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“The fortified island city of Rhodes stood as a strategic crossroads in the eastern Aegean, serving as a vital conduit for the exchange of ideas, people, and goods across the Mediterranean. At the heart of its identity was a vibrant, multicultural society, where Greek Orthodox Christians, Latin Catholics, Jews, and Muslims lived side by side—coexisting with remarkable resilience despite religious differences. As a port city, Rhodes flourished into a major commercial and transit hub. Its lively marketplace—later transformed into an Ottoman bazaar—became the economic pulse of the city. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, this bustling center was concentrated in the eastern sector of the medieval city, near the heart of the commercial harbor. A pivotal moment in the city's urban development came in 1793 with the establishment of the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library. Positioned west of the bazaar in what had been open land, the library marked the beginning of a westward expansion of civic life. Soon after, a grand mosque was constructed, which by the mid-19th century replaced the imperial Mosque of Suleiman. Educational buildings followed, gradually reshaping the area from a religious center into a lively hub of learning and culture. The addition of the Clock Tower, built atop the corner Byzantine Guard Tower, introduced the symbolic presence of time into the cityscape. This striking landmark became a visual and cultural anchor, reinforcing the growing significance of the complex within the urban fabric of Rhodes. This volume, Conversation in the Library, sheds new light on this transformative era—an enduring chapter in the layered and dynamic history of Rhodes.”

Katerina Manousou-Ntella

The Transformation of the *Magna et Communis Platea*
of the Hospitaller's Town of Rhodes into an Ottoman Bazaar¹

After the great siege and the conquest of Rhodes town in 1522², the material remnants of one of the eastern Mediterranean's most splendid towns³, where elements of the early Renaissance had already started appearing⁴, passed from the hands of the Knights Hospitaller to the Ottoman Turks (FIGURE 1). The most prominent feature of the unique urban landscape of Rhodes is the creative coexistence of western and eastern elements of form and typology in the geographic melting pot of cultures⁵ within which the town evolved over time.



FIGURE 1: Graphic depiction of the walled town of Rhodes in the 16th century.
(G. Braun - F. Hogenberg “Calaris-Malta-Rhodus-Famagusta”, 1572)

After 1522, Rhodes retained strategic importance due to its geographic location in the Eastern Mediterranean and was immediately turned into the most important Ottoman military and naval base in the southeastern Mediterranean⁶, with a garrison of 1415 soldiers, 662 cannon and 1249 harquebuses.

1 Many thanks are due to my dear friend archaeologist Anna-Maria Kasdagli for her suggestions regarding the rendering of the translation of the text. Photos 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 by the author.
2 Buttigieg & Philips (2013), 85-112.
3 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 147-175.
4 Κόλλιας (2001), 10-17.
5 Slot (1982), 71-73.
6 Kolovos (2022), 140.

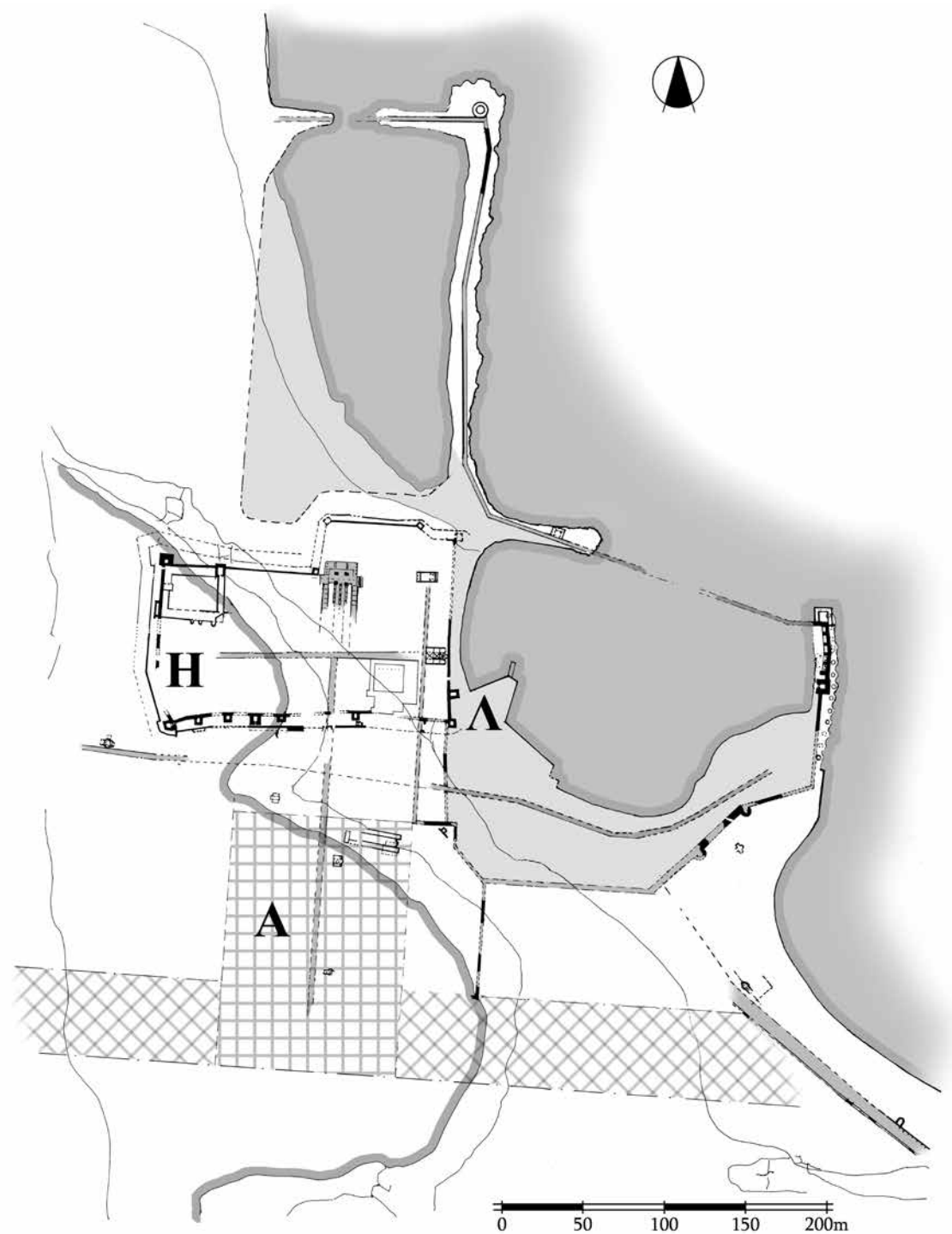


FIGURE 2: General layout plan of the central functions of the town of Rhodes during Late Antiquity

As a regional administrative centre⁷, it built up vigorous maritime and ship-building activity⁸. Galleys for the Ottoman fleet and the islands' trade needs were built from the forests of Rhodes. Sailing ships from Rhodes took active part in the trade of goods between Greece, Constantinople, Syria and Egypt. The presence of Venetian trade representatives is already mentioned⁹ in the first years following the conquest of the town, permanently resident within the walled town. The year 1631 is described¹⁰ as a period of relative prosperity for Rhodes. The procurement of cereals from the Anatolian shores was necessary, but the island was self-sufficient in meat, fruit, and all sorts of vegetables and medicinal products, which were even exported to Smyrna and Beirut.

