

The Knights of Malta, Catalonia and the Mediterranean (*)

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The Order of Malta is not well known in Spain, and yet the cross of Malta is probably more familiar here than in any other country. It appears as the universal symbol for chemists' shops throughout the country. The origin of this use is that when the Red Cross was introduced into Spain in 1867 it was founded under the patronage of the Grand Prior of the Knights of Malta, the Infante Sebastián, and as a consequence the medical corps of the Spanish army received the privilege of using the cross of Malta as its emblem. From this association of the distinctive eight-pointed cross with medical services it has come to be used as the general symbol for pharmacies.

This anecdote points the way to two historical questions: Firstly, how the Order of Malta came to have a presence in Spain, with priories which by the 19th Century had come into the possession of members of the royal family; and secondly, why the Order should have been seen as an appropriate patron for the Red Cross. The first question concerns a 900-year historical process which I intend to outline; the second has a very easy answer, and one that takes us back to the beginning of that historical process. The connexion between the cross and Malta and medicine is that the Knights of Malta are the Knights Hospitaller, one of the two great military orders of the crusading period. They originated with the hospital for the pilgrims founded in Jerusalem in the 11th Century. In the 12th Century this hospital became the largest and most famous in the Latin world; the hospitallers became a religious order of the Catholic Church, and they also became a military order like those of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara which were appearing in Spain at the same period. After the fall of the crusader states, the Knights Hospitaller conquered the island of Rhodes. When they lost the island to the Turks in 1522 the Emperor Charles V granted them Malta, which they governed for nearly 300 years. Then in 1798 Napoleon conquered Malta and the Knights established their headquarters in Rome, where it still is.

The last two centuries have been perhaps one of the most surprising periods in the 900-year history of the Order. The Knights of Malta stand today as the only survivors of the military religious orders, that is to say those in which the knights took the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Nowadays the professed knights are only a small minority, the knighthood of the vast majority of the 10,000 members of the Order being merely a title of honour. Nevertheless there are about 40 professed knights, besides some chaplains, and they hold the most important posts in the Order's government, including that of Grand Master.

A second aspect of the Order's survival is even more extraordinary. For 500 years the Order had a status of territorial sovereignty through its possession of the islands of Rhodes and Malta. It fought wars in alliance with Mediterranean states such as Spain and Venice, and in various countries, such as Spain by the 18th Century, its envoy was received with the honours of a royal ambassador. Since 1798 the Order has no territorial dominion, and yet its status as a sovereign body in international law has never been lost. Throughout the 19th Century it continued to maintain diplomatic relations with various governments, although after 1860, these were reduced to the Austrian Empire and the Holy

(*) Presentació del llibre de H.J.A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta*, Yale University Press, New Haven i Londres, 1993, 306 pàgs.

See. Then in the 20th Century an extraordinary development began: More and more countries have established diplomatic relations with the Order, the number now standing at about 60. In Spain there has been an ambassador of the Order of Malta since 1937, and the Italian Republic, besides exchanging ambassadors with the Order, recognises the sovereignty and extraterritorial status of the two palaces in Rome where the Order has its headquarters.

The third remarkable aspect of the Order's life today is the recovery of its hospitaller function. Although I spoke just now of Knighthood of Malta today as a title of honour, it needs to be added that these 10,000 knights throughout the world support medical and hospitaller activities which vary from one to another of the 39 National Associations into which the Order is divided. Among the most important of these enterprises may be mentioned the very extensive ambulance organisation run by the German knights, which has been particularly active recently in helping the wounded in Bosnia and evacuating refugees. Another major work is that of the North American knights, which distributes aid throughout Latin America and in other places of need. A third is the organisation of the French knights which maintains hospitals and other centres in most of the former French colonies in Africa, and has specialised in the eradication of leprosy; this is a work in which the Spanish Association of the Order has also participated. I make this preliminary overview to show that although I shall be concerned with the past of the Knights of Malta, my subject is not a mere historical curiosity but an institution which has a very prominent presence in the world today.

