



NICHOLAS COUREAS*
Cyprus Research Centre
Gladstonos 6
CY-1095 Nicosia
Cyprus
Ncoureas@hotmail.com

WOMEN AND THE HOSPITALLER ORDER ON RHODES AND CYPRUS IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

KEYWORDS

military orders; history; the Middle Ages; Hospitallers; women; slaves; serfs; widows; property; legislation; violence

ABSTRACT

The women on Hospitallers Rhodes were by no means a uniform group. They differed in terms of social class, some being slaves, others being serfs while others were free women, at times wealthy property owners. Nor did the women on Rhodes have the same ethnicity. While the majority of women were Greek, like the inhabitants of Rhodes in general, not all of them originated from Rhodes. In addition, there were also women of Syrian origin, as well as women of Latin and Jewish origin. In terms of marital status, there were unmarried women, married women and widows, and in terms of legal standing there were lay women but also women in religious orders, nuns or donors. In spatial terms some women resided in the countryside while others lived in the Town of Rhodes. Members of all the groups of women mentioned above had contacts or relations with the Hospitaller Order and its members, and women feature in the legislation of the Order.

* ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8903-8459>



Two comparatively recent studies on female Hospitallers in the medieval period have appeared in the last sixteen years. An edited volume titled *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages* by Anthony Luttrell and Helen Nicholson discusses for the most part Hospitaller female houses in various parts of Europe and the Latin East, and the female Hospitallers' participation in the Order. A monograph by Myra Miranda Bom titled *Women in the Military Orders of the Crusades* likewise deals with female Hospitallers in five out of its seven chapters.¹ This paper, however, focuses almost exclusively on the relations of the Hospitaller Order on Rhodes and Cyprus with women who were outside the Order, not members of it, from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries. There are three thematic subdivisions. The first section of the paper concentrates on the Hospitallers and female slaves, the second section on the Hospitallers and female serfs and the third section on the Hospitallers and free women. In addition, this paper will discuss Hospitaller amnesties involving women, Hospitallers and women in religious orders and Hospitaller relations involving widows. A sub-section on Hospitaller relations with women in Rhodes town will discuss sororities, burials, female owners of property, widows, Hospitaller legislation concerning women, its implementation and, last but not least, the issue of female victims of male violence. Where possible, particular conditions on Rhodes will be compared and contrasted to those in other former Byzantine areas under Latin rule, especially Cyprus. The ethnicities of the women on Rhodes and the extent to which their social status influenced these ethnicities will also be commented on.

In terms of source materials, the paper will be based on collections of published documents; concerning Rhodes those published by Zacharias Tsirpanlis, Anthony Luttrell and Gregory O'Malley and concerning Cyprus those published by Karl Borchardt, Anthony Luttrell and Ekhard Schöffler. The 342 documents published in 1995 by Zacharias Tsirpanlis and covering the period between the years 1421–1453 all originate from the “Libri Bullarum”, otherwise known as the “Registri delle bolle di cancellaria”, in the National Library of Malta.² The 208 documents published by Anthony Luttrell and Gregory O'Malley and covering the period from 1306 to 1423 also originate largely from the “Libri bullarum”. These were arranged territorially, with entries relevant to Rhodes and Cyprus being usu-

¹ *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anthony Luttrell and Helen Nicholson (London–New York: Routledge, 2006; 2016, 2nd edition); Myra Miranda Bom, *Women in the Military Orders of the Crusades* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

² *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo kai tes Noties Sporades apo to arxeio ton Ioanniton hippoton*, ed. Zacharias Tsirpanlis (Rhodes: Ekdose Grapheiou Mesaionikes Polis Rhodou, 1995), 21.

ally placed in the *partes cis-* or *citramarine*, as opposed to the European priories of the Hospital, making it relatively easier to find them. The editors are careful to point out that it commences only in 1346 and that only five registers survive between 1348 and 1381, while for the years from 1306 to 1346 there are only nine relevant texts from the small part of the Hospitallers' Rhodian Archive that reached Malta in 1530. A total of 49 documents in this edition date to the period between 1347–1352, while of the 24 surviving registers for the years 1382 to 1420 all other than six were produced or largely produced in the West, not on Rhodes itself.³ The 346 documents concerning Cyprus published by Karl Borchardt, Anthony Luttrell and Ekhard Schöffler originate from 36 *Libri Bullarum* for the years between 1409–1459. However, as the editors point out, the “Libri Bullarum” for the years 1423–1426, 1429–1431 1435 and 1443 are missing.⁴

HOSPITALLERS AND FEMALE SLAVES

Both Hospitaller individuals and the Order as an institution owned slaves, female and male. Manumissions in the extant *libri bullarum* of the masters of the Hospital in Malta record manumissions of female slave from the mid fourteenth century onwards. Most such records of female slaves registered their manumission. Several female slaves, including two named Eirene from Thessalonica and a tavern keeper named Kale were freed on 26 December 1347 by the Grand Master at the request of a *soror* of the Hospitaller Order named Margarita of Negroponte, the medieval name for Euboea. The document states that according to the *soror's* own application these slaves deserved to be freed on account of having served her for so long.⁵ On 20 August 1358 the female slaves Maria and Eirene were manumitted, like-

³ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes 1306–1423: Original Texts and English Summaries*, ed. Anthony Luttrell and Gregory O'Malley (Abingdon–Oxford: Routledge, 2019), 2, 4; Zacharias Tsirpanlis, “To archeio ton Ioanniton Hippoton kai he semasia tou gia te mesaionike historia tes Dodecanesou,” in id., *He Rhodos kai hoi Notioi Sporades sta chronia ton Ioanniton Hippoton (140s–160s ai.)* (Rhodes: City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town), I, 17–18.

⁴ *Documents Concerning Cyprus from the Hospitallers' Rhodian Archives: 1409–1459*, ed. Karl Borchardt, Anthony Luttrell, and Ekhardt Schöffler (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2011), xiii–xv.

⁵ Anthony Luttrell, “Slavery at Rhodes: 1306–1440,” in id., *Latin Greece, the Hospitallers and the Crusaders 1291–1440*, Variorum Collected Studies 77 (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1982), part VI, 88–89 and 93, no. 4; *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, no. 36.

wise as a reward for their long and faithful service, but also on condition that they should continue to offer services to the Order.⁶ The fact that these female slaves had many years of service behind them meant that they must have been quite old. Michel Balard has observed that the average age of slaves rose continuously from the thirteenth century until the end of the Middle Ages, being higher for females than for males, and with slaves aged over 30 being less likely to be sold or resold. He has also stated that the population losses caused by the Black Death of 1348 and by subsequent plagues and by the closing of the Black Sea as a result of the Ottoman conquests of the mid-fifteenth century all contributed to an ageing slave population. This helps explain the relatively high age of the female slaves mentioned above.⁷

On 10 May 1386 the Hospitaller Master confirmed the manumission of a black female slave of the Order named Katerina and her son, formerly freed by the late preceptor of Barcelona in return for her services but without the Master's permission, now granted. The origins of this black female slave are difficult to determine. The Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria explicitly forbade the sale of Muslims slaves or of his Muslim subjects to Christians, a prohibition that the Venetians at least respected, for when in 1409 the Duke of Naxos captured a number of Mamluk Muslim subjects the sultan disrupted Venetian trade in Alexandria. But the Copts, Christian subjects of the Mamluk sultan, could be sold as slaves. In 1420 the Venetian Senate proclaimed a prohibition against buying Saracens and other (Muslim) subjects of the sultan so as not to endanger Venetian merchants in Mamluk territories. But the Senate exempted from this prohibition *saracenos/as nigros/as* who could be bought "according to custom". This indicates that Nubians and Ethiopians could be purchased as slaves. It is, moreover, possible that the late preceptor of Barcelona had liberated Maria and her son because she had been his concubine and he was the father of her son. In Egypt a Coptic slave named Maria, the slave of a deceased "consul of the Greeks" named Stellianoni Scitara, appointed a procurator to have her enslaved son freed, an indication that she too had been the consul's concubine, had been freed after his death and was now acting to free her son.⁸

⁶ Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 95, no. 20.

⁷ Michel Balard, "Slavery in the Latin Mediterranean (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries): The Case of Genoa," in *Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (c.1000–1500 CE)*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Cristoph Cluse, Mediterranean Nexus 1100–1700 5 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2017), 242–243.

⁸ Georg Christ, "Differentiated Legality: Venetian Slave Trade in Alexandria," in *Slavery and the Slave Trade*, 300–301, 303–306 and 313; Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 98, no. 37.