In this context, the town was gradually modified to fit the housing and urban plan of Ottoman towns. The contrast between the concepts of space in European and Muslim towns¹¹ was sharply expressed in the diachronic town of Rhodes, whose design was initially based on the Hippodamian urban planning system of the Hellenistic metropolis¹². The starting point was frequently met in the Mediterranean urban planning system, where the plazas and Forum were places for gathering rather than transit, generally enclosed but accessible for religious, political, and commercial activities (FIGURE 2, A).

Over the centuries following, two completely contrasting systems of urban planning were consecutively implemented. In the typical western *ville d'accession*¹³ of the Hospitallers, the market was organised in accordance with a medieval trade system dominated by open air transactions and the guilds' workshops. Its operation was exposed to the public space and free of the control of religious or state authorities, with a marked presence of European traders and banking houses¹⁴. As early as 1389 the high street of the town, already known as *magna et communis platea*¹⁵, was an unbuilt space similar to the *platea lata* of the medieval towns of the West¹⁶ (FIGURE 3). It was 30 to 80 metres wide, flanking the land wall of the Knights' *Collachium*¹⁷, serving as its defensive zone (*terra deserta*). It was the citizens' main gathering space for festivals as well as religious ceremonies, but also had military and administrative functions. The widest available space was on the east side in the broad, flat area overlooked by the towers of the Marine Gate¹⁸ (FIGURE 3).

After 1522 there was a change in the structure of the urban grid, which was transformed from the official public space of the Hospitaller town to a lively bustling hub for commerce¹⁹ (FIGURE 4). The high street lost its military and administrative character and became the centre of financial life with a closed, hierarchic structure connected to religion. The bazaar, which gradually expanded over the entire central part of the town, was a lively area of commerce, exchanges, but also social interactions. It was central to both social and cultural life, and associated to the charitable

7 Efthymiou-Hadzilacou (1988), 19.

8 Matton (1954), 64-68.

9 Belon (1553), 13.

10 Stochove (1689), 221.

11 de Planhol (1984), 9-27.

12 Κόλλιας (2000); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2000).

13 Lavedan-Hugueney (1974), 33-58.

14 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα & Ντέλλας (2019).

15 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022).

16 Σαρηγιάννης (1973), 243-250.

17 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022).

18 Gabriel (1921), 12, 63-66.

19 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 147-175.

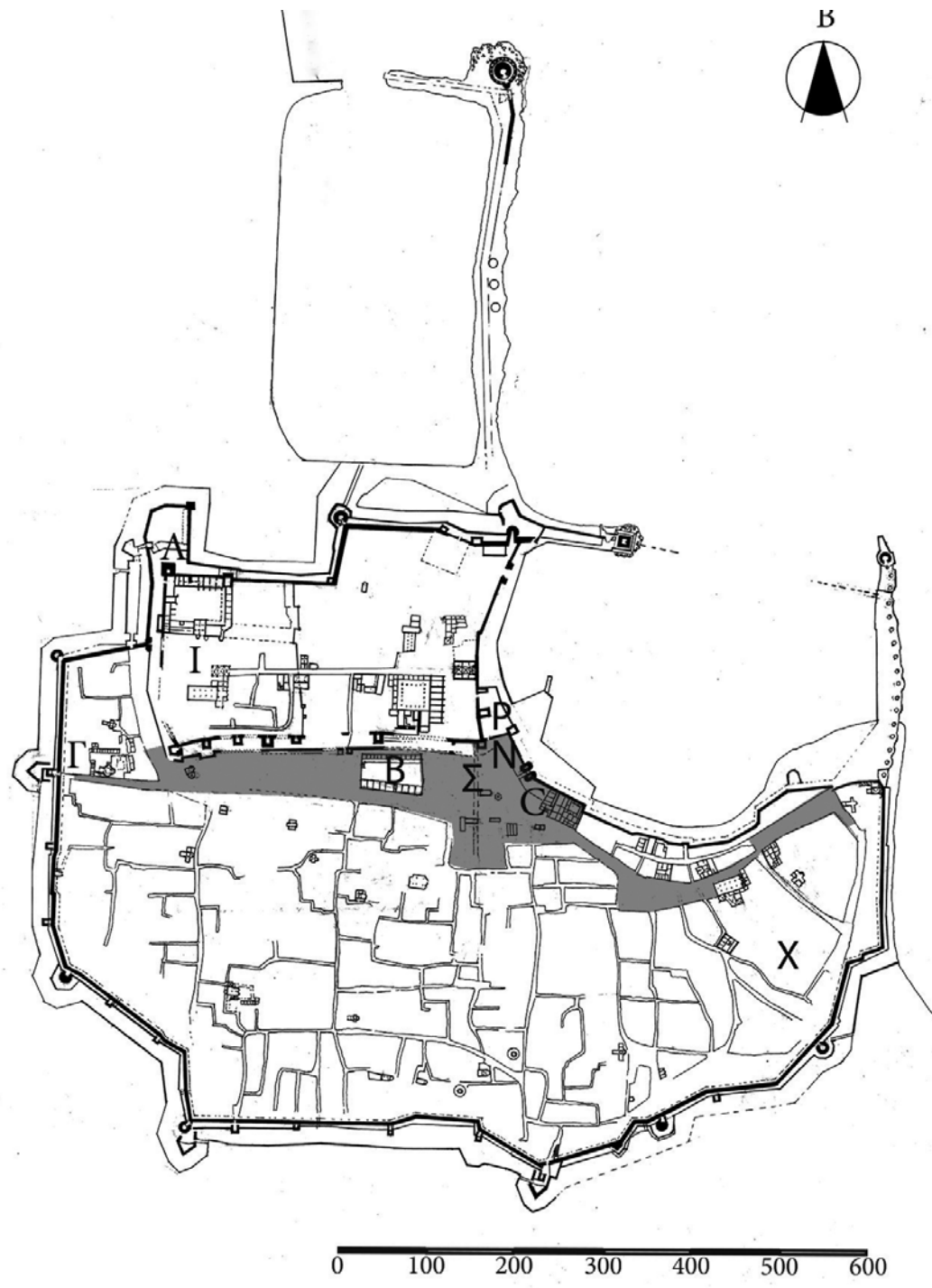


FIGURE 3: General layout plan of the medieval town at the end of the 15th century.



