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THE ROLE OF CYPRUS IN SATISFYING THE DEMAND FOR CEREALS
ON HOSPITALLER RHODES IN THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES

Cereals were a commodity that was frequently in short supply on Hospitaller Rhodes, even though wheat, barley, oats and pulses were grown on the island. Wheat and barley from nearby Kos were imported to Rhodes as well as from other Aegean and Mediterranean regions, such as Old and New Phocaea in Anatolia, Euboea, Lesbos, the Peloponnese, Southern Italy, Sicily and Cyprus, although the demand for barley was smaller. Shortages were felt during the fourteenth century. As early as 1317, less than a decade after the Hospitallers' conquest of Rhodes from Byzantium, Pope John XXII alluded to the great shortage of foodstuffs on the island, and in June 1347 there was a new shortage. This impelled the Hospitallers to secure grain from various areas. They concluded an agreement with the Genoese Ettore Vicenzi on 26 July 1347 for him to supply Rhodes with 20,000 *modia* of wheat and barley in Rhodian measures. Alberto Gentile of Genoa was dispatched on 3 September 1347 to the Aegean area (*Romania*) to buy an additional 20,000 Rhodian *modia* of grain and on 22 March 1348 the merchant and burgess of Rhodes Bartolomeo degli Albizzi was licensed to borrow 2,000 florins in order to buy grain in the Aegean area and the Black Sea region. The Hospitallers also imported foodstuffs from the Turkish mainland opposite Rhodes. When in 1386 Grand Master Juan Fernandez de Heredia granted the Commandery of Kos, Kalymnos and Leros to the German Hospitaller Hesso Schlegelholz, among the obligations imposed on the latter were a ban on exports of wheat to any destination besides Rhodes. Furthermore, the population of Rhodes, perhaps less than 10,000 in 1310, may have more than doubled by 1522 to over 20,000. This rise in population exacerbated the shortages of grain and other foodstuffs, increasing the need to import them¹.

¹ For all the examples of food shortages mentioned above see A. LUTTRELL, *The Town of Rhodes 1306-1356*, Rhodes, City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town, 2003, pp. 168 and 176; A. LUTTRELL, *Settlement on Rhodes, 1306-1366*, in *The Hospitallers of Rhodes and their Mediterranean World*, (ed.) ID., Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd,

Cyprus was an important supplier of cereals to Hospitaller Rhodes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Hospitaller estates in the diocese of Limassol were extensive, the Order being the largest landowner in this district of Cyprus. Their significance as a source of supply to Rhodes impelled the Order to try and protect them during the first half of the fifteenth century when it was at war with the Mamluk sultanate. When civil war erupted on Cyprus in the 1460s between the legitimate heir to the throne Queen Charlotte and her illegitimate half-brother James, who ultimately prevailed with Mamluk assistance in 1464 to become the penultimate king of Cyprus, the Hospitallers feared that Cyprus would come under Mamluk control, with the import of Cypriot cereals ceasing as a result. This possibility never materialized, for James, anxious for Hospitaller support in order to obtain papal recognition of his title of king, granted in 1466, did not damage their estates on the island². Problems arose over the supply of Cypriot cereals to Rhodes when Venice took control of the island in 1473 and annexed it in 1489. Wishing to satisfy the needs of Venice and Crete, the largest Venetian overseas possession besides Cyprus, the Venetians severely curtailed the export of Cypriot cereals to Rhodes in the sixteenth century. In addition, Cypriot cereals in this period were exported to Venice and its overseas possessions like Crete and the Ionian islands, with some also kept on Cyprus to satisfy local demand. Sometimes it was also exported to Anatolia and Syria³. The extent to which Cyprus supplied Hospitaller Rhodes with cereals and the factors influencing its ability to do so are the subject of this paper.

1992, pp. 276-277; A. LUTTRELL, *The Greeks of Rhodes under Hospitaller Rule*, in *The Hospitaller State on Rhodes and its Western Provinces, 1306-1462*, (ed.) ID., Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999, pp. 196; Z. TSIRPANLIS, *Morphes dioiketikes autonomias sta Dodekanesa epi Hippotokratias*, in *He Rhodos kai hoi notioi Sprades sta Khronia ton Ioanniton Hippoton (14os - 16os ai)*, (ed.) ID., Rhodes, City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town, 1991, pp. 163-164.

² P.W. EDBURY, *The last Lusignans (1432-1489): A Political History*, in «Epeterida Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon», XXXVI (2013), pp. 180-185; N. COUREAS, *King James II and the Hospitallers: Evidence from the Livre des Remembrances*, in *The Military Orders*, (ed.) P.W. EDBURY, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2012, vol. V: *Politics and Power*, pp. 113-121.

³ *Anekdotia engrapha tes kypriakes historias apo to kratiko arkeheio tes Venetias*, (ed.) A. ARISTEIDOU, Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre, 1990-2003, vol. I, nos. 44, 133, 136, vol. II, nos. 17, 153-156, 198, and 206, vol. III, nos. 10, 14, 73-74, 79, 101, 199 and vol. IV, nos. 48, 69, 91, 127-128, 131-134, 148 and 150.

Some idea of the quantities of cereals produced on the Hospitaller estates in Cyprus can be obtained from the remissions granted to the Hospitallers on Cyprus of payment of the royal tenths on ecclesiastical produce, imposed by King James I in 1385 to restore royal finances after the disastrous Genoese invasion of 1373-74. On 25 September 1411 King Janus abolished the royal tenths due from the main preceptory of Cyprus based at Kolossi in the diocese of Limassol, following the death of the incumbent preceptor Raymond de Lescure. These tenths as regarded cereals and pulses consisted of 1,250 *modia* and six *cafis* of wheat, 3,022.5 *modia* of barley, 69.5 *modia* of broad beans, 335.5 *modia* of oats and nine *modia* and one *cafi* of lentils. King Janus also abolished payment of the royal tenths on 1 October 1411 on the minor Hospitaller preceptories of Phinikas in the diocese of Paphos and Templos in the region of Kyrenia. As regarded cereals and pulses the tenths remitted for Phinikas amounted to 266 *modia* and six *cafis* of wheat, 266 *modia* and five *cafis* of barley, 90 *modia* of oats and ten *modia* of broad beans⁴.