On 19 January 1404 a slave of the order named Maria originating from Bulgaria obtained manumission in common form, which meant that she became a Roman citizen, thereby gaining unconditional freedom. Bulgarian Slaves were common in Crete during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries as a result of the Ottoman conquests and were sold in the Cretan slave markets. Therefore, it is not surprising to encounter them on Rhodes. Rhodes was near Crete and had its own slave market, while numerous Cretan merchants lived and traded there.⁹ The slave Helena from Hungary who worked in the Hospitaller infirmary on Rhodes was likewise manumitted in common form on 22 December 1414, in recognition of her services to the sick.¹⁰ Another female slave manumitted on 26 July 1439 at the instigation of Catherine de Lusignan, an illegitimate daughter of King Janus titled *admiratissa* of the Kingdom of Cyprus and the wife of the admiral Carceran Suarez, was Kale Georgiou tou Latrioti, from the Hospitaller *casale* of Phinica on Cyprus. In July 1447 Katerina, a slave originating from Bulgaria, was freed in common form after the death of the Hospitaller brother who had bought her, whereupon she had become the property of the Hospitaller treasury prior to her manumission.¹¹ On 11 December 1450 the Rhodian chancery issued a recommendation emanating from the Grand Master, addressed to all captains and owners of ships, recommending the former Russian slave Theodora of Grimani, who had been granted permission to leave Rhodes together with her daughter and journey back to Russia to stay there with her relations. Indeed, by the second half of the fifteenth century the trend to manumit Christian female slaves was reinforced by a statute of the Hospitaller Order of December 1461, stating that women fleeing from Cyprus to Rhodes and made captive could be sold as slaves but should serve their masters for up to seven years, whereupon they should be freed. This statute clearly reflected a decree of Pope Urban VI that Greek slaves should obtain eman-

⁹ Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 98, no. 39; Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300–1415)*, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia 11 (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, 1983), 161; Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000), 87; Christ, "Differentiated Legality," 306–307 and note 38; Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton Legacy Library 118 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 364.

¹⁰ Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 88 and 98, no. 42.

¹¹ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 158; Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 99, no. 50; Jürgen Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft im Johanniterorden des 15. Jahrhunderts, Verfassung und Verwaltung des Johanniter auf Rhodos (1421–1522)*, Vita regularis 14 (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2001), 372–373; Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, "Les Lusignan de Chypre," *Epeteris Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon* 10 (1980): 183–184.

cipation after seven years of servitude. But in December 1461 it was also stipulated that some male and female Albanians abducted from their country by some ships were to be sold in time in Rhodes Town and not elsewhere, so its policies were not always consistent.¹²

In general, manumitted female slaves were recorded by name, whereas those purchased or exchanged were only sometimes so recorded. On 23 October 1347 a man named Costecome received permission to marry Anna, daughter of a Hospitaller serf named Leo Cabasilas, because he had given the Order a female slave in exchange. On 14 September 1438 the Order granted permission to the Jew Abraham of Cyprus and his wife Elie to buy an elderly female Saracen slave, past childbearing age, for domestic service. This reflects the fact that on Hospitaller Rhodes as in Genoa the servile population was becoming older during the fifteenth century, with females between the ages of 30 to 40 or even up to 60 being recorded in sales contracts. The Saracen slave mentioned above, probably a black slave from Ethiopia or Nubia for reasons explained above, must have been past 40 years of age. It also reflects the reality that in general female slaves were assigned to domestic service whereas male slaves were purchased for agricultural or employment in various crafts. The names of both female slaves exchanged or purchased are unrecorded.¹³ But on 17 February 1458 the Hospitaller Grand Master Jacques de Milly confirmed an exchange whereby the preceptor of Cyprus Louis de Magnac granted him a Russian slave named Anastasia, receiving in exchange Maria the daughter of the deceased Rhodian serf Michael Filarethos. Louis de Magnac thereby acquired the power to have her married and dispose of her as he wished, Maria and her progeny being declared free of all obligations towards the Order. The Chapter General of the Hospitaller Order confirmed the above exchange on 24 October 1459.¹⁴ Sometimes female slaves were simply mentioned as part of the properties listed in grants made by the Order to individual brethren. On 4 March 1348 the Master and Convent of the order granted the *casale* of Kalamonas in the Castellany of Feraklos, a property once belonging to the now deceased *soror* Margarita of Negroponte, who has been mentioned above. Listed among the things and persons pertaining to this *casale* were *sclavis sexus utriusque*, slaves of both sexes. When on 15 May 1366 the Hospitaller Grand Master freed

¹² *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 230; Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft*, 371.

¹³ Luttrell, "Slavery at Rhodes," 93, no. 6; *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 139; Balard, "Slavery in the Latin Mediterranean," 243 and 247.

¹⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, nos. 326 and 339.

a group of male slaves in common form two of those manumitted, John Calogeros and Holamis, were freed with their wives and children, but they are not named.¹⁵

The sale of female slaves on Rhodes could cause problems, especially if the brother concerned died. Sometime before 15 December 1453 Antonina Alamana complained to the Grand Master Jean de Lastic over the sale of a female slave worth 46 Rhodian ducats to the Hospitaller brother Sir John de Agnon, a member of the Spanish Langue responsible for the provision of foodstuffs. John had not given her the money he owed her, he allegedly purchased another slave for her, regarding which purchase she gave him an additional ten ducats, so that he owed her 56 ducats all told. Following this, John bought another Circassian slave, supposedly with his own money, the deed of purchase being recorded in the *commercium* or customs house of Rhodes under the date 10 October 1450. Subsequently, John had recorded at the bottom of this deed of purchase that he admitted buying the Circassian slave with the money he owed Antonina. To add insult to injury, he actually sold the female Circassian slave to Alamana, even though he had initially bought her using Antonina's money, during the previous year while he was ill and close to dying. This deed of sale had likewise been recorded in the *commercium* on 10 January 1453 by the scribe William Martini. Antonina requested the Grand Master that she should not have to pay the Order's treasury the price of this Circassian slave were John to die or to depart from Rhodes, a request that the Grand Master accepted. Neither of the female slaves in question is actually named, unlike the sums Antonina paid to Sir John de Agnon.¹⁶

One observes that the Circassian slave as well as the two Russian slaves mentioned above could well have been purchased at the Genoese colony of Caffa in the Crimea, described by the Spanish Traveller Pero Tafur in 1430 as being the biggest slave market in the world, where Russian and Circassian slaves as well as those from other nations were brought for sale. During the first half of the fifteenth century Circassian slaves were also obtainable from the Venetian colony of Tana on the Sea of Azov, as well as from Byzantine Constantinople with its strong Genoese mercantile presence. Genoese traders could easily have transported Russian and Circassian slaves from either or all of these places to the Rhodian slave market.¹⁷

¹⁵ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, nos. 39 and 92.

¹⁶ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 340.

¹⁷ Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, trans. Malcolm Letts (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1926, reprinted Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 132–133; Danuta Quirini-Popławska, "The Venetian Involvement in the Black Sea Slave Trade (Fourteenth to Fifteenth Centuries),"

HOSPITALLERS AND FEMALE SERFS

The female serfs of the Order, like their male counterparts, were invariably Greek. Nevertheless, they could marry outside their own ethnic group and social class. On 15 February 1366 the Grand Master and Convent of the Hospital accepted a supplication brought by five serfs of the Order, including the female serfs Joya and Margarita, to be granted freedom in common form. The serfs in question had been born to a free man from Provence named Richardon Boeuf and his wife Sophia, born a serf of the Hospital. Richardon arrived on Rhodes after travelling the world at the time of the Grand Master Hélión de Villeneuve, who directed him to take up residence in the *casale* of Villanova as a *sargentus* and to perform the service attached to this office. He had married Sophia with the Master's permission, and having obtained promises from the master that his children from this marriage would be *franci* and baptised as children of a *francus*, namely of a free man with Latin ethnicity. Because, however, Richardon had not obtained these promises in writing, his children had hitherto been regarded as serfs. The children, however, issuing from a *francus homo* and christened in the Roman Church according to the *mos francorum*, were now freed from serfdom along with their progeny in perpetuity.¹⁸ This instance illustrates the problems that could arise when serfs intermarried with free men. In normal circumstances the children of such intermarriage were considered serfs, but an exception was made for the children of Richardon Boeuf precisely on account of the promise given to him by the Grand Master. The more usual practise in the case of marriages between serfs and free persons appears in a manumission dated 29 August 1391, when the Grand Master emancipated a serf named George. His father Michali Protoutamenou was a *francus* and his mother Kale tou Mangipa was a serf from Kos, and so George had been born a serf like his mother. His emancipation, moreover, was conditional, for in exchange he promised to grant four Greek slaves to the *baiulia* of Kos.¹⁹

The Hospital saw to it that widowed serfs were cared for. When sometime before 30 June 1413 the serf John Zilota of the Hospitaller *casale* of Logara, present-day Louvaras in the diocese of Limassol, died without children, Brother Bernard Roux who was resident on Cyprus asked to be given the deceased serf's property, which in such cases escheated to the preceptor of Cyprus, at that time Brother

in *Slavery and the Slave Trade*, 266–268, 274–277 and 280; Annika Stello, “Caffa and the Slave Trade during the First Half of the Fifteenth Century,” in *Slavery and the Slave Trade*, 377–378.

¹⁸ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, 28, 43, 51, 62 and no. 88.

¹⁹ Luttrell, “Slavery at Rhodes,” 98, no. 38.

