who did come stopped at Rhodes on their way. The order did maintain the huge hospital at Rhodes, which it rebuilt after 1437 with Fluvian's legacy, and the smaller hospital of St. Catherine, built in 1392 by Dominic de Alamania, an Italian knight, and modernized in 1516 by Constant Oberti. The grand master continued to appear in chancery acts as "servus pauperum Christi et custos Hospitalis Hierusalem." Additional hospital activity was carried on in the priories and commanderies of western Europe, and brethren were still occasionally mentioned as serving in the hospital at Jerusalem; their hospice at Ramla did not pass to the Franciscans until 1514.⁸

In 1440, while John of Lastic was grand master, Rhodes was threatened by an Egyptian fleet of eighteen galleys, dispatched by sultan Jakmak az-Zāhir. After having devastated the little island of Castellorizzo⁹ they approached Rhodes and anchored at Sandy Point. John of Lastic described the events in a letter written on November 6, 1440, to John de Villaragut, prior of Aragon and castellan of Amposta. The fleet of the order, composed of seven galleys, four other ships, and six lesser craft, attacked the Egyptian fleet, which resisted without moving, making much use of cannon and Greek fire. During the following night the Egyptians moved toward the coast of Turkey, and the next day formed their order of battle near the coast, above a sandy bottom where the Rhodian galleys could not maneuver. Nevertheless, the Hospitallers, commanded by their marshal, attacked the enemy, superior in number, pushing among them "not unlike a few bears amidst swarms of bees." There were heavy losses on both sides, until night divided the contestants. The next day the Egyptian fleet turned on Cos, devastating especially the property of the Hospitallers, and carrying off many Christian slaves. The grand master added that he had learned that the sultan, angry at his defeat, planned another expedition against Rhodes, thinking that if he could control it he would be able to reduce to submission the rest of eastern Christendom.¹⁰

8. See Girolamo Golubovich, ed., *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, IV (Quaracchi, 1923), 17, and A. Luttrell, "The Hospitallers' Hospice . . . at Venice: 1358-1451," *Studi veneziani*, XII (1970), 369-383.

9. Castellorizzo was destroyed by the Mamluks in 1444, and definitively lost by the order in 1450, having been occupied by the fleet of Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples, as authorized by a brief of pope Nicholas V (Marinescu, *Misc. Mercati*, V, 392-393).

10. Malta, cod. 354, fol. 103, published in Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 121-123. Cf. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 158-159.

While the grand master welcomed Burgundian and Catalan reinforcements, and continued to strengthen the fortifications on Rhodes, he did not neglect diplomacy. In 1442 he charged John Marsanach, lieutenant of the grand commander of Cyprus, with negotiations, and in 1443 John Delfino, grand squire of the order. But in response an Egyptian fleet reached Rhodes, in August 1444, besieged the fortress for forty days, and was repulsed.¹¹ In 1445 peace was restored. In an act of April 2, 1446, mention is made of the sultan of Egypt, "with whom we are at peace,"¹² and in a decree of March 6, 1448, to all Christians living "in the provinces, countries, cities, lands, and places of the most potent lord sultan, with whom we have good peace," it is made known that they can come to Rhodes freely to carry on commerce, paying only the dues to which other Christian merchants are held.¹³

When in 1448 Ibrāhīm Tāj-ad-Dīn, the emir of Karaman, took the Cilician castle of Corycus, formerly belonging to the king of Cyprus, John of Lastic wrote to the "most illustrious king of the Moors, and, like Alexander in his time, great soldan of Babylon" Jakmak aḏ-Ḍāhir, asking his intervention in obtaining the return of the castle, and in stopping Karaman from injuring Cyprus, as it was tributary to the sultan.¹⁴ In 1451 Ibrāhīm besieged Alaya (Candeloro or Scandalore, now Alanya), the emir of which, Lûtfi Bey, was allied with Cyprus and Rhodes.¹⁵ The grand master sent the order's galleys to attack Karaman, until the latter raised the siege of Alaya. By the middle of the fifteenth century, apprehensions in Rhodes had increased because the Hospitallers distrusted the Egyptians, and were disturbed by the Ottoman Turks. In 1449 watch was being kept day and night, and guards stationed on the heights were to light fires to give warning of the approach of ships "of enemies, both Turks and Moors, or of any other nation, Christian or infidel, which may be enemies of our order."¹⁶ On July 20, 1450, John of Lastic read "ad

11. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 162. On the four Egyptian attacks between 1439 and 1444, see Marinescu, *Misc. Mercati*, V, 386–387, Valentini, "L'Egeo," p. 138, and Schwoebel, *Shadow of the Crescent*, p. 84, as well as the Olver article cited in the bibliographical note.

12. Malta, cod. 359, fol. 220.

13. Malta, cod. 365, fol. 176. This decree was renewed by grand master James of Milly in 1455.

14. Malta, cod. 360, fol. 225. On Alfonso V's attempt to assist the Hospital's truce efforts see Marinescu, *Misc. Mercati*, V, 389–390.

15. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 181.

16. Malta, cod. 361, fol. 362: "ordinationi . . . del 27.5.1449." Those guilty of negligence in signaling were threatened with the loss of beard and hair.

clangorem sive pulsationem bucinarum" in the porch of the customs-house of Rhodes in the presence of an ambassador sent by "Moratbey Grande Turcho," a proclamation in accordance with which "good, true, and loyal peace" being confirmed with Murad, the people of Rhodes were absolutely forbidden to receive or deal in slaves or goods taken from Turkish ships, or to privateer against the Turks, "under penalty of loss of life and property."¹⁷

With the accession in 1451 of the son and successor of Murad II, young Mehmed II (known as the Conqueror [Fātiḥ] after his capture of Constantinople, two years later), the situation of Christian holdings in the Levant became more critical. The order, like the other states, sent an ambassador, Peter Zinotto, to congratulate the new sultan and to renew, on December 25, 1452, the peace made with his father. The fall of Constantinople on May 29, 1453, after a short and desperate siege, caused acute alarm at Rhodes. The order was impoverished; the island was sparsely manned. John of Lastic, in informing the prior of Auvergne, and urging the Hospitallers in the west to come to the defense of Rhodes, said he was ready to meet martyrdom for the defense of the faith. "Et si casus se offerat, pro salute animarum nostrarum martirium sumere, vitamque aeternam adipisci valeamus."¹⁸ The Hospitallers could well say of their city, "Civitas nostra Rhodi communis et libera est omnibus nacionibus Christianorum."¹⁹

Mehmed II asked Rhodes to pay 2,000 ducats as tribute in 1454, a humiliation to which the neighboring islands of Lesbos and Chios were subjected; as his final act of defiance, John of Lastic refused. Under his successor, James of Milly (1454-1461), a Turkish fleet laid waste the Hospitallers' islands of Syme, Nisyros, and Cos (1455), and sacked the village of Archangelos on the island of Rhodes itself; in 1456 it took Chios,²⁰ while plague and famine swept Rhodes. The king of Cyprus, John II de Lusignan, died in 1458. His heiress was his daughter, princess Charlotte, widow of John of Portugal, duke of Coimbra, and affianced to Louis of Savoy. A natural son of John II, called James the Bastard, hoped to succeed his father, and took

17. Malta, cod. 362, fol. 193. Valentini's description ("L'Egeo," p. 144) of this truce as an alliance is inaccurate.

18. Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 131. Cf. Bottarelli, *Storia politica e militare*, I (1940), 206, and Valentini, "L'Egeo," p. 138.

19. Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, III, 498.

20. Valentini, "L'Egeo," pp. 150-151; Marinescu, in *Misc. Mercati*, V, 395-400, with details of the order's precarious financial situation.

refuge with the sultan of Egypt, al-Ashraf Inal. There he turned Moslem, and with the sultan's aid landed on Cyprus, on August 18, 1460, just as Louis of Savoy arrived to assume the scepter. Queen Charlotte fled to Rhodes; Louis was besieged in the castle of Kyrenia, and resisted for some time with the help of the Hospitallers; then he retired to Piedmont. During these events the order sought to help Charlotte, the legitimate heiress, and at the same time to protect its own vast and lucrative interests in Cyprus.²¹ John Delfino, sent in 1459 to negotiate with sultan Inal, was thrown into prison, where he died before he could be freed.

At this time the order was repeatedly at odds with Venice for detaining Venetian ships. In 1460 the sequestration, the sale of goods, and the arrest of Saracen travelers on two Venetian ships bound for Egypt led to a punitive expedition by the Venetian captain-general, Alvise Loredan. He put troops ashore on Rhodes, and laid waste various villages until the order released the prisoners. Again in 1464, because of a similar incident involving two Venetian ships in Syrian waters, Venice mounted a naval demonstration at Rhodes until the prisoners were released and their merchandise returned.

In 1462 the Ottoman Turks renewed their truce with Rhodes; the order still refused to pay "tribute" but offered a "gift" to the sultan as a sign of friendship, without incurring the obligation of stated renewal.²² In the same year, on November 16, 1462, the Turks occupied Lesbos, and the last of the Gattilusi, Nicholas II, was strangled at Constantinople. Preparations for the crusade planned by Pius II were started by the Hospitallers, but the death of the pope at Ancona on August 15, 1464, delayed the enterprise.

In 1464, and again in 1466, Mehmed II renewed his demand for tribute; as the order did not comply, a complete rupture resulted. The order strengthened the fortifications of Rhodes; in 1464 the fort of St. Nicholas, defending the Mandraki (the later Port of Galleys) was rebuilt. When the Turks laid siege to Euboea (Negroponte), a Venetian possession, and conquered it, on July 12, 1470, two galleys commanded by John of Cardona, bailiff of Majorca, coöperated with the Venetian fleet in an attempt to save the island. The Christian league, initiated by pope Paul II, and backed by Sixtus IV, brought

21. On the death of James the Bastard in 1473, the rule of Cyprus was taken over by his widow, Catherine Cornaro, of Venice, and in 1489 passed directly to Venice, which kept it until 1571. See chapter XI, below.

22. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 212. The grand master was (Peter) Raymond Zacosta (1461–1467). In 1466 there were 300 knights, 30 chaplains, and 20 sergeants stationed on Rhodes.

together in 1471–1472 the forces of Venice, of the pope, of Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples, and of Rhodes. The grand master, Giovanni Battista Orsini (1467–1476), contributed two galleys commanded by James of Vandenberg, bailiff of Brandenburg. The fleet of the league in 1472 attacked and devastated Smyrna, and then turned to the south and sacked Adalia, Seleucia (Silifke), and Corycus.²³ The commander entered into relations with Uzun Hasan, the “White Sheep” (Ak-koyunlu) Turkoman ruler of eastern Anatolia and western Persia, an enemy of the Turks. The defeat of Uzun Hasan in the battle of Kara Hisar (or Bashkent, in the mountains north of Erzinjan), on August 2, 1473, laid low the hopes of the league, which accomplished nothing more.

When Orsini died, his successor Peter of Aubusson (1476–1503) took care to strengthen the fortifications, to attract knights and volunteers from the west, and to stock the city with provisions in case of attack. Mehmed II was busy in Albania, in Hungary, and in Wallachia, and was raiding in Venetia as far as the Piave valley (1477). Relations between the Turks and the Hospitallers were those of prudent waiting on both sides; but there was no doubt that Rhodes would soon be attacked. Meanwhile peace was restored with Egypt; the text of the treaty²⁴ was drawn up in Italian, translated into Greek, and thence into Arabic. The customary commercial clauses were included, and a *fondaco* of Rhodes at Alexandria was mentioned. The Hospitallers would be permitted to go freely to the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and to the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. There was no longer any mention, however, of the hospice and hospital of the order in Jerusalem. A truce concluded in 1478 by Aubusson with abū-‘Amr ‘Uthmān, the Ḥafṣid ruler of Tunisia, through the mediation of John Philo of Rhodes, is evidence of the extent of the commercial interests of Rhodes at that time. The agreement concerns reciprocal customs duties, and permission for Rhodes to take annually from Tunis and its dependencies 30,000 *moggie* of corn.²⁵

A son of Mehmed II by the name of Jem was governor of Caria, in

23. The commander of the papal fleet was cardinal Oliver Carafa. In the sack of Adalia (Satalia), the chains of the harbor were carried away and hung in St. Peter's at Rome, with the following inscription: “Smyrnam ubi Oliverius Card./Neap. Carafa Xysti IV Pontificiae/Classis dux vi occupasset in/Sataliae urbis Asiae portum/vi quoq. irrupit ferreamq./hanc catenam inde extraxit/et supra valvas huius basilicae/suspendit.”

24. Malta, cod. 75, fols. 156–159. Cf. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 299.

25. Malta, cod. 75, fol. 171. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople may have prevented Rhodes from obtaining corn from the Black Sea ports.

the region still called Monteshe; in the correspondence of the order surviving in the *Libri Conciliorum* he is called "Prince Jem Sultan, son of the Grand Turk." To keep the Hospitallers quiet, Jem, evidently with his father's approval, negotiated with them at length from February 1478 to April 1479. His emissary was a renegade Greek named Dimitri Sofiano. Jem offered peace to the Hospitallers. Aubusson responded affably and diplomatically, remarking that if he were to make peace, he must inform "his holiness the pope, and the most serene Christian kings and princes," from whom he held garrison duty in honor of the Catholic faith; meanwhile he prepared a truce limited to the waters between Rhodes and the Turkish coast, in order to favor commerce. These negotiations led to nothing but a provisional truce; a real peace could not be concluded.²⁶

On December 4, 1479, a Turkish squadron cruised before Rhodes, and landed troops which devastated villages and attacked the island of Telos (Piskopi). From that moment Rhodes and the Hospitallers' other islands were practically besieged. On May 23, 1480, a large Turkish fleet appeared and began to land forces on the island.²⁷ There were three thousand janissaries and an uncertain number of soldiers, collected at Marmaris (Fisco) and then ferried over to Rhodes.²⁸ Compared with the enemy, which had picked troops, and great siege guns able to throw stone balls weighing over 1,400 pounds, the defenders were in very small numbers—only a few more than three hundred knights, about the same number of sergeants, and not more than three to four thousand soldiers from France and Italy, including a detachment led by Benedict della Scala of Verona.