The corresponding remissions for cereals and pulses regarding Templos were 96 *modia* of grain, 99 *modia* and 7.5 *cafis* of barley and 3.5 *modia* of oats. These remissions for the minor preceptories were applicable following the death of the incumbent Jean de Vogon, preceptor of Belleville. A levelled *modium* in Cypriot measures amounted to just over 32 litres of wheat or 34 litres of barley, that of Rhodes being slightly smaller, just under 31 litres. The *modium* was divisible into eight *cafis*. The abovementioned Hesso Schlegelholz, now lieutenant of the Hospitaller Grand Master on Rhodes, and the Convent thanked both King Janus and Queen Charlotte for absolving the preceptories of Phinikas and Anoyira from payment of the royal tenths on 11 December 1411. The preceptors Lescure and Vogon were killed fighting the Turks at Makri in southwestern Anatolia in the spring of 1412, so the remissions took effect at that time. By multiplying the quantities of cereals enumerated above by a factor of ten one reaches the total cereal production of those commanderies, although the minor commandery of Anoyira in the diocese of Paphos is not included⁵. Hospitaller estates on Cyprus, moreover, were considerable. One observes that following the dissolu-

⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus from the Hospitallers' Rhodian Archives: 1409-1459*, (ed.) K. BORCHARDT, A. LUTTRELL, E. SCHÖFFLER, Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre, 2011, nos. 10-11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xli and xlvi, nos. 11 and 13.

tion of the Templar Order in 1312 Templar properties on Cyprus were transferred to the Hospitallers. The sixteenth century Cypriot chronicler Florio Bustron lists over 40 *casalia*, *presteries* and *bailliages* transferred in this manner, although he mistakenly includes certain properties belonging to the Hospitallers from the beginning, namely Kolossi, Monagroulli, Phinikas, Palaikhori, Kellaki and Trachoni⁶.

The Mamluk invasion of Cyprus in 1426, during which the Hospitallers fought on land and sea with the Cypriot forces against them, caused damage to their estates on Cyprus, and when on 17 and 20 August 1428 the preceptory of Cyprus was leased for seven years to the Hospitallers Angelo Muscetulla and Pedro Sarnes the relevant contracts stipulated that they were to spend 500 Rhodian florins a year on repairs to the preceptory in line with the instructions of the preceptor or the visitor sent out from Rhodes every second year. Nevertheless, exports of wheat from Cyprus to Rhodes continued. Wheat exported from Hospitaller estates on Cyprus to Rhodes was on occasion sold there by Rhodian burgesses acting for the Hospitaller officers residing on Cyprus. The Hospitaller Grand Master Anthony de Fluvià and the Convent on 10 March 1428 granted the Rhodian burgess Bernino Clavi a quittance for the sum of 510 Rhodian florins accruing from the sale of grain shipped over from Cyprus. He had sold this grain on behalf of the Hospitaller brother Angelino Muscetulla, the leaseholder of the preceptory of Phinikas and Anoyira, who owed considerable arrears to the Order as regarded the payment of responsions from this preceptory. The sum received for the sale of grain was transferred to the Order's treasury to pay off some of these arrears⁷.

Warfare between the Mamluks and the Hospitallers occurred in the years 1440-1443, with Mamluk fleets attacking Rhodes itself, and the Mamluks raided the grand commandery of Cyprus sometime before 6 November 1440 when returning from an expedition against Rhodes and once more before 8 March 1443. The damages done, which had resulted in a reduction in the preceptory's revenues for a great length of time,

⁶ Florio BUSTRON, *Chronique de Chypre*, (ed.) R. DE MAS LATRIE, in *Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France: Mélanges historiques*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1886, vol. V, pp. 246-247; P-V. CLAVERIE, *L'Ordre du Temple en Terre Sainte et à Chypre au XIII^e siècle*, 3 vols., Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre, 2005, vol. I, pp. 321-322.

⁷ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, nos. 84 and 89-90.

impelled Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent to authorize the preceptor of Cyprus Jacques de Milly to pay reduced responsions of 7,000 Rhodian florins yearly. He was also authorized to make peace with the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, and the Grand Master's letter adds the important observation that he and the Convent wished the preceptor to remain at peace with the sultan and the other infidels «notwithstanding whatever disputes and wars that we and our Religion might have at present or in future with the sultan himself or with whomsoever other unbeliever».⁸ Clearly the Hospital did not want the preceptory of Cyprus, an important supplier of cereals to Rhodes, to be ravaged, regardless of wars it might wage against the Mamluks⁹. This policy formed a precedent, moreover, for a similar arrangement that took place during the civil war on Cyprus between Queen Charlotte and her half-brother James in the years 1460-1464, to be discussed below.

A shipment of a large consignment of grain to Rhodes on 11 October 1442 underlined the importance of Cyprus as a source of supply. The relevant document states how Jean de Marsenac, the lieutenant of the preceptor of Cyprus, together with the preceptor's procurator Giovanni Martini had previously sold the Order 4,000 *modia* of wheat and 4,000 *modia* of barley. In addition, they were now selling a further 4,000 *modia* of wheat to the Order and 2,000 *modia* of barley, priced at 11.5 aspers per *modium* for the wheat and five aspers per *modium* for the barley. Payment for the consignments was to be made within the next three months, with the sellers acknowledging that it should be deducted from the responsions of the preceptory of Cyprus. The prices given for the wheat and barley, besides showing that wheat had over double the value of barley on Rhodes, are relatively high when compared to the prices both cereals commanded in the later 1440s. A document of 1 December 1444, moreover, records that the Grand Master had lent the treasury of the Order 200 ducats for the purchase of grain from Cyprus. On his orders the brothers Ramon Jou and Guillaume de Chalus held an *esgart*, that is a law suit, between the brothers Jean Lamand, the treasurer's lieu-

⁸ Ibid., no. 187: «ideo nonobstantibus quibus[cun]que discensionibus et guerris, quas nos aut religio nostra cum ipse soldano vel alio quovis infidele presencialiter vel in futurum haberemus».