Raymond de Lescure. The preceptor, then on Rhodes, wrote to his lieutenant on Cyprus, Brother Jean Claret the Preceptor of Kyrenia, to handle the matter following consultation with the brethren on Cyprus. Having duly consulted them, Jean Claret decided to grant this property for life to Bernard Roux, who in addition would obtain one fifth of the wine, grain, olives and carobs produced on this land but he was also instructed to maintain John Zilota's widow for the rest of her life, an instruction confirmed by Brother Luce de Vallins, lieutenant of the Grand Master and the Hospitaller Convent.²⁰ But surveillance was also practiced. When Hospitaller serfs and slaves of both sexes fled from the Preceptory of Cyprus and the Magistral chamber of Phinikas and Anoyira in the diocese of Paphos sometime before 15 December 1447 in the wake of Mamluk raids against the island, Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent sent Brother Niccolo de Corogna of the Priory of Venice to Cyprus to reform the Preceptory. Among his tasks was to locate fugitive female and male serfs who had fled Hospitaller *casalia* for other localities and to have them brought back to perform their customary labour obligations.²¹

Serfs on Rhodes, female and male, were liable for galley service on board the Order's ships, the so-called *servitudo marina*. On occasion, however, serfs were released from this obligation. In a famous case of 1400 Nikita de Assiza convinced the Hospitallers by summoning trustworthy witnesses that he, his parents and his lineage had been exempted from this obligation, so that on account of their depositions he and his mother Eirene were declared exempt on 17 September 1400.²² On 20 January 1422, the three female serfs named Marietta or Stavriani, Doukaina and Angelina were formally released from it and designated free with the legal status of *francomate*, that is to say freed from serfdom by Grand Master Anthony Fluvia. Their former obligations regarding the *servitudo marina* would henceforth be performed by the two men Bartholomew of Rhodes and Thomas of Famagusta and by Bartholomew's wife Maria. The three women in question were the daughters of George Beltrami or Bertranin, considered a faithful subject of the Order who himself had been formally released from the *servitudo marina* by the former marshal of Rhodes Lucius de Vallinis along with his son Nicholas. Afterwards, Anthony Fluvia had released from this obligation Beltrami's wife Arfaradena as well as the three abovementioned daughters. Their obligations regarding the *servi-*

²⁰ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, no. 230.

²² Anthony Luttrell, "The 'Servitudo Marina' at Rhodes, 1306–1462," in *id.*, *The Hospitallers in Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece and the West, 1291–1440*, Variorum Collected Studies 77 (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1979, 1997, 3th edition), part IV, 57–58.

tudo marina were to be performed in their places by two married couples, Xenos Megistanos with Sophia Riis and Zacharias of Crete with Stauria de Turcomanno. The care taken to find replacements for those freed from the obligation of performing the *servitudo marina* underlines the importance of this service in the eyes of the Order.²³ Similar care was taken to find replacements in November 1427 for John and his children who had been exempted from the *servitudo marina*, their places taken by the Cypriots John Trigonari of Famagusta and his wife Aracliani. The relevant document also declares the exemption of the four children of this Cypriot couple who had been born before the date on which they undertook to perform the *servitudo marina*, two of whom, Orphane and Eirene, were daughters.²⁴

It is noteworthy that emancipated female serfs gave female and not male slaves in exchange, possibly because the females given were likelier to perform the same tasks as those female serfs manumitted. On 24 November 1433 Marietta, a registered serf of the Order and the daughter of Michael from the village of Aphantou on Rhodes was emancipated by the Grand Master Anthony Fluvìa, being released along with her descendants from all forms of servile obligation. In return she granted the order an unnamed female slave worth 60 ducats.²⁵ Likewise, on 24 February 1435 two female serfs, Xeni Angelina the daughter of Costas Plandias and Eirene of Mangaphadena, a serf of the Hospital from the *casale* of Koskino, living at that time in Parambolino, were emancipated. Eirene had paid the Grand Master 40 ducats in return for the purchase of a female slave to replace her “as is customary in similar instances.”²⁶

Sometimes emancipation was obtained through the intercession of third parties. On 28 July 1445 Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the convent of the Order manumitted Maria the daughter of Michael, a carpenter of Rhodes. She was also the wife of the eminent citizen of the town of Rhodes named Primicires Kayias, who had interceded for her on numerous occasions, beseeching the Order to secure her emancipation. He finally succeeded for she was now emancipated in common form and declared a Roman citizen with full civic rights. One observes that her husband is recorded in the deed of emancipation as having performed many services for the Order over a long period of time. Despite obtaining emancipation, Marietta felt insecure in her new status, and on 27 September 1449 Grand Master

²³ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 4; Luttrell, “The ‘Servitudo Marina,’” 62.

²⁴ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 17; Luttrell, “The ‘Servitudo Marina,’” 62.

²⁵ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 36.

²⁶ Luttrell, “Slavery at Rhodes,” 99, no. 46.

Jean de Lastic, who had succeeded Anthony Fluvà in 1437, confirmed his predecessor's decision.²⁷

Intercession, however, did not always secure an unconditional manumission. On 9 May 1449 Grand Master Jean de Lastic had the serf Eirene from the village of Zenodotou on Rhodes, the daughter of Nicholas and Sophia Kalamari, manumitted. He did so in response to the entreaties of Alexios the son of Andronikos from the nearby island of Nisyros, a *francomatus*, that is a free person with limited obligations, who had been stricken with love for her. Alexios's parents opposed his plans to marry Eirene knowing well that the children of such a marriage would be serfs. In a compromise solution, the Grand Master ruled that the male children of this marriage would be *francomati* obliged to perform the *servitudo marina*, the female children being serfs.²⁸ Intercession was unsuccessful on occasion. On 11 February 1446 Jean de Lastic and the Convent of the Order decided to emancipate in common form and relieve from the *servitudo marina* a female serf named Sarantine, the daughter of the late Stephen Melis and Mangaphadena of Kontaratos. He did so in response to the intercession of his faithful familiar and servant John Yiaxis, who wanted one of his sons to wed her. This emancipation was never put into effect, as is recorded in a note at the top of the folio, written in another hand.²⁹

In one interesting instance, recorded in a document of 16 October 1449, a female serf secured emancipation in common form by offering slaves of both sexes to the Order, of childbearing age and granted sufficient material goods so as to deter them from escaping. The serf in question was Kale the daughter of the priest Hieronymus and granddaughter of the deacon Tsangaropoulos, originating from the island of Kos and the castle of Peripatos. She gained in return full emancipation for herself and her descendants of both sexes, obtaining Roman citizenship. The number and value of the slaves and property given in return clearly influenced the grant of unconditional emancipation.³⁰ In cases of intercession, the status of the intercessor also influenced the type of emancipation granted. On 31 March 1451 a female serf of the Order named Magdalena, daughter of Antonina of Macheda and liable to perform the *servitudo marina*, was emancipated in common form along with all her children of both sexes and all their direct descendants in compliance with a decision made by Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the

²⁷ *Anekdotà engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, nos. 151 and 193.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 189.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 158.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 195.

Hospitaller Convent. This was done following the intercession of none other than the Sir Bernard de Vilamari, admiral of the fleet of King Alfonso V of Aragon. Fantin Quirini, the admiral of the Hospitaller fleet and preceptor of Kos, was informed of this emancipation as were his successors from the langue of Italy so that Magdalena could enjoy her freedom undisturbed.³¹

It was important for the admirals of the Hospitaller fleets to know of instances where serfs, female or male, had been emancipated and thereby released from performing the *servitudo marina*. On the 10 January 1453 Jean de Lastic decided to emancipate in common form the Rhodian serf Maistrissa the daughter of Chrysoteles. She was in a sexual relationship with the eminent citizen of the town of Rhodes Nicholas Gorgostares, a doctor of law and a judge of the Order for criminal cases, and had given birth to two illegitimate children by him. Because, however, this judge intended to marry her, following his intervention the Grand Master and the Convent granted her, her present children and the children of both sexes they would have after marriage Roman citizenship with the attendant exemption from the *servitudo marina*. Besides, for the greater security of Maistrissa and her present and future children in their new legal status, George de Montefafia, admiral of the Hospitaller fleet and a member of the Langue of Italy, to which this office was generally given, was informed along with his successors in office of her emancipation and instructed not to violate it. In this as in other instances, naval commanders unaware of the release of serf, female or male from this obligation would have forced them to continue performing it.³²

In one instance the admiral of the Hospitaller fleet was to be notified of the inclusion, not exemption, of a female serf into the class of persons liable for the *servitudo marina*. On 24 December 1453 Grand Master Jean de Lastic and the Convent of the Order approved the transfer of the serf Katerina, daughter of Michael Kaloxenos, a *marinarius* from the Rhodian village of Koskinou and a faithful subject of the Order, from the class of serfs to that of the *marinari*. This was because she wished to marry a certain unnamed man who would not, however, agree to marry her on account of her status as a serf, that would be inherited by their children. Michael Kaloxenos had earnestly entreated the Order to consent to his daughter's transfer from the class of serfs to that of the *marinari*. The Master and Convent approved of the transfer, but also saw to it that Katerina was to be registered as a *marinaria*, instructing the *baiulo* of Rhodes and the admiral of the

³¹ Ibid., no. 235.