As I mentioned earlier, the Hospital of Jerusalem, from which the Hospitaller Order developed, was founded in the 11th Century, probably between 1071 and 1080. Originally it was merely a lodging house for pilgrims who were beginning to flock to the Holy Places in increasing numbers from Western Europe. At that time the crusades had not yet been fought; Jerusalem was in the power of the Turks; virtually the whole Mediterranean was under Moslem control, a control which extended from the Dardanelles to the mouth of the Ebro. Navigation of the Mediterranean was virtually a monopoly of the Moslems, whose possession of Sicily enabled them to control seaborne trade between Western Europe and the East. In fact the only Western European city which had regular trading links with Jerusalem was Amalfi on the Italian coast just South of Naples. It was an independent republic which rivalled Venice and Pisa as one of the great mercantile cities of Italy. Significantly, it was a group of Amalfitan merchants who founded the hospital of Jerusalem, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and the brotherhood of pious laymen who served the pilgrims there were probably at first predominantly if not exclusively Italians. Their Rector was a certain Brother Gerard, about whom very little is known, although it is clear that he was a man of outstanding and saintly character, and he was soon to show the gifts of organisation that enabled his house to develop into a great religious order.

After the Hospital had been in existence for some twenty years the political situation of the Holy Places was dramatically transformed. In 1099 the First Crusade conquered Jerusalem, and the fame of the Hospital of St. John was spread by the returning crusaders all over Europe. The first area to show the effects of this new awareness was Southern France, the County of Toulouse. In 1101-02 the first European donation to the Hospital of Jerusalem was made near the city of Toulouse, and within 15 years the endowments received in Southern France enabled the greatest of the Order's priories to be founded at Saint-Gilles, at the mouth of the Rhone.

This Mediterranean region, which in the language of the time was known as Provence, and which at this period was rising to the peak of its culture, was the area of Europe which was quickest to receive the new Hospitaller Order. Donations in Northern France were much slower to come, and the same, curiously enough, was true of Italy. By 1113 there were six hospices of the Order in existence in Italy, but they seem to have been set up by the organising ability of Brother Gerard rather than by the generosity of the Italians. The country that came next to Provence in its welcome to the Hospitallers was Catalonia. In 1108 there was a donation of a *mas* at Sarroca, the first endowment of the Order in Spain; four more such donations were made in Catalonia the following years, and by 1111 there may have been a house of the Order at Cervera. This would have been the oldest example in Spain of the unit called a commandery- in Catalan *comanda*, in Spanish *encomienda*- which was the basis of the Order's possessions in Europe. These commanderies were urban or rural properties placed under the administration of a brother called a commander - *comanador*, *comendador* - who might be a knight, a priest or a serving brother, and sometimes, especially in the 12th Century, a woman, because the

Hospitaller Order, as we shall see, was far from being exclusively masculine in its membership.

In Aragon and Navarre, and also in Portugal, the Order was much slower in being accepted than in Catalonia. In Castile however it benefited from an early demonstration of royal favour and received its first donation near Salamanca in 1113. This generosity was repeated, and in 1126-7 the Order received donations which enabled it to found a pilgrim's hospice at Atapuerca. It was the first military order to begin the work of protecting the pilgrim route of Santiago de Compostela, with which those orders, and especially the Templars, were to be closely associated.

Unlike in Castile, in Catalonia the favour of the ruling house was not the leading factor in the establishment of the Order, and this raises the question why its development here was so early. As far as I can see, the reason must lie in the close cultural ties that existed with Southern France, which made Catalonia responsive to new developments North of the Pyrenees. The marriage of Ramon Berenguer of Barcelona to Douce of Provence in 1112 united those two countries and strengthened the cultural unity of this area. We see this political union interestingly reflected in one of the most significant figures of the Hospitaller Order at this time, Pere of Barcelona. The Priory of the Order at Saint-Gilles at first had authority over all the Order's possessions in Western Europe, including the whole of Christian Spain. The first mention of this priorial house is in a document of 1115-16, which lists a community of six brethren, including Pere of Barcelona. He was not a cleric at this time; we know he was a nobleman from the description by William of Tyre in his history of the crusades, where he describes Pere as a man «noble according to the flesh but nobler still in spirit.» It is possible that he was a crusader who had gone to Jerusalem in the early years of the century and joined the Order of the Hospital, as so many were doing at that time. In 1116-19 he was himself Prior of Saint-Gilles, and as such had responsibility for the first developments of the Order in Spain. In 1119 he was recalled to Jerusalem, where he was one of the leading brethren of the Hospital for a time. He then entered the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, becoming Prior of that Order in 1130 and Archbishop of Tyre in 1158. He exemplifies the rapid transformation of the Hospitallers from their Italian origins into an international order.