⁹ Ibid., nos. 165-166 and 187; E. ROSSI, *The Hospitallers at Rhodes, 1421-1523*, in *A History of the Crusades*, (ed.) K. M. SETTON, 6 vols., Philadelphia/Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1955-1989, vol. III, 319-320.

tenant, and Pierre Racault concerning this sum. Brother Louis de Barras swore that he and the bailiff of the Morea George Pichat had asked the Grand Master to lend the treasury this sum for buying grain from Cyprus, and that the latter had ordered Pierre Racault to pay this sum to Jean Lamand. By way of reply, Pierre Racault stated that Jean Lamand had given him a receipt, and that the brothers Louis de Barras, George Pichat and Jean Lamand had to give him the 200 ducats on request. As regards the ratios between Rhodian currency denominations, the Rhodian ducat was worth 32 aspers and the Rhodian florin, the standard money of account, was subdivided into 20 aspers and 320 deniers, therefore one asper equalled 16 deniers¹⁰.

Genoese merchants were also active in transporting Cypriot wheat to Rhodes. The Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent acknowledged on 24 April 1446 that the Genoese merchant Michele Grillo had sold the Order 1,000 *modia* of wheat from Cyprus priced at 7.5 aspers per *modium*, a rate appreciably lower than that of 1442 discussed above, making a total of 234 Rhodian ducats and 12 aspers. The brothers in charge of the granary on Rhodes, however, and its preceptor Étienne Moret received the wheat in question from a certain Cipriano Vivaldi acting on behalf of his brother Domenico, something apparent in the quittance the lieutenant of the treasury Jean Lamand and Étienne Moret had issued. The Grand Master and the Convent therefore promised to pay this sum within one year either to Michelle Grillo or his heirs, or to Domenico or Cipriano Vivaldi or to whomsoever else was lawfully entitled to claim the money. Cipriano Vivaldi appears in a subsequent document dated 1 November 1448, in which Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent on behalf of the Order's treasury issued a receipt to him for 2,866 *modia* of Cypriot wheat he had brought to Rhodes, priced at eight aspers and four deniers and amounting to a sum total of 1,182 silver florins of Rhodes, four aspers and eight deniers. The grand master and the Convent promised to pay Cipriano, his heirs or his procurators on Rhodes by 31 October 1449¹¹.

The involvement of Venetian merchants residing in Hospitaller territories in shipping Cypriot grain to Rhodes appears in a document dated 1 May 1446. It stated that the Hospitaller Grand Master Jean de Lastic

¹⁰ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, p. and xxxv and xlv, nos. 174 and 191.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 213 and 243.

and the Convent acknowledged receipt by the Order's treasury of 1,500 *modia* of wheat and 551 *modia* of barley originating from Cyprus and the island of Kos in the Aegean, brought to Rhodes by Pietro Barozzi, a Venetian residing on Rhodes. Jean Lastic and the Convent undertook to pay him a total of 430 Rhodian ducats and 1 *gigliato*. The wheat was valued at eight aspers per *modium*, making a total of 375 ducats, and the barley at one *gigliato* per *modium*, a total of 55 ducats. In 1446 and in 1450 one *gigliato* was worth 3.2 aspers and ten *gigliati* were worth one Rhodian ducat. Pietro Barozzi was one of a group of merchants who were important business partners and confidants of the Hospitaller Order, such as Bartolomeo di Auria from Genoa, Giovanni de Peruzzi and gentile de Bardi from Florence and the Catalans Joan de Stella and Guilhem and Luis Bardoch. They were involved in importing foodstuffs and other goods to Rhodes for the Order's needs, such as cloths and olive oil¹².

The fall of Korykos, a port in south-eastern Asia Minor taken by King Peter I of Cyprus in 1359, to the Turkish emir of Karaman in October 1448, following a siege and the bribing of its starving Cypriot and Armenian garrison with gold, heralded a new crisis for the enfeebled Cypriot kingdom and also impeded the export of grain from Cyprus to Rhodes. The Hospitallers, despite a promise to assist King John II of Cyprus with an armed galley if the port were attacked, failed to send armed assistance. Indeed, after its capture they simply advised the king to make peace with the emir of Karaman or solicit help from the Mamluk sultan, the suzerain of Cyprus after the Mamluk invasion of 1426¹³. It was in the wake of this disaster for the kingdom of Cyprus that Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent sent Louis de Rilhac, the preceptor of Sauvetat in the diocese of Auvergne, to Cyprus in February 1449 with a series of numbered instructions. The third involved explaining to the king on obtaining an audience with him that he had been sent to Cyprus for two reasons, to obtain wheat, «which our town and island lack»,¹⁴ and for business involving the Order's treasury. The need to

¹² Ibid., p. xxxvii and no. 214; J. SARNOWSKY, *Handel und Geldwirtschaft der Johanniter auf Rhodos*, in *Die Ritterorden in der europäischen Wirtschaft des Mittelalters*, (ed.) R. CZAJA, J. SARNOWSKY, Torun, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2003, pp. 20-21.

¹³ N. COUREAS, *Participants or Mediators? The Hospitallers and Wars involving 15th Century Lusignan Cyprus*, in «Ordines Militares», XVIII (2013), pp. 198-199.

¹⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, no. 250, para. III: «quo civitas nostra et insula indigent».

obtain wheat is given first. The fourth instruction expressed the Order's gratitude to the king for granting a *tracta*, that is an export licence, for the dispatch of 6,000 *modia* of wheat and of 100 wine casks from Cyprus to Rhodes. The Hospitaller brother Nicolaus de Coronis, sent to visit the Grand Commandery on Cyprus, had informed them of this, and the royal letters confirmed it. Louis de Rilhac was to implore the king to grant the Order permission to use the licence forthwith without any hindrance as the Convent, the whole city of Rhodes and the island suffered from a shortage of wheat¹⁵.