³² Ibid., no. 284.

Hospitaller fleet accordingly, so that Katerina and any children of either sex she might have during her marriage would be considered *marinari*.³³

Turning from Rhodes to Cyprus, it is interesting to observe that female serfs in certain localities were sometimes in short supply. When on 24 November 1454 Grand Master Jacques de Milly and the Convent of the Order confirmed Brother Serio Seripando, capitular bailiff of Sant' Eufemia and Preceptor of the magistral Chamber of the *prestaria* of Templos, a village on Cyprus near Kyrenia, in his possessions on a lifetime basis, it was added that should there be a shortage of female serfs at Templos the male serfs at this village could marry female slaves originating from other localities within the Grand Preceptory of Cyprus with the permission of the Preceptors or their lieutenants in the Grand Preceptory, "as had been the custom in times past". The allusion to how this had been a customary expedient in former times indicates that a dearth of female serfs, at Templos and possibly at other localities belonging to the Hospital, was a chronic problem, although the causes of such shortages are not given.³⁴

Another interesting feature concerning Cyprus and Rhodes is the phenomenon of Cypriot male serfs escaping to Rhodes, marrying free women there and thereby securing their freedom in practice, though not according to the letter of the law. A letter of the Venetian *luogotenente* of Cyprus addressed to the Council of Ten in Venice and dated February 1504 informed them that Cypriot serfs who had escaped from Cyprus many years before had settled on Rhodes and in other places, had married free women there and had had children by them. Their return to Cyprus was now out of the question, nevertheless, some of them were willing to pay sums in Venetian ducats in order to obtain their legal as well as their practical emancipation from serfdom. They desired this so as to travel freely between Rhodes and Cyprus and trade commodities in both places. The letter illustrates the importance of obtaining legal emancipation even if in practice it had already been secured, not only for reasons of security but also in order to engage in trade. The Venetian diarist Marin Sanudo observed that numerous serfs who had escaped from Cyprus were resident on Rhodes in 1518.³⁵

³³ Ibid., no. 342.

³⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 310.

³⁵ *Anekdotia engrapha tes kypriakes historias apo to kratiko arkheio tes Venetias*, ed. Aikaterini Aristeidou, vol. 1 (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1990), no. 64; George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 799.

HOSPITALLERS AND FREE WOMEN OWNING PROPERTY OF RHODES

Fiefs, although few on Hospitaller Rhodes, nonetheless existed. That of Dyaskoros passed through several hands, including those of Nicoletta de Leone, the wife of the Florentine Giovanni Corsini, who was enfeoffed with this *casale* in 1374. The grant recorded in a document of 28 September 1374 stated specifically that the fief had been given to him and his descendants by his wife Nicoletta. Nicoletta by around 1408 had been widowed, had remarried a Catalan named Bernat de Sant Saturnin and had become widowed a second time. Prior to his death, Bernat himself was granted the *casale* of Dyaskoros on a lifetime basis in 1403. Hence Nicoletta became the heiress of both her deceased husbands, and her own heiress Alamana married the Catalan burgess of Rhodes Bartolomeu Sunyer sometime before 1408, when as a result of disputes over Giovanni Corsini's inheritance the Hospital acquired cheaply the Corsini *casale* of Fanes that Alamana claimed for herself.³⁶

Any plans the Order had to resell this *casale* at a profit were scotched when King Marti of Aragon, a familiar of whom Bartolomeu Sunyer was, intervened in Alamana's favour. In a letter dated 27 September 1408 the king complained that the order had impounded unjustly some warehouses in the town of Rhodes that Alamana had inherited. In August 1409 the Aragonese king also asserted that the deceased Bernat de Sant Saturnin had acknowledged giving Nicoletta 2,000 ducats according to the terms of her marriage contract. She, however, had given in return a receipt for 4,000 ducats, expecting to receive the outstanding balance later. After this Bernat nominated his brother Artal as his heir, but following Bernat's death the Hospitaller Grand Master Philibert de Naillac illegally withheld the 4,000 ducats due to Artal, and Artal's procurator was frightened to claim them. Instead, Alamana was condemned to pay this sum herself, appealing in vain to the pope against the decision. To enforce the decision the Grand Master forced Alamana to sell the *casale* of Fanes to the Order for only 2,100 florins, knowing well that no-one else would buy it from her against his will, and he intended to resell it for 6,000 florins. To add insult to injury, Philibert de Naillac also refused to present the accounts for 5,000 ducats from Nicoletta's inheritance claimed by Alamana and Bartolomeu, simply agreeing to pay them as an act of good will. The Aragonese king threatened retaliation if no redress was forthcoming. Although its nature was not specified, Hospitaller Rhodes benefited greatly at this time from

³⁶ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, 34–35 and no. 99.

Catalan merchants making use of its facilities for trade with Mamluk Egypt, so it could ill afford to antagonise the kingdom of Aragon.³⁷

Free women are recorded as owners of land on Rhodes, sometimes in grants pertaining to other people. On 20 October 1347 the Grand Master and Convent of the Order granted lands in emphyteusis to Vassilis, the Grand Master's cook and familiar, and his heirs. The lands in question had boundaries to the east with those of Maria tou Kyriakou. When on 20 December 1347 the Grand Master granted lands in emphyteusis to John Tzangaris at the locality of Selloros, the lands in question were described as bordering on those of Ianna Caludina. Likewise, when on 8 March 1379 the Hospitaller Grand Commander Bertrand Flote permitted an exchange of lands at Damatria in the castellany of Villanova, the lands in question had boundaries to the east with the lands of Eirene Carbonera. Among the women owning land were some originating from Syria.³⁸ On 27 August 1381 the Grand Master granted lands for life to Brother Domenico de Alamania, the Commander of Naples, and some of this land bordered to the South by a garden belonging to Marussa Syriana. On 6 March 1382 the Grand Master granted for life to the burgess and resident of Rhodes Dragonetto Clavelli some land bordered to the West and South by lands belonging to Nicoletta de la Litsa.³⁹ On occasion the Order also granted lands to women. On 28 November 1347 the Grand Master and the Convent of the Order granted in everlasting emphyteusis a vineyard of three *modiates* in the *contrata* of Asgourou in the castellany of Rhodes to Doukaina the daughter of Matito and her heirs, in return for an annual payment of 10 aspers.⁴⁰

Such grants of land sometimes record the heirs of the women granted them in the first place. The grant of land made by the Grand Master sometime before 13 March 1382 to Brother Mondon de Mauvoisin, the Commander of Saint Maurice, by the gate of the Town of Rhodes leading out to Saint Stephen was invalidated because it belonged to the heirs of the abovementioned Maria Doukaina. The mistake made in granting this land was also acknowledged in a document dated 22 March 1382. It specifies that land belonging to Eleni Vastarquine and Eirene Melene, residents of Rhodes and heirs of their late mother Eirene Doukaina, mistakenly granted to Brother Mondon de Mauvoisin, belonged to them and their

³⁷ Ibid., 35 and no. 188; Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 234–235.

³⁸ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, nos. 21, 33 and 100.

³⁹ Ibid., nos. 108 and 114.

⁴⁰ Ibid., no. 30.

heirs forever. One learns from the second document that Doukaina's heirs were her two daughters.⁴¹

Besides lands in general, free women on Rhodes are recorded as owning houses and hospices. A document of 20 March 1348, recording the grant in emphyteusis by the Grand Master and Convent of Rhodes of a house with a court yard and stone steps to Otonino de Montonino and his heirs, states that this house, located in the neighbourhood of the Greek metropolitan church, had once belonged to a certain Kale Rospi, and had devolved upon the Order once she had died without heirs. A two-storeyed hospice in the *collachium* of the Town of Rhodes is recorded as having belonged to Sophia, daughter of John Diastrique. This hospice, moreover, adjoined the houses of three other women of Latin or Greek ethnicity, these being Margarita the sister of the widow of Leonardello, Anna the Widow of Petrotos and Marossa of Stratofodilos.⁴² When on 10 May 1366 the Grand Master granted in perpetual emphyteusis lands and goods formerly belonging to a heretic to his squire and familiar Nicholas of Corinth, among these properties was a hospice in the *contrata* of Saint Athanasius in the Town of Rhodes, bordered on one of its sides by the hospice of Maria Vagueni and on another by the hospice of Maria Misquena. In a document of 2 September 1392, in which the Catalan Grand Master Juan Fernandez de Heredia confirmed the sale by the Convent of the Order to two Hospitallers of a vineyard located at Platypotamo in the castellany of Rhodes, it was stated that on one side it adjoined lands belonging to Mangaphadena, the widow of Nicetas Simeoni.⁴³

Free women could also inherit incomes in cash or kind as well as lands. A confirmation of the Grand Master in a document of 4 July 1389 of the endowment made by Brother Domenico de Alamania, Commander of Naples and Santo Stefano di Monopoli, of a perpetual *cappellania* dedicated to God and Our Lady in the Hospital's Conventual Church, consisting of several properties, included among these properties an annual income of 150 bezants and four *modia* of grain that Brother Domenico had purchased from the Order's Treasury, and which originated from the inheritance of Antonina de Garibaldis, heiress of the Rhodian burgess Opitino de Garibaldis.⁴⁴ At times they also featured in court cases. A document from Avignon dated 20 September 1391 records how a case between the claimant

⁴¹ Ibid., nos. 116 and 120.