In Spain the great interest awakened by the Hospitaller and Templar orders was due to their possible value as instruments of the *Reconquista*. The Templars were authorised as a military order by the Council of Troyes in 1129, and about the same time the military function of the Hospitallers begins to appear in Spain, perhaps connected with the role of protecting the pilgrim route of Santiago. This new opportunity was memorably recognised by Alfons el Batallador in 1131, when he intended his kingdom of Aragon to be divided after his death between the three orders of the Hospital, the Temple and the Holy Sepulchre. In fact the military development of the first two was far too slow to make such an arrangement possible, while the Holy Sepulchre never became a military order at all. Alfons's will was set aside on his death in 1134, but the military orders were left with claims which were settled in the form of important donations in the coming years.

In 1149 the Hospitallers received the town of Amposta, their first military possession under the Crown of Aragon, and this accession of power was reflected in the creation of a separate Priory of Aragon independent of that of Saint-Gilles. Such was the importance of the new military role that the Priory was in fact known as the Castellany of Amposta (Castellanía de Amposta). The Priory at first included the County of Barcelona and the kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre, until a separate Navarrese priory was founded in 1185.

Parallel to this endowment of the Hospitallers came a similar one to the Templars, who in 1153 received the city of Tortosa and a large territory on the West bank of the Ebro. In fact almost the whole of Catalonia on the far side of the Ebro, which was conquered at this time, was divided between the Templars and the Hospitallers, a grant which marks the importance of the two orders in defending the new frontier with the Moors of Valencia.

Although Amposta was now an independent priory, its links with Saint-Gilles remained close, the two priories continuing occasionally to be held together by the same man until 1207; and Catalans and Provençals remained interchangeable in the two offices for a further fifty years. We have a similar phenomenon in the Templar order, which built the powerful castle of Miravet on the Ebro. This was the headquarters of a great Templar province which until 1243 included not only the whole of Christian Spain but a large part of Southern France as well.

As we view the Hospital of Jerusalem a century after its foundation we see an institution transformed

from its humble beginnings, with great possessions including military fiefs in Western Europe. But we see also a European world which has been dramatically transformed by the impact of the crusades. From its narrow and precarious frontiers of the 11th Century, Western Europe had turned itself into a colonial power. A strip of territory down the coast of Syria and Palestine had been conquered, and by the 1150s all the ports along the coast were in Latin hands. The Normans had established their dominion over Sicily and in the 1130s began the conquest of Tunisia, so that the narrow centre of the Mediterranean passed from Moslem to Christian possession. The Moslem dominance of Mediterranean trade was ended, and Western ports such as Pisa, Genoa, Marseilles and Barcelona were stimulated by the new opportunities opened up in the East. Culturally the strongest impact was felt in the Languedoc, from where had come the largest of the European armies that had marched in the First Crusade, and we see this reflected in the special importance of the Hospitaller Order in that region. The link between Western Europe and the new crusader states in the East was forged especially by the three religious orders whose raison d'être was the Holy Places: The Templars, the Hospitallers and the Holy Sepulchre. The role of the first of these was purely military. That of the Hospitallers was both military and medical. The function of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre was to provide revenues for the patriarchal church of Jerusalem. Thus a network of states grew up which served to pour European money and resources into the crusader states and keep them in being. Because of the predominantly economic interest of the military orders in their estates, we see a typical process of commutation of feudal jurisdiction and services for money payments, and the military orders became the strongest rural promoters of the money economy in medieval Europe. The Templars and Hospitallers became specialists in shipping money across the seas in their own fleets, and from this function developed a banking role and great liquid wealth which, in the case of the Templars, was to lead to their unpopularity and eventual suppression.