Mesih Pasha, who commanded the Ottoman forces, first tried to overpower the defenses of the fort of St. Nicholas, which protected the entrance to the Mandraki. He succeeded in dismantling it, and

26. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 306–307. On the Ottoman conquest of Euboea and Lemnos in 1479 see Schwoebel, *Shadow of the Crescent*, pp. 121–122.

27. For Christian and Turkish accounts of the siege, consult the bibliographical note. In the archives of the order at Malta there is, it appears, no chronicle of the siege, but only actions taken on May 21, 1480, when the attack was imminent, and deliberations made after the siege, as for example on August 7, 1480, a reward given to a person who had distinguished himself for valor. G. Caoursin, vice-chancellor of the order, afterward wrote and had printed a famous account of the siege. The following notation made by him (Malta, cod. 76, fol. 35) deserves citation: "Quia civitas Rhodi obsidebatur per Turcos et summo conatu oppugnabatur, in tanta rerum perturbacione ac formidine peracta in scriptis non sunt redacta. Sed, habita victoria, historia est edita per Guillelmum Caoursin Rhodiorum Vicecancellarium. Quae per orbem impressorum arte est divulgata, quapropter in hoc spacio nihil est registratum. Ita est: G. Caoursin, Rhodiorum Vicecancellarius."

28. Khoja Sa'd-ad-Din in the Turkish chronicle, *Tāj at-tawārikh* (Istanbul, 1863), p. 573, gives the figures of 3,000 janissaries and 4,000 *azabs* (marines), who left Constantinople with him, and an uncertain number of soldiers coming from Rumelia and Anatolia. Modern Turkish historians accept the figure of 100 to 160 ships, and 70,000 to 100,000 soldiers.

attempted to put assault troops on it from a raft, but the valor of the knights and the effectiveness of their artillery stopped this undertaking. Then Mesih Pasha concentrated his forces on the eastern side of the city, at the bay of Acandia. The perimeter of the walls was shared by the eight *langues* of the order; the Acandia front, entrusted to the Italian *langue*, was the site of the bitterest fighting. At certain points the Turks, after demolishing the walls with gunfire and mines, were able to mount the parapet and begin a decisive attack. Aubusson, more than once wounded, encouraged the defenders, who succeeded in repelling the attack. Thirty-five hundred Turks are said to have fallen on July 27–28, in the climax of the battle.

Informed of the grave losses and of the difficulties of the enterprise, sultan Mehmed II, who in these same months was engaged in an expedition led by Ahmed Pasha against Otranto in Apulia (captured on August 18, 1480),²⁹ ordered Mesih Pasha to bring the ships back to Constantinople and to send home the Anatolian troops. On August 17, 1480, the siege was raised, and two ships sent by Ferdinand of Naples entered the harbor with reinforcements.³⁰ The Hospitallers, exultant over their success, set to work to repair the walls and strengthen those parts which had proved to be weakest. At the point where the melee had been the most violent, a church was built and dedicated to Our Lady of Victory.

On April 27, 1481,³¹ the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II died, while with a large army near Scutari, perhaps planning a new enterprise toward the west. His death caused a fratricidal war for the succession between his two sons, Bayazid and Jem. Bayazid was governor at Amasya, and Jem at Konya (Iconium), both in Anatolia. Bayazid II was the elder, and knew of his father's death first. He reached Constantinople on May 21, and took over the government. But Jem reached Brusa, and proclaimed himself sultan on May 28. He sent a deputation to his brother, proposing that they divide the empire, one to govern Anatolia, the other Rumelia (European Turkey). Bayazid refused the proposal, and sent his army against his brother. Jem fled to Syria and thence to Cairo, where Ka'itbey, the Mamluk sultan, gave him shelter. Then Bayazid got in touch with the Hospitallers to

29. Otranto was liberated on September 10, 1481.

30. G. M. Monti, *La Espansione mediterranea del Mezzogiorno d'Italia e della Sicilia* (Bologna, 1942), pp. 185–186. "Mesih Pasha" has often been identified with the renegade Manuel Palaeologus, son of Thomas (of Achaea).

31. European sources give different dates; the most generally accepted is May 3. But the late author of this chapter considered 27 Safar 886 = April 27, 1481, more probable. The news of Mehmed's death was kept secret for several days.

renew the peace, and charged the *subashi* of Petsona³² to negotiate with the knights. He sent them an emissary, one Hajjī Ibrāhīm, who on November 26, 1481, concluded a truce with the knights valid for six months. Traffic and commerce between Rhodes and the Anatolian coast as far as Palatia were to be allowed. The order sent its own ambassador, Mosco, to the subashi to treat for a real peace with the sultan, but one "without any sort or form of tribute between the sultan and the most reverend grand master." In case peace could not be made, and the sultan chose to disavow the truce, three months' notice was to be given, so that the Turks in Rhodes, and the Rhodians in Turkey, could return to their homes with their property.³³

Shortly before this Jem Sultan, after a brief residence in Cairo and a pilgrimage to Mecca, had reappeared in Anatolia, laid siege to Konya and Ankara, and then retired to southern Anatolia, pursued by his brother's troops. To avoid being taken prisoner, he turned to the Hospitallers, with whom he had been in touch a few years previously. The archives of the order contain a letter, dated July 12, 1482,³⁴ and directed to Jem Sultan, in which he was advised of preparations being made to bring him to Rhodes, and of orders given to Dominic Álvaro de Stúñiga, captain-general of the galleys, to bring to Rhodes "Zam Soldan, son of Mahumet, formerly Grand Turk." He went on board a ship of the order of July 20 at Anamur,³⁵ and nine days later arrived in Rhodes.

His stay in Rhodes lasted little more than a month. On August 22, 1482, he signed with the grand master a perpetual treaty of peace, for himself and his heirs, pledging himself, when he had conquered the throne, to grant freedom of commerce in Turkey to the order and its subjects, and to pay expenses contracted in his favor to the amount of 150,000 gold scudi. He gave permission to the order to treat in his name with Bayazid, and expressed his willingness meanwhile to go to "France" (western Europe). He was probably afraid of being pursued even to Rhodes by his brother, and was probably also persuaded by the order, which, if it got rid of Jem but kept him in the west, could use him as a hostage in treating with Bayazid. Jem Sultan sailed from Rhodes on September 1, 1482, and arrived on October 16 at the Savoyard port of Villefranche. He spent

32. In Turkish, Pechin, capital of the territory which until 1426 constituted the emirate of Monteshe (Caria). A *subashi* was a subordinate official, commanding a district.