⁴² Anthony Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes: 1306–1356* (Rhodes: City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town, 2003), 114–115 and 246–247.

⁴³ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, nos. 91 and 152.

⁴⁴ Ibid., no. 133.

Anna Stratigissa and the defendant Nicolaos Crossocopoulos (Chrysopoulos?) was resolved in Anna's favour before magister Ameliarius, a judge ordinary in the Rhodian curia, and once again before Buchius de Mutis, a judge of appeals. Following this the defendant, who maintained that the archbishop of Rhodes had found in his favour but that he had failed to bring his verdict to Avignon, appealed to the Grand Master who happened to be there. On taking advice from his councillors the Grand Master decided that the two judgements should be annulled and the case heard once again.⁴⁵

Similar records of women owning property on Hospitaller Rhodes appear for the early fifteenth century. A document dated 13 November 1400 in which the Grand Master granted two vineyards for life to Brother Elie de Fossat, Commander of Pézenas and Saint Nezans, mentions how they were adjacent to several other properties. The large vineyard was next to a property of Margarita de Ricardo to the north and the smaller vineyard had a common border to the north with property belonging to Anemina tou Mollou. In addition, Brother Elie de Fossat was granted a house at the locality of Compania, the eastern boundary of which adjoined property belonging to Maria Mavromata. The two vines and the house granted had been made vacant through the death, presumably without heirs, of a certain Stamatis, a serf of the deceased Brother Nicholas Soulier, a former Prior of the Convent of the Order.⁴⁶

A document of 4 June 1401 recording the donation of the *casale* of Myrtonas to the langue of Italy by Domenico de Alemania, the Commander of Naples, in the presence of various high-ranking Hospitaller brethren, states that Domenico had originally bought the *casale* on 3 November 1385 with his own money from Ilario Usodimare, a Genoese burgess and resident of Rhodes Town, and his wife Lascarina, the daughter and heiress of the late Georgio de Leone. The latter had been granted it on 16 August 1361 by the incumbent Grand Master Roger des Pins and the Convent, with permission to sell it, so it is clear that the *casale* in question had been inherited by his daughter Lascarina. Furthermore, this document records that Domenico with the Grand Master's licence confirmed the donation to the chapel of St Dominic in the hospice or auberge of the Langue of Italy made by the deceased Admiral of the Order Brother Palamedo di Giovanni. This consisted of incomes from two windmills, of which one, located on the harbour mole

⁴⁵ Ibid., no. 143.

⁴⁶ Ibid., no. 170.

of Rhodes Town, had previously belonged to the women Eirene Stamatudine and Eirene Archondo.⁴⁷

Women are attested as owning hospices in the fifteenth as well as in the fourteenth century. On 8 February 1409 the Grand Master granted for life to Angelina Joanna and her heirs a *hospicium* at Villanova. This was done at the customary census where the Grand Master was entitled through the use of his Magistral bull to grant to secular persons lands and vineyards, a custom formalised by a statute passed in 1367. The relevant document describing the properties adjacent to the hospice mentions that the Grand Master also granted Angelina and her heirs that part of a vineyard formerly in the possession of the sister of Leo Scopelity, who is unnamed.⁴⁸ Another document dated 23 June 1421 that records the endowment of five *capelanie* in the churches of St Mary at Filerimos and at St Anthony by the deceased Grand Master Philibert de Nailhac mentions in two separate places a garden formerly belonging to a woman named Despina. Women owning property were eligible for compensation when this had been damaged on account of actions taken by the order. Hence in 1429 Eudoxia tou Pagomenou tou Zangan received compensation for a vacant plot of land near the church of St John Chrysostom in the *contrata* or neighbourhood of St Athanasius, probably near the St Athanasius Gate in the far south of the *borgo* of the Town of Rhodes. This plot had been ruined “on account of the quarrying of stones for the repair of the towers and ships of the Town of Rhodes.”⁴⁹

The issue of *ius patronatus*, the right of individuals to possess a proprietary church, also surfaces in the Order’s Rhodian documents. Sometime before 12 March 1428 the nobleman Draguninus Claveli decreed his wife Agneta Crispa to be the heir of his estate, she herself being of noble birth as demonstrated in the will. All her inheritance rights had been purchased by the late Grand Master Philibert de Nailhac, but one outstanding issue remained. Claveri had had constructed a chapel dedicated to St Nicholas at the church of St Augustine located in the town of Rhodes, where he had been buried. A deed drawn up by the notary Hieronymus Justatis from Milan, chancellor of the duke of the Archipelago, outlined an agreement concluded between Agneta and her relative Saffredo Clavo, according to which the latter was to possess one half of this chapel as a proprietary church.

⁴⁷ Ibid., no. 171.

⁴⁸ Ibid., part 23 and no. 185.

⁴⁹ Ibid., no. 202; Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes*, 263.

Anthony de Fluvià, the present Grand Master, assented to Agneta's request that the agreement be honoured.⁵⁰

Most of the women mentioned in the Rhodian documents of the Hospitaller Order were ethnically Greek, but not invariably. A woman of Syrian origin has been mentioned above, and another appears in a document of 14 April 1436 in which Anthony de Fluvià confirmed that Demetrius Katsoures from Salakos on Rhodes, a faithful subject of the Order, had purchased for twelve florins a garden in his village for himself and for his wife Anna tou Salippa. The wife's surname or patronymic clearly derives from the Syrian name Saliba. The garden in question, moreover, had escheated to the Order following the death of the female serf named Sophia of Tsangares. Syrian Christians did in fact settle on Rhodes in the early fourteenth century, sometimes via the Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus.⁵¹ A document dated 11 April 1441 records a court case involving Antonio de Murro, a burgess and citizen of the Town of Rhodes, his Jewish wife Fustera and his mother-in-law Melcha. The latter had instituted court proceedings against him but their claims, unfortunately not specified, had been rejected by the court of the first instance and the court of appeal. Despite these court decisions, a declaration in his favour by the Grand Master and Convent of the Order and the corporal and monetary penalties inflicted on the two women they had persisted in harassing him and in defying the court decisions. On account of this Antonio de Murro had once again come before the Grand Master, who now confirmed the court decisions in the present document and ordered Fustera and Melcha to leave him alone, to keep everlasting silence and to cease disputing the court decisions. Furthermore, new corporal and monetary penalties were inflicted on them so as to force them to adhere to the decisions passed.⁵²

Even Greek women on Rhodes were not always from the island itself. In a document dated 10 December 1446 Grand Master Jean de Lastic granted a plot of land under the terms of perpetual emphyteusis to the married couple Agapetos Tziasis and Eirene of Condaratos, refugees from Castelrosso (Kastellorizo), an island east of Rhodes off the coast of southern Anatolia, following the storming and destruction of the castle there by a fleet from Mamluk Egypt that attacked the island

⁵⁰ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 40; Nicholas Coureas, "The Migration of Syrians and Cypriots to Hospitaller Rhodes in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean and Europe: Festschrift for, Anthony Luttrell*, ed. Karl Borchardt, Nikolas Jaspert, and Helen J. Nicholson (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2007), 101–107.

⁵² *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 129.

in October 1443. The land in question called Spitotopos located in the borgo of the Town of Rhodes bordered on various properties, including one to its north belonging to a woman named Lucia, the widow of Domenico Grimani, and one to its south belonging to a woman named Xene Kalladiana. The married couple from Castelrosso were entitled to use the plot of land as they saw fit or to sell it, their sole obligation being to pay annually the symbolic sum of 1.5 aspers to the Grand Master on 8 September, the birthday of the Virgin Mary.⁵³ There are also instances of free women emigrating from Rhodes. On 26 October 1410 Brother Domenico d'Alamania, the Grand Master's lieutenant, and the Convent acknowledged receipt from the burgess and resident of Rhodes Nicolaus Rocondo of a letter written by King Janus of Cyprus, dated 21 February 1409. It alluded to a request by Theodoros Sozomeno, the bailiff of the *comerc* or customs house in Nicosia. The bailiff was requesting permission for his sister Euphemia, who also happened to be Nicolaus's wife, to migrate to Cyprus with her children. The Grand Master and Convent of the Order accordingly licenced Nicolaus, Euphemia and their children to leave Rhodes for Cyprus.⁵⁴

Sometimes the status of free women was in doubt, with attendant problems regarding their ability to marry. According to an undated document, Antonina, raised by Joanna of Vovos, was a case in point, for being uncertain of whether she belonged to the free population or to the *marinari* liable for service on the Order's galleys she could not easily find a free man to wed. The Order, therefore, had to resolve this difficulty by ascertaining her social status. With this in mind Grand Master Jean de Lastic appointed a two-man committee, Nicolao de Cornia the lieutenant of the Hospitaller fleet, to whose jurisdiction the *marinari* and their registration pertained, and doctor of laws Giovanni Rocundo, judge of the court of the first instance on Rhodes, to investigate the matter. The committee, having conducted a thorough investigation and having taken sworn depositions from trustworthy witnesses, reached the conclusion that Antonina had been abandoned near the Latin church of Our Lady of Mercy in the borgo of the Town of Rhodes. A group of devout women, having found her there, took her to Joanna, who following the loss of her own children was inconsolable. Joanna adopted her,

⁵³ Ibid., no. 162; Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft*, 401; C. Edmund Bosworth, "Arab attacks on Rhodes in the pre-Ottoman Period," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, series 3, 6, no. 2 (1996): 163; Yehoshua Frenkel, "Al Biquai's Naval War Report," in *History and Society during the Mamluk Period (1250–1517)*, ed. Stephan Conermann, Mamluk Studies 5 (Göttingen: V & R Unipress / Bonn: University Press, 2014), 9–20.