FIGURE 4: General layout plan of the town of Rhodes with the monuments of the Ottoman period.

activities of the *vakufs*. The dimensions of the high street were modified by the constant addition of shops, even in the middle of the street, with covered alleys and labyrinthine passages. As a typical bazaar adjusted to the climate of the eastern Mediterranean, it was related to the Ottoman centres of Smyrna, Constantinople and Damascus. It was organized in commercial zones where each profession had its own space (textile traders, metal workers, perfumiers, jewellers etc). The main market was located between the 16th-century mosque of Suleiman (FIGURE 4, 46) –known today as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque– and the Bezesten gubernatorial mansion (FIGURE 4, 31). The Shadirvan Mosque, the bath house (Eski hammam) and other public and educational institutions were part of the same complex (FIGURE 4 P). Coffee shops, *hans* and *caravanserais* were intended for recreation and social contact, as well as housing travellers who usually brought goods from distant regions, creating a multicultural trade centre.

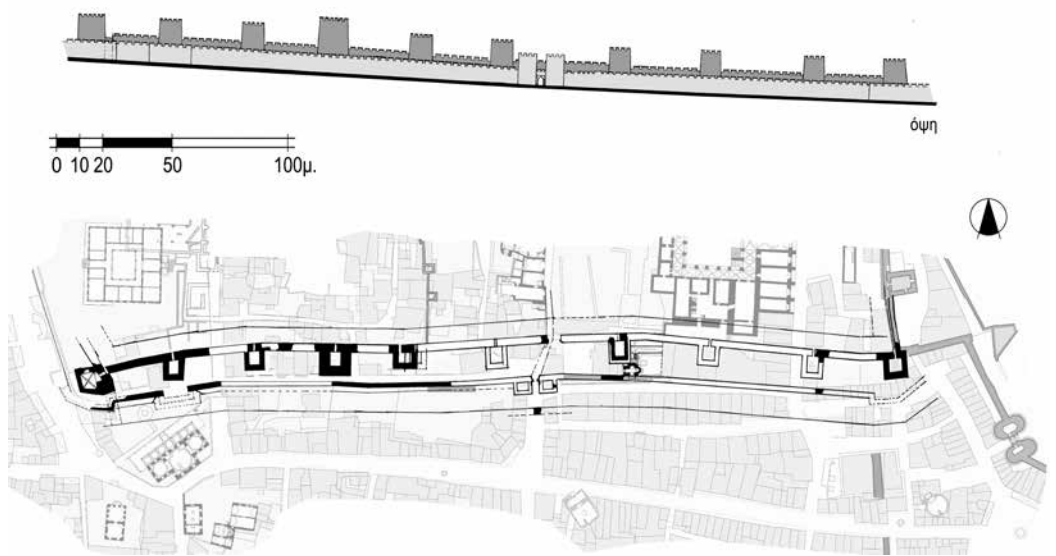


FIGURE 5: Graphic representation plan of the southern wall of Kollakio in the center of the walled town of Rhodes .

It is clear that, at least until the mid-16th century, the town remained divided as follows (FIGURE 4):

- the inner fortress, where the Ottomans established themselves²⁰, and
- the outer fortress, which the Ottomans shared with Jews²¹, and some very few Greeks who remained until their final expulsion²² and relocation to the neighbourhoods surrounding the walled town (known as *marash* in Turkish or *marassia* in Greek).

The *fausse-braye* of the southern wall of the Collachio (FIGURE 5) survived as a boundary until

20 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022); Barnes (2021), 325, FIGURE 4.
21 Ευθυμίου (1992).
22 Τσιρπανλής (2002).

the second half of the 19th century²³. The towers were gradually abandoned or adapted to new uses. In its eastern part, apart from the southeastern corner tower²⁴, the fortification with its moat disappeared, gradually incorporated into newer buildings associated with the market (FIGURE 4).

An Ottoman register from 1530²⁵ already recorded 18 neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) in the inner and outer fortress, where 581 Ottoman families had settled.

Documents from the first years of Ottoman Administration show:

- the conversion, by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent himself in 1523²⁶, of the Hospitaller conventual church of Saint John the Baptist (FIGURE 3) into the grand Mosque of the Castle²⁷, also known as *Senjuvan*²⁸;
- the establishment of the Market Mosque (Bezesten Djami) in the hall on the upper floor of the Hospitaller Commercial Court (*Commercium*)²⁹ by grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha³⁰ (FIGURE 4, 31). The covered part of the market or *Bezesten*³¹ was established in the ground-floor arcade of the Merchants' Lodge or *Loggia Mercatorum* (FIGURE 3, C), retaining its administrative and commercial character as an important landmark in the heart of the town³²;
- the founding of the poorhouse complex (*imaret*)³³ (FIGURE 4, 39) by a decree of Suleiman the Magnificent in the first years after the conquest, at the highest spot of the *high street*, where the great Cross is notably depicted in Caoursin's illustrations³⁴. Relatively recent restoration work on the *imaret* buildings³⁵ has revealed important remnants of the side aisle of the Hospitaller church of the Holy Apostles³⁶. According to a 1568 firman of sultan Selim II³⁷, the public welfare institutions connected to Imaret included the hammam known today as the New Hammam or Mustafa Hammam (FIGURE 4, 45). It is, however, clear that the monument in its current form dates from the period when the Mustafa Mosque was built³⁸, in 1765.

23 Guérin (1856). He mentions that the gates, towers, and a part of the walls forming the fortification of the Collachium have been retained, without forming a clear fortification boundary.

24 Δοντάς (2012).

25 Kolovos (2022), 131-146.

26 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 149.

27 Kolovos (2022), 132. Mentioned as the “cami-i-serif” of Ibrahim Pasha.

28 Τσελεμπί (2005), 379-380.

29 Gabriel (1923), 93-101.

30 Τσελεμπί (2005), 378. As mentioned: “Inside the market there is the mosque of Makbul Ibrahim Pasha”

31 The bezesten was an institution of prime importance in Ottoman towns. This is where valuable items were sold, documents and valuables were safeguarded, product quality was inspected, and currency exchange rates were determined (source: Wikipedia).

32 Matton (1954) 72-73. In 1880 it is reported that the fish market was housed inside a ground level area of the *Commercium*.

33 Balducci (1932), 13.

34 Caoursin (1481).

35 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2001), 124-125.

36 Ντέλλας (1998), 167-169.

37 Balducci (1932), 45.

38 Balducci (1932), 115.

- the founding of the Khurmali Medresse³⁹ (FIGURE 4, 40) that operated in the conventual compound of Saint George⁴⁰ in the western part of the town.
- the establishment of the Shadirvan or Sinan Bey Mosque⁴¹ complex with its fountain⁴² (FIGURE 4, 49; FIGURE 6) and the old bath house (Eski Hammam)⁴³, in the first years following the conquest. They occupied the site of the Latin church of Saint Sebastian⁴⁴ (FIGURE 3, Σ) with the pedestal of the cross which projected into the axis of the high street's Marine Gate. The church of Saint Sebastian had been built *in platea civitatis Colocensis*, next to the cross (*iuxta crucem*), around 1435. The founders⁴⁵ were Filippa, daughter of Jacob de Puteo, and Saffredo Calvo, who thus invoked the saint's help against the plague⁴⁶. This key spot in the broad, level area of the square towards the Marine Gate, was the centre of the Ottoman bazaar (FIGURE 8). The Ottoman foundations are considered important mainly due to their location, but also their antiquity. The elegant series of domes of the Hammam and the originally ground-floor mosque built by Sinan Bey, along with the fountain turned towards the high street, stand out in the picturesque depictions of the town, mainly from the early 19th century; the mosque was later destroyed by fire and rebuilt on the first floor in 1887.