33. Malta, cod. 76, fol. 70.

34. Malta, cod. 76, fols. 93 ff.; published in Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 411–412.

35. For a discussion of the date of sailing, in contrast with that found in Thuasne, *Djem-Sultan* (Paris, 1892), cf. Ismail Hamdi Danişmend, *Izahlı Osmanlı tarihi kronolojisi* (Istanbul, 1947), p. 372.

four months in Nice, and was then sent to Chambéry in Savoy, and thence to other castles of the order in Dauphiné, Provence, and Auvergne.³⁶

The day after Jem Sultan left Rhodes, instructions were given to the ambassadors charged with treating for peace with Bayazid II. Peace between “the most illustrious, excellent, and potent great lord Bayazid Sultan, and the most reverend lord Peter of Aubusson, grand master of Rhodes, and the noble religion of Jerusalem” was signed on December 2, 1482.³⁷ It was agreed that full liberty of commerce should exist for both parties, and that fugitive Christian slaves might be received at the castle of St. Peter at Bodrum in Anatolia. At the same time it was agreed that the order would assume custody of Jem Sultan (Zyzumus in the Latin text), receiving in return 35,000 Venetian ducats a year for the cost of maintenance of the unfortunate prince. As proof of his gratitude toward the Hospitallers, who kept Jem in golden imprisonment in France, and resisted the demands of various sovereigns who wanted him as a tool against the Turks, Bayazid sent to Rhodes on April 20, 1484, an ambassador bringing as a gift the right hand of St. John the Baptist, patron of the order.³⁸

After the victorious repulse of the siege of 1480, and the lucky consequences of the consignment of Jem to the Hospitallers, the situation at Rhodes had greatly improved. The importance of the order had increased even in Turkish eyes. While up to 1480 the Turks

36. The rest of Jem's adventures belong rather to the history of Europe than to that of the Hospitallers. Many Christian states intrigued to get hold of him: the Aragonese king Ferdinand I of Naples, Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, and Charles VIII of France. In 1489 pope Innocent VIII managed to get custody of him. The Turkish prince, leaving Toulon on a Hospitaller ship, reached Civitavecchia on March 6, 1489, and going up the Tiber from Ostia to Porta Portese, entered Rome on March 13, was received by the pope, and was lodged in the Castel Sant' Angelo. Bayazid II negotiated with Innocent VIII, and promised to pay the pope 40,000 ducats a year for his brother's expenses; in 1492 he sent to the pope as a gift a relic believed to be “the lance which pierced Christ on the cross.” To the new pope, Alexander VI (1492–1503), Bayazid proposed that Jem be poisoned and thus disposed of finally. But at that time Charles VIII, invading Italy, persuaded the pope to transfer Jem to his custody. Charles took him on the road to Naples; at Capua Jem sickened and died, on February 25, 1495, not without suspicion of poison. His body was embalmed and, after long insistence by Bayazid directed to the king of Naples, was sent in 1499 to Turkey and buried in Brusa. Jem Sultan's residence in Rome is commemorated in a picture by Pinturicchio: the *Disputa di Santa Caterina*, in the Borgia apartments of the Vatican. It is said that Jem is represented in the person of the knight on the right of the picture. Cf. articles by Zippel, Cognassa, and Sakisian, cited in the bibliographical note.

37. Italian and Greek text, in Malta, cod. 76, fols. 101–102. Cf. Greek text in Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 419–420.

38. The hand was kept at Rhodes until 1522 in a casket of gold and ivory made for the grand master Aubusson, and then taken to Malta, where it remained until 1798.

had claimed an act of vassalage at the payment of the tribute, now it was the knights who received a sort of tribute from the Turks in the guise of an annual payment for Jem's upkeep. The grand master Aubusson was carrying on a policy of acquiring prestige, with evident results both in the Levant and in Europe. In 1484 he reconfirmed the peace with the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, after having obtained compensation for breaches of the peace by Egypt; Ka'itbey on this occasion sent him a gift of 3,000 *arādib* of corn.³⁹

In 1486 he intervened with Bayazid II in favor of the Mahona of Chios, which was involved in a contest with the Turks over damages inflicted by a Chian corsair on Turkish shipping, and was threatened with reprisals by the sultan. The grand master succeeded in turning the Turkish threat away from Chios, and getting the damages allegedly owed by the Mahona reduced. In 1489, by transferring Jem to Innocent VIII as a hostage, Aubusson got a cardinal's hat, which he received at Rhodes with solemn ceremony on July 29. At the same time, the pope gave to the order the possessions of the knightly orders of the Holy Sepulcher and of St. Lazarus, which had been dissolved.

But the worries of the order had not ceased, and the general situation was becoming worse. Rhodes was gravely injured by successive earthquakes in March, May, October, and December, 1481, which added ruins to those of the siege (and of previous quakes). A huge work of restoration and repair was needed, at enormous cost. The order could expect little help from western Europe, because of the disturbances there caused by the hostility between Charles VIII of France and the Aragonese king of Naples, and by the ill-fated policy of pope Alexander VI. And after Jem Sultan died on the road to Naples in 1495, the order could expect little consideration from the Turks.

On March 1, 1496, Paul di Saloma, of the priory of Messina, was sent to Sicily to collect "armed ships of any nation or condition, the owners and captains of which have the will and holy wish to injure infidels of any sort," offering them a welcome at Rhodes and liberty to "sell those goods captured, but from infidels only, not from Christians."⁴⁰ In a letter dated September 10, 1496,⁴¹ the grand master and council, having learned that the "Grand Turk, enemy of the Christians and especially of our order, whose function it is in this portion of the Levant to resist his most insolent power," was build-

39. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 394. *Arādib* is the plural of Arabic *irdabb*.

40. Malta, cod. 392, fol. 174.

41. Malta, cod. 392, fols. 118 ff. Cf., on folios 120 and 122 of the same volume, letters on the same subject.

ing great ships of two to three thousand tons, and many galleys, wishing to revenge the defeat which his father suffered under the walls of Rhodes, ordered Boniface de' Scarampi, commander of Savona, Brasco de Salvago of Genoa, and Fabrizio del Carretto, of the priory of Lombardy, to do their utmost to bring to Rhodes two galleys, with crews and material for the equipping of ships: "400 pieces of cotton cloth, 200 for sails for galleys, and 200 for ships, 300 oars, and ropes and hawsers for two galleys." Fabrizio del Carretto and Philip Provana were to command the ships.

