



The commemorative plaque placed at the entrance of the Museum of the Order.

MUSEUM ON RHODES
of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem
also called of Rhodes also called of Malta in the Palace
of the Grand Master
CATALOGO 1999-2000
Introduction

Among the tasks of my long office as Receiver of the Common Treasure of the Grand Magistry of the Sovereign Order, a particular place was reserved for the negotiations with the Greek government for establishing a permanent exhibition of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, conceived by the late lamented confrère Gabriel Oliver, the Keeper of the Order's Museums and Monuments, in what had been for over two centuries the Grand Master's Palace.

A grateful thought goes to H.E. Amb. Felice Catalano di Melilli, at that time Grand Chancellor and my predecessor, who encouraged the initiative by signing an agreement with the Minister of Culture of the Greek Republic, Anna Benakis, in 1992. This agreement included the concession to the Sovereign Order of some rooms of the Grand Master's Palace in Rhodes for exhibiting testimonies to the Order's activities over its nine centuries of life.

Today, thanks to the constructive cooperation of the Antiquities Department of the Dodecanese, represented first by Dr. Elias Kollias and now by Dr. Maria Michailidou, the museum's rooms have taken on a new lease of life and I believe this is a good omen for intensifying the cultural cooperation

with Greece. Within this framework relations could be developed to enhance the moral heritage left by the Knights on the island of Rhodes during the first half of this millennium: the roots of their history in the Mediterranean basin and their expansion today, at the dawn of the third millennium, to horizons embracing all continents.

It is a great satisfaction to have completed my task with the inauguration of the museum and the publication of this catalogue. This initiative pays homage to the Greek Republic and to the Magistry of the 78th Prince and Grand Master, Fra' Andrew Bertie, who has honoured, with his visit to Rhodes today, the memory of those who fell in the Siege by praying on Mount Philermus, where the Image of Our Lady, patron of the Knights, was originally venerated.

The museum reminds us, inter alia, that men pass but institutions and states remain. The Knights of today have the task of bearing witness to their commitment and the awareness of being prepared to pay the highest sacrifice when they are called to serve the centuries-old institution of St. John, now as in the past, in the service of the faith to relieve human suffering in obedience to its charisma.

Rhodes, from the Grand Master's Palace, 9 October 1999



Rhodes. Fileremo Sanctuary. His Most Eminent Highness the Prince and Grand Master together with the High Charges and the Members of the Sovereign Council, the Dames and Knights from all continents, in occasion of the international meeting of the Order, during the Holy Mass celebrated by the Cardinalis Patronus, His Eminence Pio Laghi at the Sanctuary of the Holy Virgin of Fileremo, Patroness of the Order.

On the right. Knights of St. John, from a series of watercolours shown at the Museum in Rhodes.