FIGURE 6: Actual view of the Siantrivan Mosque and the Fountain on the main street of the Bazaar.

39 Balducci (1932), 146-147; Τσελεμπί (2005), 379. More specifically, it is mentioned that there were: “The Khurmali, Timurlu, and Ibrahim Pasha medresses, one Quran school, seventeen schools and one school for the study of the holy tradition”.

40 Balducci (1932), 74-76.

41 Balducci (1932), 73-76; Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου (2008), 97-100.

42 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 510-511. This is likely the medieval Fountain of the Plaza whose distant memory was retained in the name “Fountana”.

43 Balducci (1932), 42-45.

44 Μανούσου-Ντελλά (2022), 138.

45 Τσιρπανλής (1995), 89. In 1435 the pope recognised their right of *jus patronatus*.

46 Τσιρπανλής (1995), 57. A man of considerable wealth and influence in his time, Calvo is reported to have owned a “house enclosed by wall” serving as his residence near «Saint Sebastian's square».

It seems that after 1480, within a more general reorganization of the town, the wide space of the Hospitaller high street was gradually occupied by buildings of a commercial character⁴⁷ serving the operation of the market (FIGURE 7). These include a ground-level Hospitaller building⁴⁸ of the *loggia* type, found on the east side of «Saint Sebastian Square» and covered by two monumental cross-vaults, and probably more vaulted buildings concealed by later additions to the bazaar (FIGURE 3; FIGURE 9,10,11).



FIGURE 8: Graphic depiction of the central area of the Bazaar inside the Sea Gate in the mid-19th century (E. Flandin 1853)

A typical case is the addition of the 16th-century elongated compound⁴⁹ set inside a courtyard, with its main entrance opening onto the high street (FIGURE 3, B; FIGURE 14), carrying above it a square frame with the arms of grand master Fabrizio dell Caretto (1513-1521). This compound spread in an east-west direction from the «Saint Sebastian Square» to the *Collachium* Gate on the modern Lachetos Street. Its situation precisely on the axis of the Marine Gate (FIGURE 3, B; FIGURE 8) is worth noting, as it divides the Saint Seabastian Square into two sectors of equal width and delimiting the commercial zone. It is an imposing structure whose appearance is preserved in engravings of the first half of the 19th century⁵⁰ (FIGURE 12), having retained its original aspect for at least three centuries. It was organised into two parallel wings separated by an open space and its typology is reminiscent of the *hans* of Ottoman towns, although its exact use has not been determined. Our only clue is that in the

47 Gabriel (1923), 12, note.1. In 1391 at least 14 new warehouses are documented in the area of the high street. It is mentioned as a place for selling vegetables, possibly in an open-air market, and it originally abutted the *Collachium* fortification.

48 This originally isolated structure was incorporated into the complex of Ippokratous square's eastern frontage in the period of the Italian Occupation, after a design by architect Florestano di Fausto. Καρανάσος (2023), 163.

49 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 159-161.

50 Flandin (1853), 28, 29; Rottiers (1828), LXIXb, LXX.



FIGURE 7: General view of the centre of the walled town of Rhodes from the harbor.
(Aerial photograph 2000, N. Kasseris)

early 20th century its ground floor was occupied by private shops and warehouses, while its upper floor accommodated poor families⁵¹. In its current condition the original plan is not apparent, as it has been incorporated into later structures (FIGURE 4, 44), and the modern Polydrou Street is a remnant of its spacious enclosed courtyard. Only the northern face of the compound, facing the *Collachium* wall, is visible in its original form (FIGURE 13), as well as the central portion of the southern facade on the high street, with its triangular top and the rectangular frame with the coat of arms (FIGURE 14). The internal structure of the ground-level vaults is visible in the unique traditional Coffee Shop⁵², a major landmark on Socratous Street, with its ornate wooden facade (FIGURE 15). Recently, the first-floor gallery of the northern wing, with its vaulted rooms⁵³, has been restored and converted into a small hotel.



FIGURE 9: View of the medieval ground-floor building with the cross-vaults (Loggia) in its current form.



FIGURE 10-11: Interior views of the shops of the building with the cross-vaults.

51 de Belabre (1908), 139-141.

52 The Coffee Shop has been declared a protected element of the old market both in terms of its use and the equipment.

53 This is where the pauper accommodations used to be housed.

It is possible to formulate the following two hypotheses:

- it may have been incorporated in the functions of the bazaar, where the presence of a trade *han* and three *hans* for travellers is mentioned⁵⁴;
- it may originally have been used for military purposes⁵⁵ or as lodgings for the 24 families of volunteers to the Castle guard, which is mentioned⁵⁶ as one of the 16 Muslim neighbourhoods in the town. Perhaps this is why its designation as «barracks» survived until the time of Rottiers.



FIGURE 12: Graphic depiction of the north wing of the 16th century barracks complex (B.E.A. Rottiers, 1828).

In the analysis of the Ottoman bazaar area in terms of urban planning, it must be stressed that following the blocking⁵⁷ of the gates of Saint George, Saint Athanasius, Acandia and the Arsenal (the shipyard), the remaining access points to the town were (FIGURE 4):

- The three sea gates: the *Collachium* Sea Gate, Marine Gate and Gate of Saint Catherine, which provided access from the main port and its Pier of the Windmills. Soon the bazaar's activities extended to the space outside the sea wall, on either side of the two main gates of the inner and outer fortress. As recorded in an old photograph⁵⁸, an imposing two-storey building

54 Τσελεμπί (2005), 379-380. The description of the bazaar is particularly vivid: "The market and bazaar are beautiful. There are three hundred vakuf-owned shops at the Suleiman Han mosque and four hundred more. There is also a bezesten, eighteen bakers, eight coffee shops, the customs house at the docks, a trade *han*, three *hans* for travellers...".

55 de Planhol (1984), 25. As was often the case in Ottoman town centres.

56 Kolovos (2022), 132. A neighbourhood is mentioned for volunteer soldiers (*gönüllüyan*) at the Rhodes fortress, comprising 21 homes.

57 Use of the three inland gates and the Arsenal Gate was discontinued in the late 15th-early 16th c. due to defence considerations.

58 Δοντάς (2012), 41. It is mentioned as an albumen print photograph by Tancrede R. Dumas.