Documents from the order's archives reveal the great interest taken by the grand master Aubusson at the end of the fifteenth century in the strengthening of his navy. Turkish corsairs increased their activities in the Aegean islands, and even among the Hospitallers' possessions. A Turkish pirate named Kemal Re'is became famous in these years for his pitiless chase of Christians on the sea.⁴²

Nevertheless, Bayazid II was at that time not planning to attack Rhodes. In 1498 the truce between the Turks and the knights was confirmed, with the usual guarantees of freedom of commerce which were in practice constantly violated. Turkish preparations were directed rather against Venice, and threatened the Adriatic after the Turkish conquest of Lepanto in 1499. In 1501 a Christian league was organized, the participants being Venice, France, Spain, Portugal, the pope, and Rhodes. The Hospitallers agreed to supply four armed galleys, to be commanded by the admiral (of the *langue* of Italy), the turcopolier (of the *langue* of England), the prior of St. Gilles (of the *langue* of Provence), and the castellan of Amposta (of the *langue* of Aragon). The grand master, cardinal Peter of Aubusson, had been named by the pope to be captain-general of the league. A great fleet, composed of Venetian ships commanded by Benedict Pesaro, seven papal galleys under the bishop of Paphos, James Pesaro (brother of the Venetian commander), five galleys under the command of the Hospitaller Fabrizio del Carretto, and three galleys from Rhodes, besides the "great ship" and the "bark" of the order, all under the command of the admiral, Louis of Scalenghe, gathered at Cerigo in the summer of 1502. The grand master asked that part of the fleet be sent to Rhodian waters, where Turkish vessels had devastated the island of Chalce, but Benedict and James thought it better to use the whole fleet in attacking Santa Maura (Leucas), in the Ionian islands. Santa Maura was captured August 29, 1502, after a week's siege in which the Hospitallers distinguished themselves. For his part, the

42. Cf. H. A. von Burski, *Kemäl Re'is: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der türkischen Flotte* (Bonn, 1928).

grand master hastily armed a galley which captured many Turkish corsairs operating in Rhodian waters; some were killed, others were put to work excavating the moats of Rhodes.⁴³

In 1503, when Venice made peace with the Turks, Rhodes was isolated. On July 3 of that year the grand master Peter of Aubusson died; his successor, Emery of Amboise, prior of France, was elected at once by the Convent, but did not arrive in Rhodes until 1504. Meanwhile his lieutenant, Guy of Blanchefort, prior of Auvergne, appointed captains for the three galleys of the order, which were called *Petronilla*, *Victoriosa*, and *Catherineta* (or *Catherinella*). He sent the galleys against a squadron of Turkish corsairs which had ravaged Rhodes itself in August 1503, and then gone toward Makri (Fethiye) on the mainland. Eight Turkish ships were sunk, and two captured, with much booty, but in the fight one Rhodian galley was burned.

For their part, the knights repaid with acts of piracy the continued incursions of Turkish corsairs. In 1504 it happened that one Kemal Beg, a *kapîji-bashi* (messenger or quartermaster) of Kurkut Chelebi, Bayazid II's son and governor of southern Anatolia, was captured by a boat commanded by Guy Borel Valdiviessa e Maldonato. Kemal was taken as a slave to Rhodes; but on the night of July 20 he succeeded with twelve other slaves in eluding the vigilance of his guards. He tried to escape on a Spanish ship, but fell into the sea and was drowned. Kurkut, from his residence in Laodicea, wrote the knights several letters in Greek demanding the liberation of his *kapîji-bashi* and threatening to inform the "lord Chonochiari."⁴⁴ The order replied, explaining what had happened, and expressing its regret at Kemal Beg's death; but, referring to the threats, it added that the order, for its part, had to complain of the continued attacks by "Cortogoli and his companion corsairs" and of devastations made by the Turks in the neighborhood of the castle of St. Peter. Finally, on July 28, 1504, the order sent this dry response to the son of the sultan: "Most illustrious sir, we are good and peaceful friends of the lord Chonochiari, and of your own most illustrious lordship, and we are always ready to do everything that is just and honest and due to good friends; and to this purpose we are on this island, by order of the most serene Christian princes, from whom we have favor and

43. Malta, cod. 79, fol. 83. Titian was commissioned by James Pesaro to paint an altarpiece commemorating this victory; see E. Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic* (New York, 1969), pp. 178-179 and fig. 16.

44. I.e., his father Bayazid II. *Chonochiari*, which often occurs in Venetian and Rhodian documents of this period, is a European corruption of the Persian *khunkār*, *khudāvand-gār* (emperor), one of the titles of the Ottoman sultans.

help because we are their sons; and except them we know no other superior, and to God and then to them we have to answer for our affairs, and we hope in God that while we do justice, his aid will not fail us."⁴⁵

These and other incidents,⁴⁶ however, did not cause a complete break in the truce with the Turks. In 1507, in giving permission to a certain Nidio de' Moralli to arm a brigantine at Cos, the order forbade him to molest Venetian ships, or to break the truce with the Turks within the stated confines (*limites induciarum*), that is to say, on the stretch of sea comprised between Palatia and Adalia, and in the channel of Chios.

The relations of the order with Egypt were ambivalent, from the time when, around 1505, sultan Kansuh al-Ghūrī, although fearing the Turks, had drawn closer to them and received from them provisions of war, and especially timber, for the ships with which he intended to dispute with the Portuguese the control of the Red Sea. Kansuh received help even from the Venetians, whose trade in spices was ruined by Portuguese colonial expansion. In fear of being handed over to Bayazid, a son⁴⁷ of Jem Sultan had fled from Cairo to Rhodes. This also could well be a motive for the Ottoman sultan's breaking the truce with Rhodes. However, no Turkish attack on Rhodes occurred yet. Instead, there were many naval successes of the knights at this time over the Egyptians. In 1506 near Cos the Hospitallers captured seven Egyptian ships which had come to devastate the island. In 1507 near Crete they captured a large merchant ship, called the "Gran Nave Mogarbina," chiefly employed in carrying spices from Alexandria to Tunis to supply the whole Maghrib. The ship was towed to Rhodes; in it were goods of great value, spices, cloths, and carpets, and travelers for whose ransom the Egyptians paid heavily. In the same year three Saracen ships were captured off Cyprus.

In 1510 the Egyptian sultan Kansuh sent his fleet to load timber in the ports of the Gulf of Alexandretta, which belonged to the Turks. The order learned of this, and on August 6 the grand master Amboise ordered Andrew do Amaral, the chancellor's lieutenant, and Philip Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the seneschal, the two commanders of the order's fleet, to sail toward the gulf, avoiding Cyprus (in order to keep the voyage secret), and, when the Egyptian fleet appeared, to

45. Malta, cod. 80, fols. 85-92. For "Cortogoli" see below.

46. In 1505 Kemal Re'is attacked the islands of Nisyros, Telos, and Syme, and in 1506, Leros.

47. Probably named Murad; he was killed at Rhodes, together with his two sons, after the Turkish conquest, in January 1523. Cf. Rossi, *Assedio e conquista*, p. 42, note 2.

attack it, and to fight "discreetly like wise and experienced men, and bravely like knights and gentlemen assigned to the defense of the holy faith."⁴⁸ The attack succeeded; when the two fleets met, on August 23, 1510, near Alexandretta (Iskenderun), the Egyptian fleet was thrown into confusion. Eleven cargo ships and four battle galleys were captured, in good condition; the other Egyptian ships were burned.⁴⁹