⁵⁴ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 7.

raising her as her own daughter. In the light of the above the two-man committee decreed that Antonina should be considered a free woman, a status the Grand Master recognised both for her and for any children that she might have. One observes that on Lusignan Cyprus children of serfs abandoned by the cathedral of St Sophia and then raised by the Latin Church were likewise considered free. From 1494 onwards, however, the Venetian administrators on Cyprus imposed restrictive measures to limit this practice, which seems to have fallen into disuetude by the end of the 1550s, with abandoned babies being devoured by pigs or wild dogs.⁵⁵

Some free women on Rhodes as well as men enjoyed the relatively elevated status of jurors (*omotes*) serving as such in the Greek ecclesiastical courts. A case in point is the couple recorded in a document of 2 June 1450, Master Ezra Morbassia and his wife Kale of Kyriakos, jurors of the village of Trianda. This couple had bought from a female serf named Stamata of Themelina two *carrucae* of arable land in the area of the village known as the *protaria* for five aspers with the Order's permission. The *protaria* was a unit in Rhodian villages headed by a protos, a leading villager. The sum of five aspers, moreover, was payable to the Order on an annual basis, as an acknowledgement of the Order's legal rights over the land. Other than that, the jurors could cultivate, manage as they pleased and even sell the land purchased, save for the Order's rights over it. Given that the land purchased was adjoined land belonging to Ezra himself and his brother Nicholas Morbassia to the east, it had clearly been bought so as to be contiguous with Ezra's existing lands in the area. One notes that the vendor Stamata was herself a female serf of the Order.⁵⁶

Like the jurors, priests had an elevated social status among the Greeks of Rhodes. Nevertheless, the Grand Master exercised wide-ranging powers among the Greek clergy in the countryside, controlling nominations to Greek churches and monasteries, appointing abbots, allowing monks to make bequests, licencing promotions and nominating minor Greek clerics and notaries. A reflection of his powers is found in a document dated 18 July 1450, in which Jean de Lastic gave permission for Synadene, daughter of the priest Michael who was the son-in-law

⁵⁵ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 198; Ioannis Chatzakis, "Ta 'vreta' paidia, hoi idiaiteres diastaseis tes ektheses brephon sten venetike Kypro," in "Pneumatou Dorema Giorgio P. Nako", *Nomos* 13 (2010): 485–503; Gilles Grivaud, "Échapper la pauvreté en Chypre vénitienne," in *Ricchi e poveri nella società dell'Oriente grecolatino*, ed. Chryssa Maltezos (Venice: Biblioteca dell'Istituto Ellenici di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 1998), 364.

⁵⁶ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 211.

of Ducas Marmaras and originated from the village of Zenodotou, to marry John the son of the priest Nicholas from the village of Koskinou. The Grand Master granted this permission on account of the services rendered the Order by Ducas and the priest Michael. On account of this decision, moreover, Synadene and the dowry she brought with her would be incorporated into the social fabric of the village of her husband to be John. All priests setting eyes on the relevant document were instructed to bless this marriage, that was to take place in accordance with the rites and the customs of the Greeks.⁵⁷

The Order's favour was also instrumental in securing grants of land to free women. On 1 April 1452 Jean de Lastic acceded in writing to the petition submitted to him by Anna Maistrissa the widow of the late Peter Moulas, requesting the grant of land with arable or barren lands, with or without vines and with houses, trees or anything else in the Rhodian village of Asgourou (Lisguri) on account of her erstwhile husband's services towards the Order and her devotion to it. This grant was made to Anna for life so long as she paid an annual rent of six current Rhodian florins to the Grand Master and his successors on the feast of St Martin which fell on 11 November, failing which this grant would be revoked forthwith. Furthermore, Anna was to enjoy the right to cultivate and exploit this land as she thought best or to rent it.⁵⁸ From her name the above woman seems to be Greek, but women of non-Greek origin also received land grants. On 28 March 1453 Jean de Lastic granted Picolina, the widow of Emmanuel Vignol, whose name indicates Catalan origin, for life some land originally belonging to her late husband. The land with an extent of around 20 *modia* at the villages of Lardos and Pylona had been exempted from the payment of taxes, but after Emmanuel's death it had reverted to the Order's jurisdiction, becoming subject to the rules governing serfs. Picolina would enjoy the land now granted her free of all taxes other than the payment of the *morty*, a tax levied on the lands of deceased serfs, and the *ius dominationis*, a tax likewise applicable to lands cultivated by serfs. The grant made to Picolina was communicated to the bailli of Rhodes, the Order's scribe, to the castellans and to other officials of the Order. The tax known as *morty* was also levied during this period on Venetian Crete, but there it was a rental payable to the landowners in kind.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid., no. 216; *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, 51–52.

⁵⁸ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 256.

⁵⁹ Ibid., no. 299; Charalampos Gasparis, *He Ge kai hoi agrotas ste mesaionike Krete* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1997), 19, 151 and 159 note 79.

The imposition of the *morty* tax reappears in a later document dated 10 September 1453. It records how Anna Metaxotou, a resident of the castle of Nerantzia on the island of Cos, appeared before Jean de Lastic with a request with supporting documentation, according to which the late Hospitaller knight and preceptor of Cos Raymond Berengarius in a document dated 15 September 1362 granted Anna's grandfather Nicephorus Botarios and his descendants of either sex tax exemptions. This notwithstanding, the last and recently deceased preceptor of Cos, Fantino Quirini, refused to recognize these tax exemptions, imposing the tax of *morty* on Anna's vineyard named Sokhoro, that was located in the castellany of Nerantzia. The receptors of Cos succeeding Quirini likewise refused to recognize the exemptions from tax granted by Raymond Berengarius. Given the Grandmaster's pressing numerous duties and the time-consuming nature of an inquest into this matter, the two Hospitaller preceptors Sidet Arendary and Johannes de Spilles conducted an inquiry, assembling information and witnesses. In addition, the Grand Preceptor of the Convent having been summoned, the rights of the treasury taken into account, witnesses having been examined and the advice of numerous learned men having been taken, the two preceptors found in favour of Anna. Therefore, she was entitled to the exemptions from tax given previously as the legal heir of Nicephorus. The Grand Master additionally stipulated that no *morty* tax was to be levied on Anna's vineyard or on any other lands she owned, with the Order's officers on Cos being obliged to respect her rights, also applicable to her heirs.⁶⁰

Subjects of the Order on Rhodes sought not only to acquire rights but also to be relieved of onerous obligations. In a document of 8 March 1453, a Jewish couple named Ezra and Rebecca, the son-in-law and daughter of the late Ezekiel Mauristeres, protested to Jean de Lastic over the demands the cash-strapped treasury had placed upon them in the form of a forced loan, offering them the standard securities and guarantees. Not wishing to lend the money and considering this to be an act of compulsion contrary to the Order's customs, the couple had appeared before the Grand Master, reminding him, moreover, of the numerous services Ezekiel and they themselves had performed for the previous Grand Masters and for the Order in general. Acknowledging this, the Grand Master decreed that henceforth no officer of the Order could inflict harm of any kind upon Rebecca and Ezra. Furthermore, he exempted them, their descendants and familiars from payment of the customary tax payable by the Jewish community on Rhodes, amounting to

⁶⁰ *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 319.