–possibly a *han*– and a series of vaulted shops or warehouses existed outside the Marine Gate and in the space between the wall and the –then still existing– *fausse-braye* as early as 1880–1885. In another panoramic photograph from 1862⁵⁹ the waterfront neighbourhood is visible outside the Marine Gate, which became known as the “Customs House Gate”.



FIGURE 13: Actual view of the northern side of the barracks complex (left).

FIGURE 14: Actual view of the central access to the barracks complex from the main street of the bazaar (below).



FIGURE 15: Today's view of the traditional cafe on the main street of the bazaar with its characteristic wood-carved facade.

59 Δοντάς (2012), 30-31. These are valuable pictures by photographer Francis Bedford from the Naillac Tower on 15 May 1862, just before its destruction in 1863.

A mosque stood adjacent to the Sea Wall, raised above vaults opening towards the public space at ground level, where a water fountain most probably was to be found (FIGURE 16).⁶⁰ The Customs House was on the seafront, on the pier of what was then the main harbour. In the same area inside the town, on the axis of the *Collachium* Sea Gate, the great Hospital of the Knights⁶¹ is mentioned as a public granary in the 17th century⁶² and, in subsequent centuries, as a place for treating patients⁶³, a *medresse*, a warehouse, and a barracks.

Finally, a 1912 view⁶⁴ of the Commercial Port with the Dock buildings confirms the presence of important administrative buildings outside the medieval walls, including the Customs House, the Post Office, and the Town Hall. The Neoclassical Style had clearly prevailed in the formal architecture of the late Ottoman period before the neighbourhood was demolished by the Italians who cleared the area in the early 20th century⁶⁵.

- Amboise gate⁶⁶, providing access to both the inner and the outer fortress; after the blocking of the Gate of Saint George⁶⁷, it replaced it in importance and served mainly the countryside of the island's west coast by way of the Long Straight (*Makry Steno*)⁶⁸, Saint Stephen's hill, and the neighbourhood known as *Neomaras-Niochori*⁶⁹ (FIGURE 17).
- The Koskinou Gate⁷⁰ or Gate of Saint John that mainly served to connect with the countryside of the east coast of the island and Lindos, via the Rhodes-Lindos Road, as well as the *marassia* to the south of the town, particularly *Mitropoli* and *Saint Anastasia* (FIGURE 18).

Thus, the modern Pythagora Street was added as a main access route to the bazaar, forming the boundary between the Turkish and Jewish quarters of the outer fortress, leading from the Koskinou gate to the entrance of the Bezesten (FIGURE 4 A-A). It is an important thoroughfare defined by the outline of the eastern part of the Late Byzantine fortification of the *Chora*⁷¹ (FIGURE 19). As it was the main road connecting the old market to the southern *marassia*, it became even more important to the organisation of the Ottoman town. Notably, the new metropolitan church⁷² was integrated into the southern extension of this axis (FIGURE 18).

60 Matton (1954), 69.

61 Gabriel (1923), 13-36.

62 Savary (1788), n. 12-13.

63 Rottiers (1828), 250-273

64 Δοντάς (2012), 92. After 1877, the Town Hall was housed in the first building of the new front of the modern Panaitiou Street, opposite the courtyard of the Neoclassical School that was built on the site of the Hospitaller conventual church of Saint John - Senjuvan Mosque following its total destruction by a gunpowder explosion in 1856.

65 Καρανάσος (2023), 116-126.

66 Gabriel (1921), 32-34

67 Gabriel (1921), 34-42; Κάσδαγλη & Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2007).

68 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2000), 27-42

69 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 95-100; Efthymiou-Hadzilakou (1988), 126-130.

[Translator's Note: the name *Niochori*, still in use today for what is now the city centre, means “new village/town”; the word *Neomaras* combines the Greek *neo* (new) and the Turkish *marsh* (neighbourhood/village) into a portmanteau that conveys the same meaning].

70 Kasdagli & Manoussou-Della (1996).

71 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2021), 116-123. [TN: the term *chora* was widely used in Byzantine times to denote a capital or main settlement, particularly of an island].

72 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 87-94; Κασδαγλη (2019), 202-207. According to Latin missionary Peter Fangonis, in 1645 the Orthodox metropolitan church was in the *Paximada* neighbourhood and was dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin.



FIGURE 16: Graphic depiction of the central area of the port during the 18th century (Choiseul-Gouffier, 1782)

The main mosque of the outer fortress, known as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque⁷³, was built at the edges of the Ottoman period bazaar, on a slight eminence to the west of Pythagora Street (FIGURE 4, 46). This is the «Mosque of Suleiman», founded in 1540 personally by Ibrahim, grand vizier to the sultan. The mosque was dedicated to Sultan Suleiman, as is clearly attested by the dedicatory inscription above its entrance, from archival evidence, and descriptions⁷⁴. One important piece of documentary evidence is the presence of an imperial-style minaret with twin balconies. This is clearly visible in surviving depictions⁷⁵ from the second half of the 16th century until the end of the 19th (FIGURE 14), as well as in Francis Bedford's historic photograph⁷⁶. It must have been highly visible from afar, in the days before the construction of the bulky two-storey complexes in the centre of the old market in the early 20th century. The mosque included the ablutions fountain which still survives, although originally it occupied the centre of a large courtyard⁷⁷ that accommodated the congregation and common prayer of large crowds of the faithful.

73 Balducci (1932), 93-97; Ντέλλας (2008a), 364-365.

74 The floor of the mosque's portico includes *spolia* dating from Antiquity until Hospitaller times. These include, more specifically: a fragment of an inscribed cinerary casket, part of a small mullion and a screen slab of the Early Christian period, two screen slabs from the 12th c. and two pieces of medieval tomb slabs. I am grateful to my friend, archaeologist Eleni Papavasiliou for this valuable information.

75 Μαϊλλης et al (2002).

76 Δοντάς (2012), 30-31.

77 Newton (1865), 4. The British Admiralty map, dated 1838, reveals that the unbuilt space to the west of the mosque was much larger prior to the construction of a complex of commercial shops in the late 19th - early 20th c.



FIGURE 17: Plan of the town and ports of Rhodes during the 18th century (M.G.A.F Choiseul-Gouffier, 1782)

At an early period, approximately until 1750, the main area of the bazaar, where Turks, Jews, and Christians traded, spread in the free spaces around the market's Süleymaniye Mosque⁷⁸. This early bazaar extended to the gate of the *Collachium*; outside the *Collachium* and to the southwest stood a mosque that remains unidentified to this day⁷⁹, which was converted to the present day historic «Karpachos» coffee-shop (FIGURE 20, 21). It was situated at a prime location on the axis of the main bazaar street and was accessed through a slightly raised polygonal platform opposite the Hospitaller Carretto⁸⁰ compound.