The fifth instruction, linked to the previous two, was for Louis to explain to the king that the Order had learnt that the subjects of the Order on coming to Cyprus to purchase and load on board wheat for the town and island of Rhodes were not being granted export licences by the king, even though they offered to pay for them as was customary. In addition, if perhaps a licence was granted it was then revoked, leaving the buyers in debt and defrauded of attaining their aims. This innovation was not applied to subjects of other nations coming to Cyprus to purchase wheat. This occasioned even greater surprise when one considered how closely connected and bound to each other Rhodes and Cyprus were, for the things sought as of necessity for the Order's people and subjects were paid with the Order's money, as in the case of things obtained from elsewhere and from far away, and especially when having Cypriot possessions. Louis was to ask the king to give the reasons for this innovation so that the Order could offer apologies, for whenever it should discover the reasons directing the king's hostility it would disprove them if perhaps it had been incurred on account of evil reports. Louis was to ask the king to grant export licences or have them granted to all the Order's ships, men and subjects coming to Cyprus so as to load on board wheat, barley and other things needed for human sustenance without obstruction so long as they paid the sum customarily payable for such licences. The aim was for Rhodes to be supplied with provisions of this kind, and such an action would be gratefully received. If the king acted otherwise, which the Order did not expect, they would have cause to complain that he had not assisted them with wheat at a time of need¹⁶. Royal obstruction was linked perhaps to the Order's failure to

¹⁵ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, no. 250, paras. III, IV.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 250, para. V.

offer assistance to prevent the fall of Korykos, as well as its continuing demands for repayment of the sum it had paid towards ransoming King Janus from Mamluk captivity in 1427.

The acquisition of Cypriot grain was linked to the responsions payable to the Order from its Cypriot properties. This is apparent in the tenth instruction, in which Louis was told that Filip d'Hortal, the prior of Catalonia and leaseholder of the Grand Commandery of Cyprus, had informed the Grand Master and Convent on numerous occasions that should the treasury wish to purchase wheat or barley on Cyprus he was willing to pay the price thereof to the sellers on the island. Bearing this in mind Louis was instructed to buy wheat and barley wherever he found it for sale, to the quantity of 6,000 *modia* of wheat and 4,000 *modia* of barley at the best available price, with Filip d'Hortal being obliged to pay the sellers for the cereals purchased. Furthermore, until reaching Rhodes and unloading there, Filip d'Hortal would remain liable for any damages or losses incurred regarding the grain purchased and at risk on the high seas. The price of the cereals purchased and paid for by Filip d'Hortal would be deducted from the 10,000 Rhodian florins he owed to the Grand Master¹⁷.

Louis de Rilhac also received numbered instructions on the collection of Filip d'Hortal's debt to the Hospitaller Order in a letter dated 18 June 1449. These included an agreement with the representative of the Master and Convent and the treasury with the Venetian merchant and resident of Cyprus Marco Cornaro, whose family had extensive estates around Kossi in the district of Limassol. This agreement, involving the purchase for the Order of 10,000 *modia* of wheat and 3,000 *modia* of barley in Rhodian measures, had been prepared at the Order's treasury on Rhodes by the Venetian merchant Stefano Barozo, perhaps a relative of the above-mentioned Pietro Barozzi, acting on Marco's behalf. The cereals, priced at eight Rhodian aspers per *modium* of wheat and four Rhodian aspers per *modium* of barley, would be brought to Rhodes at Marco's own expense and at his own risk. Marco, moreover, was obliged to dispatch or have dispatched one third of the cereals by the coming September on pain of paying a penalty and the remainder of the whole amount by the coming November. In this regard, Louis was reminded to conclude the agreement with the inclusion of an express penalty, that could be demanded

¹⁷ Ibid., no. 250, para. X.

from Marco Cornaro were he to default on his obligations. Furthermore, in such an eventuality the Order was empowered to buy on Rhodes or elsewhere the quantity of cereals corresponding to the damages incurred on account of the non-fulfilment of the agreement¹⁸.

In late September 1449 Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent sent Jean de Marsenac, preceptor of Vaufranche in the Priory of the Auvergne, to Cyprus on a mission that once again consisted of a series of numbered directives. The ninth directive instructed him to secure wheat from those in debt to the Hospitaller Order and to have it sent to Rhodes to prevent shortages. The fifteenth and sixteenth directives instructed him to find out how much wheat, barley, other types of cereals and vegetables were to be found in all the estates of the grand Commandery and to ascertain while travelling how much the Commandery expended on wheat, barley and other items. The eighteenth directive instructed him to find a way to have sent to Rhodes all wheat and barley belonging to the status of the Commandery, which should not be in a faulty condition. Sometime before 9 October 1449 Grand Master Jean de Lastic obtained a royal export licence from King John II and so he instructed Jean de Marsenac, described in this particular document as the preceptor of Metwault in the Priory of the Auvergne, to buy or recover from the Order's subjects in the Commandery of Cyprus or the other Hospitaller commanderies in the kingdom of Cyprus 2,000 *modia* of wheat and 1,000 *modia* of barley and to arrange its export to Rhodes in accordance with the terms of this licence, without any hindrance or payment of an export licence, since one had been given already¹⁹.

The Hospitaller brother Louis de Magnac was appointed leaseholder of the Grand Commandery of Cyprus in November 1449 but his term was extended in June 1451 to November 1460 and he obtained the full powers of a commander in this commandery in 1451. In addition, he was granted the vacant Commandery of Phinikas and Anoyira in July 1451 for ten years and in October 1451 he also received for seven years the lease on the royal *casale* of Tarsis, given to the Order as a security by the crown of Cyprus for repayment of the monies owed for the ransom of King Janus from Mamluk captivity in 1427. In December 1452 he was

¹⁸ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, no. 255; B. ARBEL, *A Royal Family in Republican Venice: The Cypriot Legacy of the Corner della Regina*, in «Studi Veneziani», new series XV (1988), pp. 134-137.