50 Rhodian florins per annum with the sum payable by Ezra, Rebecca and their familial circle corresponding to four florins per annum. The Grand Master also informed them that their property had been placed under his direct protection, with none able to interrogate them or demand anything from them without his express permission. Finally, Ezra and Rebecca were granted the right to circulate freely between the Upper and Lower Jewish quarters where they and their relations had houses, even during the hours of bellringing, until they came home, and to move around at night bearing a light so as to visit the baths, a pharmacist or a doctor as many times as was necessary, without fear and without being subject to any penalty imposed formerly or now.⁶¹

Free women wished to give birth to free children where possible. One issue that gave rise to problems in this respect were the documents manumitting former slaves in common form, granting them the status of Roman citizens 'as if you had been born of free parents.' This is because they impart no information on the status of the children to be born following the grant of freedom. Their status was in dispute even among contemporaries, as transpires from the dispute recorded in two documents dated 8 and 14 March 1453. Sometime before those dates the free woman Catherine tou Querimoti was married to Philipponus Michalis tes Annas, a former slave who had been manumitted and granted Roman citizenship. Following a dispute over the validity of this marriage, on 8 March the Latin archbishop of Rhodes declared the marriage valid and explicitly stated that the children to be born to the couple after their marriage were to be considered Roman citizens 'notwithstanding whatever are the conditions stated in the said legal instrument (of manumission), which even if they apply to persons are inapplicable to the person of the said Philipponus.'⁶² His verdict elicited strong protests among Hospitallers. Brother Louis de Magnac, the Order's seneschal and preceptor of the grand preceptory of Cyprus, possibly the erstwhile owner of Philipponus, appeared before the archbishop on his own account and on that of the grand master and other officers of the Order. He declared that the archbishop had no right to declare the future children of the marriage free persons and that by doing so he had harmed the Order. Decreeing the archbishop's verdict to be null, he maintained that he and the other Hospitaller officers objected to it and requested the composition of a public instrument recording these objections, which was to be appended to the archbishop's own verdict. In his reply the archbishop stated that he had never

⁶¹ Ibid., no. 296.

⁶² *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 301.

intended to cause offence by his verdict and that he acknowledged their objections 'in whatever things were admissible by law', a qualification which suggests that he did not wholly agree to their protests.⁶³

Between 1454 and 1459 the Order was obliged to repay sums owed to Eleonore de Lusignan, the daughter of Phoebus de Lusignan, the titular Marshal of Armenia and an illegitimate son of Peter de Lusignan, count of Tripoli. Eleonore was the widow of the nobleman Soffredi Calvi alias Crispo and sometime before 10 February 1459 the wife of Vasco Gil Monis of Portugal. First the extent of the repayments was defined. In a document dated 22 October 1454 Grand Master Jacques de Milly and the Convent acting for the treasury acknowledged owing her 2,560 Venetian ducats, which amounted to 2,920 gold Rhodian ducats at the rate of 36.5 aspers per ducat according to the terms of a bull dated 25 October 1449. Besides this the Order owed the Venetian merchant Giovanni Martini 1,044 Rhodian ducats on account of cloth purchased from him, in accordance with the terms of a bull dated 15 May 1450, with Giovanni or his brother Girolamo stating that the sum in question belonged to the late Soffredo Calvi. The sum total was 3,964 Rhodian ducats, of which the Order had paid Eleonore 1,500 Venetian ducats, amounting to 1,950 Rhodian ducats at a rate of interest of 31%. In addition, it had paid 1,000 Rhodian ducats to the Catalan merchant and resident of Rhodes Pere Benet, a sum that Eleanor as Soffredo's heiress owed him for two large houses Soffredo had purchased in the principal square of Rhodes Town, but which Soffredo's creditor Pere Benet was holding as securities. The Order promised to pay Eleonore the outstanding balance of 1,014 ducats on 22 June 1455.⁶⁴ But in a document drawn up three days later, on 25 October 1454, the Master and Convent of the Order on behalf of the treasury undertook to repay Benet the 1,000 Rhodian ducats owed him in two instalments, 300 in November 1454 and 700 in February 1455. Clearly the previous document was mistaken in affirming that this part of the total debt had been already paid to Benet. On the contrary, he or his procurators would receive the above sums in the Town of Rhodes within the stated timeframe. By way of providing security the Order pledged its present fixed and moveable assets as well as those coming into its treasury in future.⁶⁵

Sometime before 10 February 1459, according to the document drawn up on that date in Nicosia by the public notary, judge ordinary and secretary to the queen of Cyprus Benedict de Quetariis of Vincenza, Eleonore de Lusignan sold

⁶³ Ibid., no. 301.

⁶⁴ Ibid., no. 306; Collenberg, "Les Lusignan," 190–191.

⁶⁵ *Documents concerning Cyprus*, ed. Borchardt, Luttrell, and Schöffler, no. 307.

one of the late Soffredi de Calvi's houses in the Town of Rhodes, located in the square of St Sebastian near the church of the Augustinian Hermits and abutting on several shops now belonging to the Grand Master and on the house of Ezra the Jew, to Louis de Magnac the Preceptor of Cyprus for 1,500 Venetian ducats. She did so after being informed in her maternal language of this transaction, of her own free will and with the consent of her present husband, the abovementioned Vasco Gil Monis of Portugal, not forcibly or swayed by means of any trickery, as the relevant document states. Given that Eleonore de Lusignan was the daughter of Phoebus, a natural son of King Janus of Cyprus, her maternal language was probably French. It is possible, however, that it was Greek, and one observes in this context that Queen Charlotte of Lusignan, the last queen of Cyprus originating from the Lusignan family, spoke Greek far better than she did French.⁶⁶

In concluding this section, one observes that free women on Rhodes were present in death as well as in life. A fragment of a tomb slab dated 1318 and found in the underground passage under the apse of the Conventual church in Rhodes Town records the burial of a woman whose name is no longer legible, but who was titled *domina* and so must have been of noble birth.⁶⁷

FEMALE RELIGIOUS, FEMALE DONORS, FEMALES IN LEGISLATION AND FEMALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

There are several references to the Hospitallers' dealings with female religious in the period under discussion. The Hospitaller *soror* Margarita of Negroponte, mentioned above in connection with the manumission of female slaves, is recorded in property dealings with the Order. On 3 November 1347 the Grand Master granted Margarita permission to give her daughter Simona a windmill and the adjacent bath situated on a mound or hill in the borgo of the Town of Rhodes. It was bounded on three sides by public thoroughfares and on the fourth by the hospices of George of Cyprus, Michael and Alemania. Several days later, according to a document of 7 November 1347, the Grand Master granted Margarita permission to grant Simona, without prejudice to the rent payable customarily to the Order, two apartments, one being a *hospicia bassa* containing an oven for baking bread and another above it, the *hospicia alta*, where Jacobus, the tailor of Grand

⁶⁶ Ibid., no. 330; Hill, *A History*, vol. 3, 518 and 611.

⁶⁷ Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes*, 43.

Master Déodat de Gozon, used to live. These places were located in the castrum of Rhodes Town near the cathedral of St Mary, being bounded on the eastern, southern and western sides by public thoroughfares and on the northern side by the Hospice of Lose de Leone. In addition to the above, Margarita was to retain the usufruct of these hospices for life.⁶⁸ A second document of 7 November 1347 adds the restriction that Margarita's grant of the hospices to her daughter Sophia excluded the oven, which Margarita had had constructed to bake bread to be given to the poor as alms. One observes in this context that the Order issued monthly allowances of wheat to seculars resident in the castellum of the Town of Rhodes as a reward for their services to the Order. Among them was the widow Katherina tou Sinademi, who according to a document dated 16 July 1517 was supposed to receive an allowance of one measure of wheat every month for herself and her seven children.⁶⁹

Margarita had concluded a verbal agreement with a Hospitaller, later confirmed in writing. Sometime before 7 November 1347 she had granted Brother Pierre de Corneillan, with the permission of Grand Master Hélión de Villeneuve, a garden called Anargyros as well as a mill, an old vineyard and a new one next to St George of Eikosi and a *charruata* of land there. In addition, as Margarita had made known to the Order, one of the vineyards had been planted at the joint expense of Margarita herself and Brother Pierre. Since the original gift had never been put in writing, neither in a public nor a private instrument, the present Grand Master Déodat de Gozon confirmed the donation in the document dated 7 November 1347, on the advice and with the assistance of the Convent and the brethren involved in the matter.⁷⁰ Margarita also owned the *casale* of Kalamonas in the castellany of Feraklos, formerly granted by her to Brother Raymond de Lescurre, a grant confirmed for ten years by Grand Master Déodat de Gozon and the Convent under the terms of a document dated 4 March 1348. According to this document Margaret, who had died before that date, had also granted him the *casale* of Archangelos, a grant likewise now confirmed, with the annual responsions of 36 aspers she had been paying now payable to the Order for both *casalia*.⁷¹ It seems that Margaret, aware by early November 1347 that she did not have long

⁶⁸ Ibid., 241–243.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 243–245; Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft*, 443 and note 218.

⁷⁰ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, no. 24; Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes*, 151.

⁷¹ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, no. 39; Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes*, 151.

to live, made the various dispositions discussed above to her daughter Sophia and to Brother Pierre de Corneillan.