The imposing Redjep Pasha⁸¹ Mosque was built in 1588, at the heart of the Turkish neighbourhood, looming over a large enclosed courtyard with its typical fountain in the shade of a large plane tree (FIGURE 4, 47). Today the two main entrances to this courtyard are visible, providing access from the two main streets of the Turkish neighbourhood: today's Hagiou Phanouriou and Omirou streets. This is obviously a major focus that served the public functions of the Muslim community⁸², namely common prayer, and essential needs of social contact set apart from the public space of the town.

78 Known today as the Ibrahim Pasha mosque.

79 The existence and location of the mosque are evidenced by the cadastral record and the outline of the specific property.

80 It is worth mentioning that the original façade of the vaulted compound, before the wooden additions, left the façade of the old mosque visible from the public space.

81 Balducci (1932), 99-113; Κίζης (2017), 180-190.

82 de Planhol (1984), 9-27.

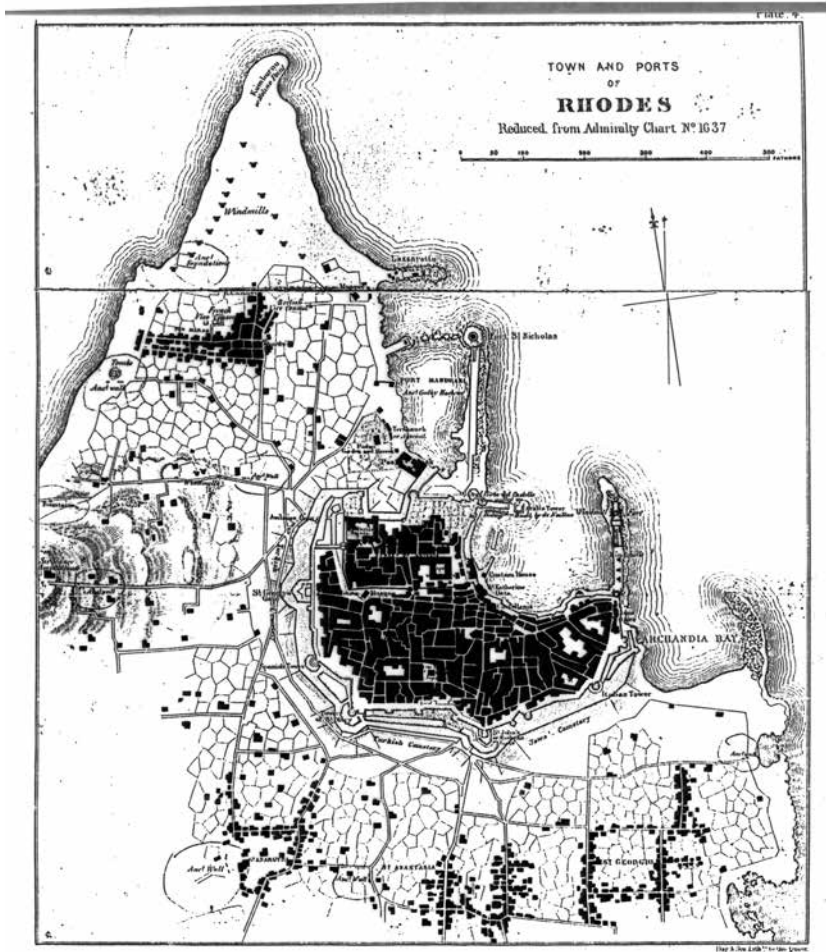


FIGURE 18: The British Admiralty map, dated 1838 (C.T. Newton, 1865)

Christian tradesmen, Greeks and Latins, retained their shops in the old market, but they were obliged to leave the walled town before sunset, at the time the gates would close⁸³. During the first transitional period, many Greeks and Western Europeans were departing daily to Crete or Italy, leaving the island nearly uninhabited⁸⁴. In spite of the best efforts of those in charge to retain them

83 The single exception was the Consul of Venice and his family who, according to a traveller's account from 1547, had the right to remain inside the Castle during the night in spite of being a Christian. Archival documents record that a Venetian consul or vice consul named Zorzi Zacaria had already been established in Rhodes. He was most probably succeeded in 1531 by Vetor Zacaria, a member of the same family, which was well known in Rhodes. This probably means that their residence was in the Hospitaller mansion that bears their family arms and is often referred to as the «Admiralty» or «the Greek Bishop's Residence».

84 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 19-29.

through favourable treatment and privileges, Rhodes was often described as a deserted town⁸⁵. In 1621, traveller Hayes de Courmenin mentions⁸⁶ that the town was inhabited by 1200 Turks and 200 Jews. Ten years later they had increased to 3000 Turks and 500 Jews⁸⁷. In the mid-19th century⁸⁸, the town's population consisted of 5500 Turks and 1000 Jews.



FIGURE 19: Actual view of Pythagora Street with the monumental neoclassical building dating to the Ottoman period.

The Orthodox metropolitan church of the Hospitaller outer fortress was stated⁸⁹ to be functioning as the centre of a Greek neighbourhood numbering five families in 1530 (FIGURE 4, 38). It was eventually converted into the mosque originally known as Kurt Zade Ahmed Bey Djami in 1738⁹⁰, having probably been abandoned and left to ruin for two centuries⁹¹, despite the Greek residents' immediate relocation to the *marassia*. It was then restored by Ianik Zade Ismail Aga, as recorded on the two marble slabs mounted above the main entrance and on the north side of the building.

85 Choiseul-Gouffier (1782), chapter 6. In his 1776 tour he notes the town's dereliction and the unchecked destruction of the island's forests.

86 Matton (1954), 67.

87 Stochove (1689), 221.

88 Guérin (1856), 54-62. He also mentions 500 Turks in the suburbs and the island's countryside, and 20,000 Greek inhabitants of whom 5000 lived in the *marassia*.

89 Kolovos (2022), 133.

90 Balducci (1932), 82-83. The later name *Demirli Djami* obviously referred to the iron gratings that were later added to the mosque.

91 The condition of this imposing Orthodox church during the two centuries following the relocation of the Christians to the *marassia* requires more investigation, based mainly on archaeological evidence.



FIGURE 20, 21: Exterior and interior view of the Mosque on Lachitos Street, the actual traditional cafe “Karpathos”

It is therefore clear that in the 16th-17th-century town there were empty spaces with abandoned and dilapidated buildings; these were gradually taken up by new buildings and functions in the mid-18th century. This seems to be the case with the part of the Hospitaller high street to the west of the *Collachium* Gate. At the northern front the derelict Hospitaller mansions⁹² and shops remained, together with the useless moat until the end of the 18th century (FIGURE 18). At the south front the remains of Hospitaller period dwellings and shops endured until the mid-19th century, when the devastating gunpowder explosion at the Great Senjuvan Mosque⁹³ altered the aspect of the town. The establishment of the Imaret, Khurmali Medresse and the Hammam charitable foundation complex, as early as the 16th century are exceptional.