Great changes took place in the next few years. Bayazid II died on May 26, 1512; on the whole he had maintained good relations with the knights. His son and successor Selim I (1512–1520) was more warlike, and, as we shall see, aggravated the threat to Rhodes. The grand master Emery of Amboise died in 1512. Guy of Blanchefort was elected his successor, but he was in France, and died before he reached Rhodes. His successor was Fabrizio del Carretto, *pilier* of the *langue* of Italy, and admiral, a man of great valor, who had distinguished himself in the defense of the fort of St. Nicholas against the Turks in 1480. Leo X (1513–1521) was pope, and well disposed toward the order, but the struggle between Charles V and Francis I prevented Europe from giving effective help to the order when the moment of peril arrived.⁵⁰

Selim first got rid of his brothers, and then began his conquests in 1514 by defeating Ismā'īl, the Ṣafavid shah of Persia. The shah was for Selim an enemy to be feared on the eastern front, and one who had combined with Christian states to the sultan's loss. Compelled after the battle of Chaldiran (fought on August 23, 1514) to sue for peace with the Turks, shah Ismā'īl still cherished plans for revenge. He wrote to Rhodes in 1515, asking that the Hospitallers hand over to him Murad, the son of Jem Sultan, whom he evidently planned to use to stir up trouble for the sultan. The latter, meanwhile, was preparing a great enterprise which was to increase tremendously the territory of the Turks, and to assure the Ottoman empire of the control of the Levant for three centuries to come: the occupation of Syria, of Egypt, and of Arabia. Selim left Constantinople on June 5, 1516, and at Marj Dābiq near Aleppo defeated the Mamluk sultan of Syria and Egypt, Kansuh, who was killed in the battle (August 24, 1516). Just before the war began, Kansuh had negotiated with the

48. Malta, cod. 400, fol. 224.

49. An account of the battle written by the grand master to the doge of Venice, Leonard Loredan, is published in Marino Sanudo, *Diarii*, X, cols. 570–571. Another account is in Pauli, *Codice diplomatico*, II, 174.

50. On conditions in Europe and the Levant see K. M. Setton, "Pope Leo and the Turkish Peril," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CXIII (1969), 367–414; reprinted in his *Europe and the Levant in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London, 1974), no. IX.

knights a renewal of the peace. In the terms discussed, beyond the usual clauses relative to freedom of trade, and the freeing of Rhodian slaves in Egypt, was a request that merchants from Rhodes should be permitted to build booths at “Le Brulle” (Burlus) in the Nile delta, where timber for Egypt was sold. Kansuh could not complete the negotiations because of the outbreak of the war in which he was killed. The treaty was, however, signed on November 3, 1516, by his successor, Tumanbey II, and ratified at Rhodes on November 16.⁵¹

But only a few months later, Tumanbey was also defeated by Selim, and hanged at Cairo on April 13, 1517; Egypt became part of the Turkish empire. Up to the end, the Mamluk sultan had asked for help from Rhodes; and it seems that he obtained a certain amount of artillery from the knights during the winter of 1516–1517.⁵² But Rhodes had plenty to do in providing for its own defense.

Rhodes at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, during the masterships of Aubusson, Amboise, and Fabrizio del Carretto, was a unique concentration of force and power, art and grace. The siege of 1522, although it partly breached the walls, did not materially injure the aspect of the island, and the Turks did not touch the fortress, the *auberges* of the *langues*, the buildings of the castellany, or the magnificent hospital—indeed, in places they repaired the walls—and they left almost intact the coats of arms, the gateways, and the inscriptions. It is therefore not difficult for those who today visit Rhodes, restored with loving care by Italian archaeologists between 1912 and 1940, to imagine the city as it was before the siege of 1522. Passing along the quiet Street of the Knights, visiting the restored castellany, standing before the Sea Gate or that of St. Catherine, and the towers of the port, traversing the walls flanked by bulwarks and deep moats, the visitor can have the illusion of seeing alive again the Rhodes of four and a half centuries ago. One notable element of Rhodes of the knights is, however, lacking: the churches and chapels which the Turks changed into mosques or demolished, causing the destruction of many works of art. In the ground-plans and portals of some mosques the original style of knightly Rhodes survives. Grave damage was done by the explosion of a powder magazine in 1856, which destroyed the grand master's palace and the church of St. John, the campanile of which had already been lost in the siege of 1522.⁵³ The Gothic style of

51. Malta, cod. 405, fol. 215; cf. Bosio, *Historia*, II, 513.

52. Sanudo, *Diarii*, XXIII, cols. 554, 595.

53. The Roman Catholic church of St. John, rebuilt during the Italian occupation, has been transformed by the Greeks into the Orthodox cathedral (1947); on the architecture see volume IV of this work, chapter VI, section B.

the Trecento and Quattrocento prevails in the larger buildings, such as the palaces of the *langues* on the Street of the Knights, and the big hospital, but there are also monuments in Byzantine and in Renaissance style. Even the defensive works of the walled city show the meeting and fusion of medieval elements of fortification with the perfected technique of the sixteenth-century engineering of Basilio della Scala.

Letters and arts flourished at Rhodes. Latin and Italian were the official languages of the order, for the use of French diminished at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Many merchants and artisans, especially Italian, French, and Catalan, settled there. The bankers who often made loans to the Hospitallers, such as the Bardi and the Peruzzi in the earlier years, had banks and storehouses at Rhodes.⁵⁴ Commerce fluctuated with political change; the order often had to break off all relations with the Levantine states. However, it maintained almost constant commercial ties with Alexandria in Egypt (where it had, as we have seen, a consul and a *fondaco*), and with Turkey, the Aegean islands, Crete, the Morea, and even Tunisia.

Among scholars who visited Rhodes we may remember the Florentine Christopher Buondelmonti, who studied Greek there at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Sabba of Castiglione, a member of the order, who lived in Rhodes between 1500 and 1508 (and who, as a good humanist and archaeologist, gathered a collection of antiquities for Isabella d'Este Gonzaga), William Caoursin, a layman, but vice-chancellor (secretary) of the order (we have referred above to his history of the siege of 1480), and Bartholomew Poliziano, Aubusson's secretary, and later Caoursin's successor as vice-chancellor until 1522, just before the siege. Byzantine literature also flourished in Rhodes under the Hospitallers. Manuel Georgillas composed a poem on the pestilence (*thanatikon*) in Rhodes during 1498-1499. To the period of the knights have been ascribed most of the popular love songs known as *Rhodiaka erotika poiemata*.⁵⁵

It was clear that the next Turkish move would be directed against Rhodes, the nearest Christian possession to the coast of Asia, and halfway between Constantinople and recently conquered Egypt. Grand master Fabrizio del Carretto hastened the work of fortifica-

54. See Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*, trans. Furcy Raynaud, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1885-1886; repr. Amsterdam, 1967), and Yves Renouard, *Les Relations des papes d'Avignon et des compagnies commerciales et bancaires de 1316 à 1378* (Paris, 1941).