Greek as well as Latin religious are recorded on Rhodes as nuns or donors. In 1440 John Geraki was granted permission among other things to instal in the church or *monasterium* of the Holy Apostles in the borgo of Rhodes two nuns, one of whom could be his wife, and the nuns could be buried in the *monasterium*. A subsequent privilege of 1445 empowered him to support as many nuns as he wished there, one of whom could be his wife. Contrary to custom, the nuns and monks residing there were also allowed to dispose of their belongings on their deaths.⁷² Women owning property, often widowed, became nuns and could found rural churches, with portraits of the donors and of the churches themselves underlining the donors' legal rights. All such foundations were established with the consent of the Order. In 1407–1408 the nun Kataphyge Alexaina and her children had built a small chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity at the locality of Iamatikon south-east of Psinthos. She was portrayed within it dressed in a nun's habit and offering a model of her church to the Saviour and was apparently buried outside this chapel, possibly built after her death. The church of the Virgin Hodegetria Enniameritissa on Chalki was executed at the expense of several persons, including the two nuns Agnese and Magdalena.⁷³

On occasion the wives of priests founded churches together with their husbands. In 1394–1395 the priest Katsambas, his wife Kale and their children founded the church of St George Pachymachiotes at Lindos for the salvation of their souls, with Kale described as *kyra* and *magistrissa*. In 1400 the church dedicated to St John the Baptist depicted as the donors Nikolaos Kamanos, his wife Eirine dressed in white and a child with a purse dressed in red. Most intriguing is the donor portrait in the church dedicated to Saints Theodore (Hagioi Theodoroi) near Archangelos, founded and embellished in 1372. It shows Konstantinos Maydis and his wife Eirene, described as an *atoumissa*, a word whose meaning is still undetermined, with the couple holding a model of this church between them, their children being mentioned but not portrayed.⁷⁴

As expected, women feature in Hospitaller statutes. The fourteenth century Capitula Rodi contain a regulation that anyone raping a woman regardless of her social status was to be placed at the mercy of his lord, a ruling that did not prescribe specific penalties and so gave the Grand Master or feudal lord considerable

⁷² *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O'Malley, 56–57.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 57 and 62.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

lassitude in determining punishment for this offence. Another regulation stated that the children of a free Latin man and a Greek woman were considered free. As pointed out, however, the ruling may have been applicable only to free burgesses within the Town of Rhodes. Furthermore, a marginal addition apparently ruled the children of Greek women under the obligation of *servitudo marina* would be liable to perform it and had to live in the borgo even if their father was a free Latin, and so would in fact not be free Latins according to the law.⁷⁵ The instance of the Provençal Richardon Boeuf and his wife Sophia discussed above illustrates the difficulties children of such mixed marriages encountered. The *Pragmaticae Rhodiae*, a later collection of statutes passed by the Order's General Chapter in February 1510, also contains regulations concerning women. The third book deals with the issues of dowries and the provision and care of married women and regarding the approval of loans towards widows and unmarried women. Harsh penalties were prescribed for sexual offences, which obviously involved women in many cases. Yet the male and female burgesses of the Town of Rhodes were expressly exempted as regarded certain legal liabilities.⁷⁶

Penalties for sexual offences were strict. Married men sleeping with a woman other than their wives were subject to a monetary fine of 100 ducats and three months in custody, and the woman was banished by way of penance to a cloister. Married men visiting brothels or consorting with women of ill repute had to pay a fine of 25 ducats or undergo corporal punishment. Bigamists were humiliated firstly by being paraded facing backwards on the back of a donkey throughout the town, with a paper crown on their heads, after which they were sentenced to two years' service on board the galleys. Only then were they allowed to go back to their first wife. Rape was a capital offence. Anyone having such sexual intercourse with any kind of woman, a maiden, a married woman or a widow, was hanged. Maidens were subject to particular protection. Men sleeping with them prior to marriage, even with their consent, had to pay a fine of 100 ducats or else were subjected to corporal punishment. Penalties for couples committing sexual offences ranged from cutting out their tongues to hanging, a penalty applied to older men coupling with their daughters. Those guilty of carrying out abortions were treated

⁷⁵ Anthony Luttrell, "The Fourteenth Century 'Capitula Rodi,'" in id., *The Hospitallers of Rhodes and their Mediterranean World* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1992), part VI, 206, note 8 and 210; Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft*, 360.

⁷⁶ Sarnowsky, *Macht und Herrschaft*, 45 and 353–355.

as murderers, given that the aborted baby could not be christened and so those perpetrating the abortion were guilty of killing the soul as well as the body.⁷⁷

Specific statutes governed movement within the Town of Rhodes. Men and women circulating there at night by custom always had to have hold a light, as seen above with regard to the privileges granted to the Jewish couple Ezra and Rebecca. It was expressly forbidden for free women, their dependents and for serfs to depart from Rhodes. Were someone to allow a relative for whom he was accountable to depart unlawfully he was punished by the deprivation of his goods and he had to throw himself on the Grand Master's goodwill, while the goods of his wife were likewise forfeit. Should a woman board a ship without the Grand Master's permission, moreover, the ship's captain was liable to punishment as well as the woman herself.⁷⁸ Sometimes such restrictions could be waived. The Genoese trader Tobias Lomelino had married on Rhodes the daughter of another Genoese named Edoardo de Carmedino, participating in one of the leading trading fleets of Rhodes and purchasing along with the Catalan Bartolomeu de Parets the right to farm the Order's incomes from the customs dues of the *gabelle* and the *commerchium* on numerous occasions between the years 1471–1474. In May 1476 he tried to leave Rhodes along with his wife Maria and their two daughters for his native Genoa. Although they were apprehended, they were subsequently granted permission to depart.⁷⁹

Women on Hospitaller Rhodes are recorded as victims of violence. Sometime before 23 August 1365 Antonius Raynerius alias Bartaquina killed Kale, the widow of Nicolas Gripiates, a resident of Diopassadas in the castellany of Rhodes. In his supplication to Grand Master Raymond Bérenger, Raynerius stated that driven by evil spirits he had dealt her several blows with his sword, from which she had perished, although the bad advice, care and negligence of the doctors and surgeons attending to her had also contributed to her death. In the meantime, he had been arrested and brought before the courts, being sentenced to a term of exile on the island of Kos that had not yet been completed. Following his supplications, the Grand Master deigned to show compassion on him, his wife and his children by remitting the rest of his sentence of exile. The supplications on Raynerius's behalf of Brother Nicolas Soulier, the Prior of the Convent and the counsel and assent of the Hospitaller brethren assisting in this case made the Grand Master remit the remaining sentence and any other actions the court may have taken to Rayner's

⁷⁷ Ibid., 456–457.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 355.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 357 and note 57.

detriment in connection with this killing. Henceforth he was free to return to Rhodes whenever he wished, and to live there in safety. One wonders whether Rayner would have been pardoned had he killed a woman of his own social and ethnic group.⁸⁰

Five days later, on 28 August 1365, Grand Master Raymond Bérenger similarly pardoned George Steele, who “impelled by the instigator of scandals”, namely the devil, while riding his horse in the *casale* of Sinodocto on the island of Rhodes in a locality called Polycastro against his will collided with Kale, a female inhabitant of this *casale*, thereby causing her death. Nevertheless, moved by George’s supplications, the Grand Master on the advice and with the consent of the brethren of the Convent had decided to pardon him, especially as he had killed Kale by accident and against his will. Remitting any action taken or to be taken by the court to the detriment of George, the Grand Master decreed that he was free to take up residence in the Town or in the island of Rhodes without fear.⁸¹ Recorded instances of violence against women also took place in the fifteenth century. A document of 15 October 1422 records that following numerous supplications submitted by Giovanni Crispo, the duke of the Archipelago, Grand Master Antoni Fluvìa decided to pardon Stavrinos, who had killed Eirene Photeinou on the island of Cos. This pardon, secured through the intercession of a third party, was conditional, Stavrinos being required to confine himself on the island of Nisyros for the next two years, on pain of being removed from Hospitaller territory if he breached this confinement.⁸² A document dated 22 May 1442 likewise records that following humble entreaties Grand Master Jean de Lastic granted a pardon to Michael Turcomano, a faithful subject of the Order who had killed an unnamed woman reputed to be his wife. From reliable sources it had come to light that she was of an extremely scandalous nature and that his act of killing her was out of character, for he had done so without guile, artifice or premeditation.⁸³ Femicide was a pardonable crime according to the extant evidence from the Rhodes of the Hospitaller Order, a predominantly male institution.

⁸⁰ *The Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes*, ed. Luttrell and O’Malley, no. 77.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, no. 78.

⁸² *Anekdotia engrapha gia te Rhodo*, ed. Tsirpanlis, no. 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, no. 137.

CONCLUSION

From the above it comes through clearly that women originating from all social classes and of varying ethnicities had contacts with the Hospitallers on Rhodes, and also with those on Cyprus to a lesser extent. They received manumissions or grants of land from the Order, were recorded as having lands adjoining properties of the Order, were protected or punished in accordance with the relevant legal statutes passed by the Order and on occasion themselves granted properties to the Order. The extant documentation affords far more information on free women than on serfs or slaves, while the majority of women alluded to were of Greek ethnicity, although women of Latin and Syrian ethnicity also make an appearance. From this documentation it is clear that women could be restricted in their mobility, needing permission to depart from Rhodes and even to move freely throughout the island. Furthermore, the Order seems to have been strict in punishing sexual offences involving women but more lenient in cases where women were themselves victims of male violence.

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