¹⁹ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, no. 260, paras. IX, XV-XVI and XVIII and no. 261.

appointed Grand Commander for life, thereby also obtaining a seat at the Order's Council on Rhodes²⁰. Therefore, he was in a position to play a leading role in Hospitaller affairs on Cyprus, including the transportation of cereals to Rhodes, for a decade. A document of 14 June 1451, referring to him as a Commander of the Cypriot Grand Commandery, records a mission to Cyprus he performed for the Grand Master and the Council. He was instructed among other things to request from King John II, in line with a letter the Grand Master had written to the king, an export licence for 2,000 *modia* of barley to be sent to Rhodes free of the usual duties. This was because the Grand Master had taken charge of the Order's treasury and its liabilities for the next three years so as to relieve the Order of the considerable indebtedness in which it had found itself. The licence was to be granted to Louis or his lieutenant in the Grand Master's name²¹.

Furthermore, on 24 January 1454 Louis de Magnac hired a ship with a crew of 60 sailors moored in the port of Famagusta and belonging to Antonio Reybaldo, a Genoese burgess residing there, for loading wheat, wine and barley from various Cypriot harbours for transportation to Rhodes, as well as seven sacks of cotton loaded on board in Famagusta. This document is particularly interesting in giving the freight charges for the transportation of the grain and wine to Rhodes. These were one Rhodian ducat per cask of wine, 50 Rhodian ducats per 1,000 *modia* of wheat and 50 Rhodian florins per 1,000 *modia* of barley. First the ship would sail to Limassol with 100 empty wine casks belonging to the Hospitaller Grand Commander and unload them there, and sail thence to a place named Vassilopotamos to load on board around 3,000 *modia* of wheat in Cypriot measures and around 2,000 *modia* of barley. After that it would sail to Salines, a locality near the modern town of Larnaca, to load on board an additional 4,000 *modia* of barley, and sail thence back to Limassol to load on board the 100 wine casks left there, now full of wine. From Limassol the ship would sail to Pissouri, a coastal village to the west of this town, to take on board 2,000 *modia* of wheat before finally setting sail for Rhodes²².

²⁰ Ibid., pp. lxviii-lxix.

²¹ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, no. 281, para. II.

²² *Gènes et l'Outre Mer: Actes notariés rédigés à Chypre par le notaire Antonius Folieta (1445-1458)*, (ed.) M. BALARD, L. BALLETTTO, C. OTTEN-FROUX, Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre, 2016, no. 73.

All told, the ship would bring around 5,000 *modia* of wheat and 6,000 *modia* of barley to Rhodes in Cypriot measures, which as stated above were slightly larger than the Rhodian ones. Antonio Reybaldo was obliged to remain with his ship in Cypriot waters for the next 45 days to load the wine and cereals on board, excluding the days needed to journey from one locality to another. He was also obliged, if the Grand Commander so wished, to load additional goods on board with the same freight charges, or goods belonging to third parties, such as 4,000 *modia* of barley belonging to the citizen of Venice Giovanni Martini. Antonio Reybaldo was also entitled to load on board 1,000 *modia* of barley of his own. The transaction was guaranteed by the citizen of Venice Lord Nicolao Signolus, who pledged all his goods to honour his guarantee. In a second act likewise dated 24 January 1454 the burgess of Famagusta Marcus Gabriel promised Nicolao Signolus to cover any liabilities he might sustain on account of the guarantee he had given²³.

Louis de Manhac also arranged for the export of grain to Rhodes from Hospitaller estates under his administration. According to the accounts he presented to the Grand Master and Convent on Rhodes for the *casale* of Tarsis, confirmed by them on 18 October 1457, he had spent 85 Rhodian florins and 16 aspers to purchase 176 *modia* of wheat for the procurator of the Order's hospital on Rhodes, the wheat in question having been lost during the journey to Rhodes. He had also spent 1,070 Rhodian florins for acquiring 1,100 *modia* of wheat and 200 *modia* of barley granted to the procurators of the same hospital, and another 20 florins to pay the freight charges for a consignment of wheat and barley sent from Cyprus to the island of Kos north of Rhodes. The fact that wheat sent from Cyprus had been lost in transit while bound for Rhodes constitutes evidence of the hazards of sending goods by sea, where they were exposed to the risks of storms and piracy. Other than Venetian and Genoese merchants, Greeks native to Rhodes participated in the transportation of Cypriot cereals to Rhodes. The Hospitaller Grand Master Jacques de Milly issued a safe conduct on 8 August 1459 to the Rhodian Theodore Calomeri, the owner of a sailing ship of the small, lateen rigged type known as a *griparia* found in the Mediterranean from the fourteenth century onwards. This was given so that he could journey to the kingdom of Cyprus and other Christian destinations and bring

²³ Ibid., nos. 73-74.

wheat, barley, victuals and other things needed to Rhodes. The document explicitly states that the Order was compelled to send ships to such destinations in order to obtain what it lacked, referring to the need for wheat, barley and other victuals in the city of Rhodes that was suffering a shortage of such provisions²⁴.

Significant as Cypriot supplies of cereals were in satisfying shortages on Rhodes, the Hospitaller Order did not put all its eggs in one basket. On 8 September 1439, on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities between Hospitaller Rhodes and Mamluk Egypt, that lasted from 1440 to 1444, the order dispatched two men, the Hospitaller knight Gurganello de Sorveliono of the castellany of Amposta and Benedetto Giovanni Torrendini, a prominent citizen of Rhodes, to procure wheat from various Aegean destinations. Journeying in a *griparia* from Rhodes to Chalkis in Euboea they were to stop off at Leros for three days at the most to obtain grain and then sail to Chalkis, obtaining as much wheat as possible there at a maximum rate of nine to ten aspers per Rhodian *modium*. If they encountered difficulties in exporting the wheat purchased, they were to present the letters of recommendation supplied to them and address themselves to the Venetian baiulo of Euboea and his councillors. If no wheat was available in Euboea, they were to journey to wherever it was to be found according to their judgement, either eastwards to Old and New Phocaea on the Anatolian littoral opposite Chios, or to Lesbos, or else westwards to the Gulf of Patras, paying no more than ten aspers per *modium* and authorized to buy up to 16-20,000 *modia* of wheat. For the transportation to Rhodes of such a large quantity of wheat they were to hire ships or *griparia*, or else transports from Rhodes would be sent if the Order was informed in time of the quantity of wheat and the place of purchase. The responsions of the Hospitaller Order from south Italian priories were also given partly in the form of cereals, as for instance those from the priory of Barletta received in September 1446 and those from the priory of Santo Stefano near Monopoli received in October 1450²⁵.

²⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, nos. 325 and 333; J.H. PRYOR, *Geography, technology and war: Studies in the Maritime history of the Mediterranean 649-1571*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 46.

²⁵ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo kai tis noties Sporades apo to arkheio ton Ioanniton Hippoton 1421-1453*, (ed.) Z. TSIRPANLIS, Rhodes, City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town, 1995, no. 103; SARNOWSKY, *Handel und Geldwirtschaft*, p. 24.

The island of Kos north of Rhodes was an important source of supply of cereals to Rhodes but also to the Hospitaller castle of Bodrum on the Turkish mainland. A document dated 8 May 1448 in which Grand Master Jean de Lastic confirmed that Fantino Quirini, the preceptor of Kos, had fulfilled all his financial obligations towards the Order's treasury records his delivery of 3,400 *modia* of wheat to the Order's main storehouse, 200 *modia* to Raymond Giou, the former captain of the Hospitaller castle of Bodrum, and 400 *modia* to the incumbent commander Guillaume Daunay. This constituted a total 4,000 *modia* of wheat valued at 7.5 aspers per *modium*, making a total value of 1,500 Rhodian florins. This value is slightly lower than that given for three documents dated 1 May 1446, 1 November 1448 and 22 February 1449 discussed above, where the wheat was valued at 8 to 8.25 aspers per *modium*. Furthermore, Fantino Quirini also delivered 1,000 *modia* of barley to the Order's storehouse priced at four aspers per *modium* making a total value of 200 Rhodian florins. This rate is the same as that given in the document of 22 February 1449 discussed above²⁶.

Two additional documents of 1 February 1449, again regarding Kos, refer to Fantino Quirini's refusal on this occasion to supply the Hospitaller castle at Bodrum with wheat and other victuals needed for the garrison and to how he forbade the inhabitants of Kos to supply it, at a time when the Ottoman fleet was preparing to attack both Bodrum and Kos. The Grand Master Jean de Lastic had learnt of this from letters addressed to him by the commander and Hospitaller brothers forming the garrison. Quirini was ordered by the Grand Master and the Convent to send the garrison supplies on pain of being declared insubordinate and seditious. In a second letter addressed to the castellans and other officers of the Order on Kos, Jean de Lastic informed them of his orders to Quirini and of his dispatch to Kos of Giovanni de Villalba, castellan of Amposta, to see if his orders had been carried out. Failing this, on the Grand Master's orders Villalba was to proclaim publicly that all the inhabitants of Kos could sell wheat, wine and other things to the garrison at Bodrum, so as not to be endangered by the castle's loss. Besides, so long as Kos had sufficient supplies, they could sell wheat and barley to merchants coming from Rhodes for its provisioning, with the permission and by the authority of the Grand Master²⁷.

²⁶ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, no. 178.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 184-185.

The Peloponnese as a source for supplying wheat and other food-stuffs to Rhodes, referred to above, is also mentioned in two documents of February and March 1452. On 22 February 1452 Grand Master Jean de Lastic issued letters patent to the captain Marco de Ritijs for him to bring wheat to Rhodes and to Giorgio Matha, the captain or owner of a *griparia*, for him to journey to the Peloponnese in order to bring wheat to Rhodes. He issued further letters patent on 4 March 1452 to Nicolao Zonarzi, likewise the captain or owner of a *griparia*, for him to journey to the Peloponnese and to the Gulf of Patras to load wheat and other victuals on board and bring them back to Rhodes. A document dated 10 May 1452 concerning a dispute between the Venetian merchants Gabriel Moro and Geronimo Martini on one hand and the Hospitaller preceptor Biordo de Pignatellis on the other alludes, moreover, to an agreement the two Venetians had concluded with the Order to transport wheat to Rhodes from Italy, once they had sent a Hospitaller brother there to obtain the requisite export licence from King Alfonso V of Aragon, who had conquered the Kingdom of Naples from the Angevins in 1442²⁸.

With the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks on 29 May 1453 the importance of obtaining wheat for Rhodes from places safe from Ottoman attack acquired new urgency. With southern Italy and Sicily under Catalan control after Alfonso V's final victory over the Angevins, Grand Master Jean de Lastic decided on 14 October 1453 to send a Catalan ship captained by Vincenzo Villa Bella and with the merchant Gaspar Momag on board to Sicily and other parts of Italy so as to buy wheat, victuals and other necessaries, including artillery, required for the needs and defence of the Hospitallers and the city of Rhodes and to bring them back to Rhodes as quickly as possible, «while awaiting from day to day the fleet of the Grand Turk, the enemy of all Christendom».²⁹ All Christian captains were requested to afford this ship every possible assistance and to refrain from placing any obstacles in its way. The Ottoman Turks soon attacked Hospitaller possessions in the Aegean. In 1455, during the office of Grand Master Jacques de Milly, an Ottoman fleet devastated the islands of Syme, Nisyros and Kos, while also sacking the village of Archangelos on Rhodes itself. Plague

²⁸ Ibid., nos. 246-247 and 260.

²⁹ Ibid, no. 326: «aspetando de zorno in zorno l'armata del Gran Turco, inimicissimo de tuti christiani».

and famine struck Rhodes, making the supply of cereals from overseas even more urgent³⁰.