55. Cf. Tryphon E. Euangelides, *Rhodiaka* (Rhodes, 1917). On the cultural aspect of Hospitaller Rhodes in general see A. Luttrell, "The Hospitallers' Historical Activities: (2) 1400-1530," *Annales de l'Ordre souverain militaire de Malte*, XXV (1967), 145-150.

tion; in 1520 he brought to Rhodes the engineer and architect Basilio della Scala of Vicenza, who reinforced the walls, the moats, and the towers according to the new rules of Italian military engineering, based on the increased attacking force of the new artillery. In his work of renovation, which harmonized strength with beauty, he had the collaboration of the Sicilian Matthew Gioeno.

Selim I did not have the time to conduct a campaign against Rhodes. He died in 1520, leaving on the throne his young son Suleiman, who began his reign by conquering Belgrade in August 1521. As Selim had in 1516 announced to the grand master of Rhodes his victory over the Mamluks, so Suleiman, as he sent from Belgrade to all his dependents and to other heads of state his "letters of victory" (*fethname*), did not forget the ruler of Rhodes. The grand master was now Philip Villiers de l'Isle Adam, who had succeeded Fabrizio del Carretto on January 22, 1521. It was a letter of courtesy,⁵⁶ according to the usage of the Ottoman chancery, but it gave warning to the Hospitallers. Indeed, Suleiman, who knew that the Christian states were involved in the war between Charles V and Francis I, concluded a new treaty with Venice, on December 1, 1521, which practically assured him of Venetian neutrality; in the spring of 1522 he began preparations for an attack on Rhodes.

In Rhodes at the time were only two hundred and ninety knights, fifteen *donati*, and about three hundred sergeants (*frères sergents d'armes*), in all about six hundred forming the Convent of the order; besides them there were five hundred Genoese sailors and fifty Venetian sailors, four hundred soldiers recruited in Crete unknown to the Venetian authorities, and a few thousand Rhodian citizens under arms. In all, the defenders numbered perhaps about seventy-five hundred. In July 1522 there arrived from Crete, in defiance of a ban by Venice, the military engineer Gabriel Tadino of Martinengo; as soon as he arrived he asked for and received the habit of a knight, and he played a most useful and valiant role during the siege.

The Turkish armada, composed of more than four hundred ships, part galleys and part transports, with forty thousand rowers, mostly Christian slaves, and twenty thousand marines (*azabs*), reached Rhodes on June 24, 1522; part of it anchored off the eastern shore, and part went to Marmaris (Fisco on medieval maps), to ferry over to the island the land army with which Suleiman had crossed Anatolia.

56. It is not probable that it contained threats; it was a simple announcement of victory. For the correspondence between Suleiman and the grand master, cf. Rossi, *Assedio e conquista*, p. 28.

With the Turkish fleet was the corsair Muşlih-ad-Din Kurd-Oghlu, who had long been a feared adversary of the Rhodian navy. By July 28 the whole Turkish force, with the sultan, had landed on the island, and on that day the siege began. From various contemporary Turkish and Christian sources one could estimate that the Turks, together with reinforcements from Syria and Egypt, amounted to about two hundred thousand, but this is, as usual, much exaggerated. The élite of the army consisted of ten thousand janissaries, the most effective and warlike infantry of the time. Sultan Suleiman, who surveyed the operation from a height of land, had given the supreme command to his second vizir, Mustafa Pasha. The Turks, who had vast experience in such operations, had brought with them much heavy artillery, and had learned how to protect their batteries with trenches and platforms, and how to use mines under the walls of the fortress. But many of the mines failed because of Martinengo's countermines.

As in 1480, each of the eight *langues* had its own post of combat on the walls and parapets. In the section overlooking the east harbor (the later Port of Commerce) were the men of Castile; farther east, opposite the bay of Acandia, those of Italy, and then in order those of Provence, England, "Spain" (Aragon), Auvergne, Germany, and France (guarding the Mandraki). The main Turkish attack did not come from the side of the sea, as had occurred in 1480. That side had made a good resistance in 1480, and had recently been heavily reinforced. Now the Turks attacked on the land side, especially against the posts of Italy, England, and Aragon. Between England and Aragon was the tower, or bulwark, of St. Mary, which was severely battered by Turkish cannon in repeated attacks in August and September. On September 4 the Turks succeeded in undermining and destroying a great part of the bulwark of England, and in penetrating to the last defenses; but a counterattack led by the grand master in person repulsed the assailants, who on that day lost more than two thousand men. On September 9 a formidable attack was made at the same spot, but repulsed with the loss of three thousand Turks. On September 13 the walls of the *langue* of Italy, protected by the Carretto bulwark, were vigorously but unsuccessfully attacked. Another assault on September 17 brought great losses on both sides. A general attack, launched on September 24, against the posts of Italy, Provence, England, and Aragon, preceded by the explosion of mines under their bulwarks, cost the Turks thousands of lives.

Early in October Suleiman replaced Mustafa Pasha by Ahmed

Pasha, beylerbey of Rumeli, and had the attack renewed with vigor. Meanwhile in the city the courage of the defenders did not flag: knights, sergeants, soldiers, sailors, and Rhodian citizens. Even the women of Rhodes performed prodigies in aiding the wounded, in bringing up ammunition, and in throwing rocks, pitch, sulphur, and burning bitumen.⁵⁷

Aid from the west did not come. Early in October a small ship sent to ask help from Christian princes returned with the news that in Naples and Messina forces were gathering to help Rhodes. But the hope was vain. A few ships which left England, Spain, and France never reached the island. The defenders remained alone to oppose the overwhelming enemy, and to face their destiny. At the end of October the grand chancellor of the order, Andrew do Amaral of the *langue* of Portugal (and Castile), was accused of committing the blackest treason by sending to the enemy by bow-shot dispatches which told of the precarious state of the defense and urged the Turks to continue their attack. He was tried and put to death.⁵⁸

In November the Turks renewed their assaults against the posts of Aragon and Italy; they got across the moats and made breaches in the inner curtains, but still they did not crush the defense. Suleiman was impressed by his great losses, by the approach of winter,⁵⁹ and by the probability that pope Hadrian VI and emperor Charles V, if successful in Italy, would send reinforcements to Rhodes. The sultan, therefore, proposed to the grand master that the Hospitallers surrender.⁶⁰ The first proposal was indignantly rejected, but then the grand master yielded to the prayers of the severely tried citizens and the urging of his wisest advisers. On December 9 he called together the council of the order, and it voted to accept the terms offered. On December 11 two messengers of the order went to the Turkish camp, and on the next day were received by the sultan.

The sultan said that if the city surrendered, the Hospitallers and the inhabitants would have permission to leave, and take their property with them; if it did not surrender, the attack would con-

57. For accounts of the siege see the bibliographical note. A good modern account is that by Gottardo Bottarelli, *Storia politica e militare del . . . ordine di San Giovanni*, I, 305-358; cf. the brief account of Albergo di Rouan in Z. Tsirpanlis, *Dodekanesiaka*, II (1967), 63-64.