The financial heyday of Rhodes followed, expressed by the building of new mosques and other charitable and educational foundations, but also of churches⁹⁴ in the town’s Greek *marassia*. From 1750 until the end of the Ottoman period, intensive construction expanded the centre of the walled town and changed its form.

The great mosque known today as Suleiman’s Mosque⁹⁵ was established in 1808 in the open space⁹⁶ outside the southern wall of the *Collachium* and the corner tower of the *Guardia* (FIGURE 4, 15), inside a courtyard that to the north was adjacent to the Byzantine *fausse-braye* (FIGURE 4, 51). In contrast to a commonly held belief, there is no definite evidence of an earlier mosque on the site. It is, after all,

92 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα & Παπαβασιλείου (1999), 593. According to the archaeological research that was initiated following the discovery of an Early Christian *balneum* west of the *Collachium* Gate, the scanty remnants of an important building of the Hospitaller period were found, which define the southern front of the Hospitaller high street. This building is identified as the impressive Hospitaller mansion depicted by Rottiers and mentioned by Gabriel as the Hospitaller *Castellania*.

93 Gehlhoff-Βολανάκη (1982); Manousou & Ntellas (2022); Barnes (2021). It should be explained that the gunpowder magazine to the west of the mosque’s main entrance was struck by lightning during a thunderstorm, causing the disastrous gunpowder explosion. The building and its exact location are noted in the plan drawn by members of the Imperial Ottoman School of Engineering in 1847.

94 Ντέλλας (2012).

95 Ντέλλας et al (2009), 129-154; Ντέλλας (2008b), 360-363; Gabriel (1923), 210; Balducci (1932), 128-138; Βογιατζής (2007), 396–406.

96 This is the defensive zone of the *Collachium* that appears to have remained unbuilt until the early 19th c. in the westernmost part of the Hospitaller high street.

clear that no such early mosque appears in illustrations of the 16th-17th-century travellers⁹⁷ (FIGURE 1). Access to the courtyard was through a distinctive doorway in its northeast corner, and its centre was occupied by the distinctive fountain. One of its particular features is the use of a Renaissance period *arcosolium*⁹⁸ as a decorative frame in the central doorway of the prayer hall; it was probably removed from the nearby church of Saint John. The mosque, which was particularly prominent, as it stands on the highest point of the bazaar axis, formed the nucleus of the charitable functions that radiated around it (Imaret, medresse, Library). After 1851 the tower-shaped clock was added, as well as the first Ottoman School of the Fethi Pasha Foundation (FIGURE 4, 16), one of the most distinctive landmarks of the old market. The minaret of Suleiman’s Mosque was rebuilt⁹⁹, probably after the late 19th century series of earthquakes¹⁰⁰, with twin balconies, a distinguishing feature of imperial mosques.

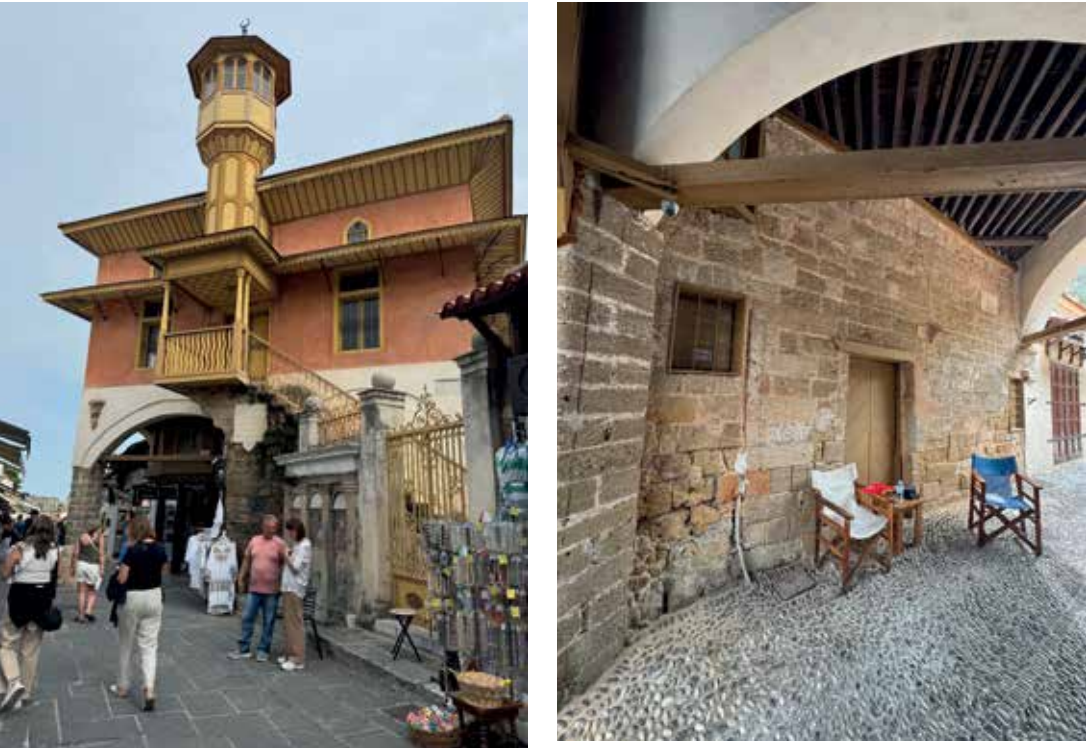


FIGURE 22, 23: Actual view of the recently restored Mehmet Ağa Mosque on the main street of the bazaar (left) and the pre-existing section of the ground-floor structures (right), which define the southern frontage of the medieval high street.

97 Μαΐλλης (1993), 33-58.

98 Guérin (1856), 138 ; Balducci (1931), 14–24, table III–V.

99 Δοντάς (2012), 37, 47. In Rubellin’s (1870-1880) photographic depiction, the minaret of Suleiman’s Mosque has one balcony, while a 1902 photograph by Fougères and Merle shows the restored minaret of Ibrahim Pasha Mosque with one balcony.

100 Παπαδόπουλος (2014), 148-160.

This modification highlights the shift in importance between the two imperial mosques, known today as the Ibrahim and Suleiman Mosques. It coincided with the expansion of the centre of the bazaar and the town through the gradual occupation of the free spaces to the west of the *Collachium* Gate in the modern Lachetos street. The more recent Suleiman Mosque dominates the main street of the bazaar –modern Socratous Street– taking on the role of the market mosque. At the same time, more access points were opened allowing communication between the inner and outer fortress, as well as the integration of new uses in the towers (Clock, Schools, Courthouse etc).

A particular case of urban planning intervention is the integration of the Mehmet Aga Mosque¹⁰¹ on a diagonally raised platform (FIGURE 4, 52). Positioned on the intersection with the Modern Hagiou Phanouriou Street (FIGURE 4, C-C), which used to be the main axis leading to the grand Redjep Pasha Mosque, its vaulted bridging is carried by a strong stone pillar that projects decisively into the axis of the main bazaar street (FIGURE 22). According to the inscription still mounted above the entrance, “in 1820 Hadji Mehmet Aga, master marksman of the navy, restored this Mosque that had lain deserted for many years”. The reference to an older ruined mosque was corroborated by the discovery of an older vaulted construction in the east wing of the ground floor¹⁰² (FIGURE 23). This may possibly have housed shops looking out on the main bazaar street and marking the southern front of the Hospitaller high street.