Cyprus, an important source of supply remote from Ottoman power at that time, was nonetheless afflicted by strife that potentially threatened the provisioning of cereals to Rhodes. Shortly after the death of King John II of Cyprus in 1458 civil war broke out between Queen Charlotte, the legitimate heir to the throne who enjoyed the support of most of the nobles of Cyprus and the Hospitallers, and her illegitimate half-brother James, who had successfully acquired the support of the Mamluk sultan and suzerain of Cyprus. The latter Grand Master Jacques de Milly addressed to the Hospitaller castellan of Empost in November 1460 expressed his fears in this regard. First recounting the tragedy of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks it then turned to Cyprus, describing the seizure of the island by James, the illegitimate son of King John II, who with Mamluk assistance and popular support had gained control of the whole island except for the fortress of Kerynia, where Queen Charlotte and her supporters were holding out with Hospitaller help. With Cyprus passing completely under Mamluk control the grain imports which Rhodes regularly received from the island would be imperilled, while the Mamluks, recent friends of the Hospitallers, might now turn against them and threaten Rhodes with the fleet they had prepared. Meanwhile the Ottoman Turks, having overrun the Peloponnese, had constructed a powerful fleet for raiding and ultimately subjugating the Aegean islands, and were already laying siege to the island of Cos. The castellan of Empost was urged to send responsions, with a total of 102,000 florins being expected from all the priories by June 1461, while Hospitaller knights and soldiers were urged to come to Rhodes swiftly with a sizeable following³¹.

This was the context in which Jacques de Milly and the Convent decided in August 1461 to import grain and to conclude an agreement for bringing 25,000 *modia* of wheat to Rhodes over the next three months. The fears Jacques de Milly had expressed regarding Cyprus coming under Mamluk

³⁰ Ibid., no. 326; D. ABULAFIA, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms 1200-1500: The Struggle for Dominion*, Harlow, Longman Ltd, 1997, pp. 205-207; ROSSI, *Hospitallers at Rhodes, 1421-1523*, p. 321.

³¹ L. DE MAS LATRIE, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan*, 3 vols., Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1852-1861, vol. III, pp. 108-113; G. HILL, *A History of Cyprus*, 4 vols., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1940-1952, vol. III, pp. 569-570.

control through James's victory over Queen Charlotte, and thereby ceasing to provide Rhodes with cereals, eventually proved groundless. James prevailed by the end of 1464, taking Famagusta from the Genoese and Kerynia from Queen Charlotte's supporters, but was anxious to secure papal recognition as king of Cyprus, which he secured in 1466. Therefore, he refrained from harming the Hospitaller possessions on the island, mindful that they were a Roman Catholic military order. Ironically, from the late fifteenth century onwards the import of Cypriot cereals to Rhodes was restricted, although not stopped completely, by Venice. Following the death of King James II in July 1473 Venice took effective control of Cyprus by the end of the year through his widow, the Venetian Queen Catherine Cornaro. The Council of Ten of Venice, the city's governing body since 1355, formally annexed the island in 1489, compelling Queen Catherine to abdicate and return to Venice, where she died³².

The Venetians did their utmost to place the Hospitaller commanderies on Cyprus under their control by having Venetians appointed as commanders to them, and the Hospitaller Order on Rhodes supported their appointment, with the Grand Master actually nominating the commanders themselves, as a way to prevent the alienation of its estates on Cyprus, as well as to improve its own historically strained relations with Venice. In 1474 Queen Catherine deprived the Catalan Nicholas Zaplana of the Grand Commandery of Cyprus on account of his involvement in a plot engineered by the late King James II's Catalan supporters to expel the Venetians from Cyprus. From November 1475 until the Ottoman conquest of 1570 all Grand Commanders originated from the Cornaro family that Queen Catherine belonged to, with the exception of the French brother Guy de Blanchefort in the years 1483-1485. The smaller commandery of Phinikas and Anoyira likewise witnessed the appointment of Venetian commanders under Queen Catherine and during the era of direct Venetian rule, and only the small Hospitaller commandery of Templos near Kerynia formed a partial exception to the rule, being administered by Venetian commanders up to 1510 but not afterwards. Venetian control of the Hospitaller estates was never total, with the Order continuing to nominate the actual commanders and to draw

³² SARNOWSKY, *Handel und Geldwirtschaft*, p. 24; EDBURY, *The last Lusignans*, pp. 192-195, 202-204 and 214-220; COUREAS, *King James II of Cyprus and the Hospitallers*, pp. 119-121.

responsions from Cyprus, but it was effective enough to impact on the export of Hospitaller foodstuffs to Rhodes³³.

Venetian control over the export of foodstuffs from the Hospital's Cypriot estates began to be exercised under Queen Catherine. Orders forbidding the export of foodstuffs from Cyprus were issued with a twofold purpose, to prevent shortages on the island and to secure supplies for Venice itself. In March 1478, four years into her reign, the Venetian government granted Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson permission to export as much grain as corresponded to the value of the annual revenues from the Hospitaller estates on Cyprus so long as this was not to the island's detriment, and it is significant that he had to solicit this permission. Even when there was a bumper harvest, the Venetian administration did not allow unrestricted export of foodstuffs. Hence in a letter of 8 June 1487 the Council of Ten in Venice acknowledged that the harvest had been the most abundant and fruitful, granting permission for the export of any surplus wheat so long as a quantity sufficient for the needs of Cyprus over the next 18 months stayed on the island, despite a previous prohibition decreed on 29 March 1487, forbidding the export of grain from the kingdom on account of dearth. Now any surplus could be exported freely and without the need to purchase export licences to Venice and all Venetian territories, but Hospitaller Rhodes was excepted, for a limit of 8,000 *modia* and no more was set³⁴. Sometime previous to 23 September 1506 Grand Master Emery d'Amboise requested permission from the Venetian government to export 10,000 *modia* of wheat and another 10,000 *modia* of barley from its Cypriot estates in order to meet its needs on Rhodes. In its reply, illustrative of the new Venetian policy, the Council of Ten instructed the Venetian rectors on Cyprus to allow the grand master or his representative to export 5,000 *modia* of wheat and 10,000 of barley. He was to do this, moreover, only after ensuring that the quantities of grain stipulated by the Council were sent to Venice and so long as the rectors could grant the Order's request without prejudice to the security of Cyprus³⁵.

Two years earlier, on 7 August 1504, the Council of Ten had granted Zacharia de Garzoni, the commander of the smaller Hospitaller

³³ N. COUREAS, *A Process of Secularization? Venetian Hospitallers and Hospitaller Estates in Cyprus after 1474*, in «Ordines Militares», XXI (2016), pp. 111-127.