58. See E. Brockman, "Rhodes-1522: d'Amaral-Martyr or Traitor?" *Annales de l'Ordre . . . de Malte*, XXIV (1966), 18-25.

59. From October 25, heavy rainfall began. Even in November rain impeded the attack. Cf. Rossi, *Assedio e conquista*, p. 20, and Bottarelli, *op. cit.*, I, 345.

60. Turkish sources say that the proposal for surrender came from the grand master. But Christian accounts (cf. Bosio, *Istoria*, II, 582) show with certainty that Suleiman made an offer in November and renewed it on December 10.

tinue until all the defenders and citizens were killed. He gave them three days to reply. The grand master requested an extension of the truce, in order to discuss in greater detail guarantees for the people of the island. Suleiman was angered by this request, either because he thought it concealed a wish to gain time, or because of the arrival, on December 14, of a ship from Crete, with a few Hospitallers and Venetian volunteers aboard who had slipped through the Venetian blockade; he therefore renewed the assault. On December 17 a final attack on the walls of the post of Aragon brought considerable gains to the Turks. On the next day the grand master surrendered, and the terms were defined on December 20. The knights had twelve days to leave Rhodes. The inhabitants were guaranteed security of person, of property, and of religion, and were exempted for five years from the levy of boys to enter the corps of janissaries.⁶¹ However, on December 24 and 25 a few Turkish units entered the fortress, and sacked it briefly, until halted.

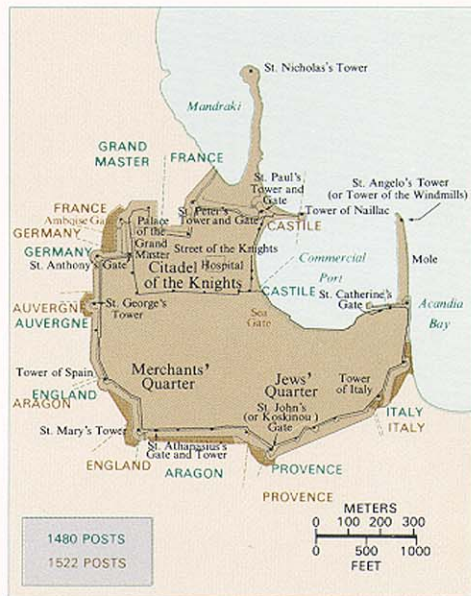
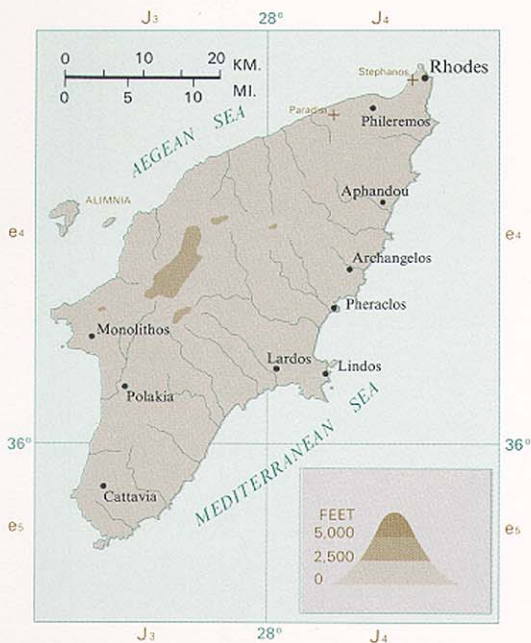
On December 25, the grand master appeared at Suleiman's *divan*, accompanied by his generals and ministers; he was treated with honor and respect. Suleiman himself entered the city⁶² on December 27, and returned old Villiers de l'Isle Adam's visit at the grand master's palace.

On January 1, 1523, after visiting Suleiman, the grand master embarked on the galley *Santa Maria*. The rest of the knights left on the galleys *Santa Caterina* and *San Giovanni*, the "great ship" of Rhodes, one galleon, and one bark. Shortly thereafter the island of Cos and the castle of St. Peter at Bodrum in Anatolia surrendered; the other islands had been occupied during the siege.

Having left Rhodes, the grand master, with the surviving Hospitalers and many Rhodian citizens who wished to follow him, stopped in Crete, and arrived at Messina in Sicily on March 1. Thence he went

61. Christian accounts speak also of a promise not to profane the churches; this is not probable, for the sultan would not have agreed to such an engagement. The fact is that the churches were turned into mosques; on Friday, January 2, 1523, Suleiman made his ritual prayer in the former church of St. John. For the Turkish celebrations after the conquest, see Rossi, "Nuove ricerche," *Rivista di studi orientali*, XV (1934), 97-102.

62. A tradition has it that Suleiman entered by St. Athanasius's gate, beside St. Mary's tower, and that he had it closed so that no one else could pass through the gate where he had made his victorious entrance. In support of this tradition, some historians and archeologists cite an inscription in Persian on the exterior of the bastion in front of St. Mary's tower. But a careful reading of this inscription proves that it only records that in 937 A.H. (A.D. 1530/1) this bastion was repaired at Suleiman's orders (and it is known that this section of the wall was badly ruined in the siege of 1522). No mention of the gate is made in the inscription. The question is clarified by E. Rossi, "L'Iscrizione ottomana in persiano sul bastione della Torre di S. Maria a Rodi," in *Ann. della R. Scuola arch. di Atene*, VIII (1929), 341-344.



to Civitavecchia, and met pope Hadrian VI in August 1523. At the end of 1523 he began to treat with Charles V for the cession of the islands of Malta and Gozo as a new residence for the order. Negotiations with the new pope, Clement VII, were protracted for several years, because of various judicial and political questions, including objections by the Maltese, and hesitation by the knights to assume the obligation imposed upon them to take over the defense of Tripoli as well as the Maltese islands. The act of cession was finally signed by Charles V on March 24, 1530, at Castelfranco, and the grand master took up his residence at Malta on October 26, 1530. During those years, Villiers de l'Isle Adam had cherished the hope of reconquering Rhodes. A conspiracy of Rhodian citizens who remained faithful to the order had been organized in Rhodes, and the Hospitaller Antonio Bosio had entered into communication with them, to plan an outbreak in Rhodes to coincide with a projected naval attack from the west. But in 1529 Bosio, who had gone to Rhodes, told the grand master that the plot had failed, having been repressed by the Turks. And so the order hastened its negotiations for the cession of Malta, Gozo, and Tripoli; held the latter from 1530 to 1551, when it was captured by the Turks; and defended Malta heroically in the great siege of 1565.⁶³

Memories of Rhodes followed the order to its new seat in Malta. There were built in Malta churches and palaces with the same names as those in Rhodes: the churches of St. John, St. Catherine, and Our Lady of Victory, and the auberges of the *langues*. In Malta are preserved an important part of the archives of the order relating to the Rhodian period, when it was in fact what it purported to be, an eastern bulwark of Latin Christendom against the Ottoman menace.

63. Cf. R. Valentini, "I Cavalieri di S. Giovanni da Rodi a Malta: Trattative diplomatiche," *Archivum melitense*, IX (1935), 137-237.