The aspect of the Ottoman urban landscape was complemented by a network of public water fountains¹⁰³ with inscriptions and beautiful taps and decorations that today remain as freestanding structures or set into the walls of other buildings. A freestanding example is the triple fountain¹⁰⁴ (FIGURE 24) built in a small square on the intersection of the major Pythagora and Omirou streets (FIGURE 4, K), the latter being an important street of the Turkish neighbourhood that led to the second gate of the courtyard of the grand Redjep Pasha Mosque (FIGURE 4, A-C).



FIGURE 24: Actual view of the triple fountain at the intersection of Pythagora and Omirou streets.

101 Balducci (1932), 87; Οικονομίδου (2007), 140-144, table 147-162

102 Οικονομίδου (2007) , table 155.

103 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 511. The Turks viewed the construction of a public water fountain as a form of almsgiving, and would endow it with a plot of land for its upkeep. Τσελεμπί (2005), 380. 70 springs and one decorative fountain inside the town are mentioned.

104 Οι Ροδίτικες Κρήνες (2000), 116-117.



FIGURE 25: Actual view of the Alhadeff Bank building dating to the early 20th century.



FIGURE 26: Actual view of the northern end of Pythagoras Street and the rear view of the Alhadeff commercial complex that was incorporated into its axis.

The two great fires that broke out in July 1876 and July 1924 were crucial historical events that seriously affected the reorganisation of the centre of the old market:

- The fire - known as the *yangini*, from Turkish *yangın* - broke out on Sunday, 18 July 1876¹⁰⁵ after sunset, when there were no Christians inside the town. It was a massive financial blow to 508 Christian families as approximately 100 shops were either burnt or looted. In the following years, the ascendancy of the Jewish element was asserted by the transformation of the centre of the old market. The construction of massive complexes¹⁰⁶ with dominant neoclassical elements (shops, warehouses, and a bank) marked the new era (FIGURE 25; FIGURE 26), lessening the visual impact of the imposing Suleiman Mosque, now known as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque.
- The conflagration that started on 17 July 1924¹⁰⁷ and destroyed approximately 60 shops, gave the Italian administration the opportunity to carry out interventions to the town's Turkish neighbourhood. The aim was the rehabilitation of urban fabric and the restoration of the surviving part of the Hospitaller *Commercium*. The result was the radical redevelopment of the centre of the old market into its current form.

From the 14th to the 20th century, Rhodes underwent important cultural interactions in the privileged region of the eastern Mediterranean, and as such it may be considered a “testing ground of defensive and urban architecture”. The transition from the high street of the Hospitaller period to the Eastern bazaar reflects the radical transformation of the town under Ottoman rule. Even though the subsequent Italian administration (1912-1947) strove to enhance the Western elements of the town¹⁰⁸, the Ottoman past remains alive in the current structure of the old market. The dynamic nature of eastern elements, the picturesque alleys and small shops coexist with late medieval architecture. The elegant round domes and the sky-high minarets have created an eastern atmosphere and are now major landmarks particularly distinctive from the sea (FIGURE 7).

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105 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 477-478.

106 A characteristic example is the construction of the neoclassical mansions on and around the axis of Pythagora Street (FIGURE 9, 26), confirming its increasing importance as a road for the movement of merchants and residents in the area.

107 Καρανάσος (2023), 155-164.

108 Τσιρπανλής (1998).

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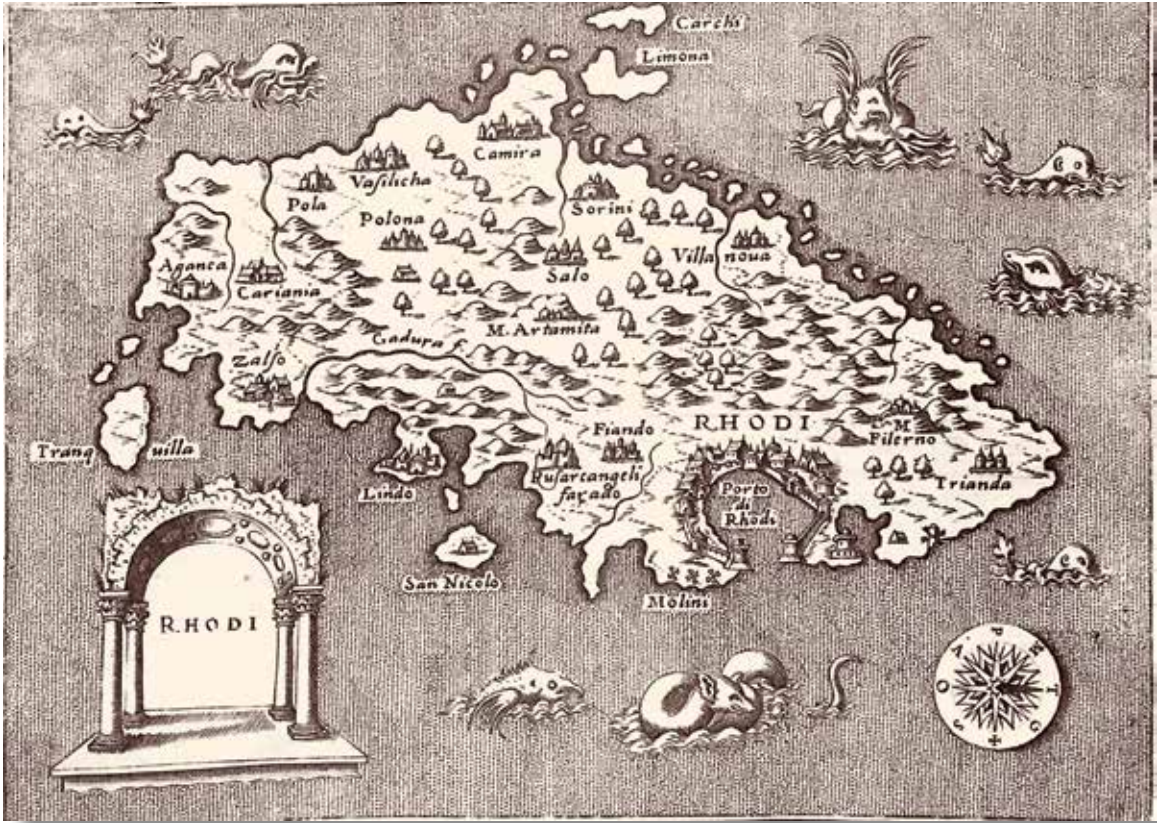
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Map of Rhodes, Isola di Rodi
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