³⁴ HILL, *History*, p. 728; *Anekdotia engrapha tes kypriakes historias*, vol. I, no. 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, no. 118.

commandery of Phoinikas in the Paphos district, permission to export 3,000 *stara* of wheat or of other types of grain from this commandery, one *stara* amounting to 38 *modia*, but with Venice as the destination. Zacharia Garzoni, whose father was a Procurator of St Mark in Venice, originated from a noble Venetian family which owned its own bank. Garzoni was granted permission by the Council of Ten to export 1,000 *stara* of wheat and another 1,000 of barley in a document dated 10 July 1539, but with the proviso that the agents hiring a ship for him, since he could not do so himself, were to offer guarantees that the grain would be sent to Venice³⁶. The practice of using sums from the sale of grain to pay off arrears in responsions owed by Cypriot commanderies, already employed in the fifteenth century as mentioned above continued in the sixteenth century under Venice. On 12 September 1513 the Venetian administration of Cyprus granted Marco Cornaro, the nephew of Catherine Cornaro and Grand Commander of Cyprus from 1508 onwards, permission to export to Rhodes 6,000 *modia* of barley «from the revenues of the commandery»³⁷ so as to settle a debt he owed the Hospitaller Grand Master, who at the time must have been either Guy de Blanchefort or Fabrizio del Carretto. A Venetian report dated 12 September 1509, moreover, states that stocks of barley on Cyprus amounted to a net total of 556,180 *modia*³⁸.

The restrictive policies the Council of Ten in Venice and the Venetian administration on Cyprus applied over the export of cereals from Hospitaller estates on Cyprus to Rhodes made it all the more imperative for the Order to obtain supplies of cereals from elsewhere. Monetary subsidies that the Hospitaller Order received from its western provinces and the Aegean area from its officers there were committed to this end on numerous occasions. In this manner, the responsions it received from its estates in Sicily were utilised for the procurement of cereals and other victuals. Sicily played an especially important part in the procurement of cereals for Hospitaller Rhodes. In the years 1482, 1504 and 1509 the prior of Messina and his collectors were urged to buy large quantities of cereals and to have them sent to Rhodes, paying for partly from overdue responsions and partly from their own funds committed to this end. Geronimo de Salonia, the captain of a ship from Sicily, obtained on 2 August 1510 the sum of 524 out of 724

³⁶ Ibid., vol. I, no. 81 and vol. IV, no. 139.

³⁷ Ibid, vol. II, no. 68: «de le intrade de la sua com(e)mendaria».

³⁸ Ibid., vol. II, nos. 12 and 68.

ducats for a delivery to Rhodes of cereals and victuals from a collector of the priory of Messina named Paolo de Salonia, perhaps a relative of his. Subjects of the Order such as the Rhodian burgesses Giorgio and Antonio Cepe obtained cereals from Sicily armed with Hospitaller letters of safe-conduct in June 1511. Other Italian priories on occasion participated in this business, buying cereals and having them shipped to Rhodes for the island's sustenance, for example those of Barletta and St Gilles on 29 April 1446 and 2 November 1464 respectively³⁹.

Sicily's importance in supplying the Hospitallers on Rhodes with grain can be placed within a wider context. After the second Aragonese conquest of 1392 the grant of duty-free export licences to Aragonese supporters, in conjunction with the high resilience of the native Sicilian durum wheat to storage and transportation by sea favoured its export. Even though Sicily's population nearly doubled from 1450 to 1500 grain exports increased from three to five percent of domestic output in around 1400 to thirteen to fifteen percent in around 1500. Cyprus itself, and especially Genoese Famagusta, imported wheat from Sicily to an increasing extent from the later fourteenth century onwards, and whenever the region of Sicily from which the wheat originated is mentioned in the relevant commercial contracts it is invariably a coastal town in the wheat producing Val de Mazara area of western Sicily⁴⁰.

To conclude, one can state that Cyprus constituted an important source for the provisioning of cereals to Rhodes throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the political vicissitudes it suffered from on account of the Mamluk invasion of 1426, the civil war of 1460-1464 and the restrictions on the export of cereals to Rhodes Venice imposed following after taking control of the island in late 1473, and officially annexing it in 1489, impelled the Hospitallers to seek for and use other sources of supply in the Aegean, the Gulf of Patras, Italy and Sicily. In this manner they were not overdependent on any one source and could supply Rhodes with cereals from various Mediterranean localities. These were usually but by no means invariably Christian states, for the Order

³⁹ SARNOWSKY, *Handel und Geldwirtschaft*, pp. 21 and 24 and p. 32, notes 38 and 42.

⁴⁰ S. R. EPSTEIN, *An Island for itself: Economic development and social change in late medieval Sicily*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 146, 163-168 and 291; N. COUREAS, *Trade between Cyprus and Aragonese Sicily in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*, in «Epeterida Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon», XXXII (2006), 104-108.

also obtained cereals from Muslim lands. A Greek subject of the Order named Vassilis Romanos was provided with a safe conduct in November 1488 so as to journey to Egypt and Syria with timber from Rhodes loaded on board his caravel, or more precisely to go to Alexandria and Damietta, and to purchase cereals in these places and bring them back to Rhodes. This Hospitaller commerce with Muslim lands, where timber was used for shipbuilding, took place with papal consent and was exceptional given the normal papal practice to ban exports of timber to Muslim lands. A papal permission of seven years' validity from Pope Innocent VIII was appended to Vassilis Romanos's safe conduct, expressly permitting trade with Egypt and Syria⁴¹. The Order's policy as regarded the acquisition of grain for Rhodes exhibited remarkable flexibility during the period under discussion, making use of a wide range of geographical locations and of merchants, ship's captains and subjects of the Order of differing nationalities and social backgrounds.

⁴¹ SARNOWSKY, *Handel und Geldwirtschaft*, p. 21; STANTCHEV, *Spiritual Rationality, Papal Embargo as Cultural Practice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 147, 173 and 189.