Another aspect of the military orders' work in forging the link with the crusader states was their role in transporting pilgrims to the East. Naturally the capture of Jerusalem had acted as an important stimulus to that traffic. We should notice that until the First Crusade travel to the East was almost exclusively by land. Pilgrims made their way to the South of Italy, embarked perhaps at Bari or Brindisi for the short crossing of the Adriatic, and landing at Dyrrhachium in what is now Albania followed the old Roman roads through the Byzantine Empire, passing through Constantinople and into Asia. After the First Crusade the land route continued to be preferred, because it was cheaper and safer, but a considerable number of pilgrims began to travel by sea, and in this process the Hospitaller Order seems to have taken a pioneering role. Perhaps this was natural in an institution founded by citizens of the mercantile republic of Amalfi. Of the seven subordinate hospices which the Hospital of Jerusalem possessed in Western Europe in 1113, six were in ports which were important embarkation places for the journey to the Holy Land: Bari, Otranto, Taranto, Messina, Pisa and Saint-Gilles. It may be that these were the nerve-centres of a network of sea-transport that the Hospital was already building up for the service of pilgrims. In the middle of the century we hear of a galley of the Order which was evidently used for the protection of the fleets that were sailing to the Holy Land. By the year 1233 the work of the Templars and Hospitallers in shipping pilgrims was so important and so competitive that the city of Marseilles made an agreement limiting the number that each order was allowed to carry to 1,500 a year.

It was not only the human cargo that was significant, however. The crusader states, a precarious enclave in the Moslem East, depended for their existence on the supplies they received from Europe, and the Hospital also played a leading part in this. When the kingdom of Jerusalem was set up in the early 12th Century, virtually the only two institutions in the city were the Holy Sepulchre and the Hospital, and for a long time they continued to be the most important. In the middle of the century we are told that the Hospital regularly housed 2,000 patients and distributed food to an equal number of poor pilgrims every day. For this function alone the material needs were enormous. The dues which the European possessions of the Order were obliged to pay to their mother house were at first not so much in money as in goods, and the statutes laid down the quantities of cotton sheets, fustian and cotton cloth, felt, sugar for the confection of medicinal syrups, and other commodities which each priory was obliged to send. It is a reflexion of this work of supply that so many of the Order's Mediterranean priories were located in the principal ports which traded with the East. Besides those previously mentioned, the house of Marseilles also became important, and the royal grant of Amposta may have reflected the

same function. In those days Amposta was virtually a sea-port, since the Ebro delta has been built up mainly since the 14th Century, and the choice of this town may have been influenced by the Order's role in traffic with the Holy Land.

Besides these material links, we should bear in mind the role of the three orders of the Hospital, the Temple and the Holy Sepulchre in familiarising the medieval world with the East. In hundreds of towns and villages all over Europe there were houses of these orders, often served by brethren who had spent part of their career in the Holy Land. The Hospital may have played some part in introducing aspects of Arabic medicine to Europe, while its organisation shows the influence of the great imperial hospitals of Constantinople. In its turn the Hospital of Jerusalem was an important influence on the medical hospitals that multiplied in Europe from the 13th Century onward. All these things are examples of the difference that the crusading period made to the West. There is a tendency today to play down the religious motivation of the crusades and to see them as a colonial enterprise with largely economic causes. In fact no entrepreneur at the end of the 11th Century could have seen the conquest of a small strip of the Levantine coast as a sound investment, yet the results of that extraordinary venture produced a cultural and economic impact on Western Europe comparable to that made by the discovery of America, and in that process the Order of the Hospital played a central and highly representative role.

The conquest of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by the Egyptian sultan in 1291 brought to an end the characteristic phase of the age of the crusades. It struck a serious blow to the crusading movement, and potentially to the military orders in particular. The Templars suffered the full force of this set-back when their order was attacked by Philip the Fair of France, whose accusations of idolatry and other crimes led Pope Clement V to suppress the order in 1312. The Hospitallers by contrast put themselves in a strong independent position by beginning the conquest of Rhodes in 1306. At the Pope's insistence, moreover, the entire property of the Templars throughout Europe was to be turned to the Hospitaller Order, thus much more than doubling its wealth. In practice many kings and princes objected to this enormous increase in power. In Portugal, where the Templars had won large military fiefs in the *Reconquista*, the king refused to allow the transfer and founded instead the military order of Christ which continued the Templar Order under another name. In Castile there were no comparable Templar fiefs, the Christian frontier having been divided among the Hospitallers and the three Castilian orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara; but the suppression of the Templars coincided with a royal minority which allowed the Castilian orders and other powers to seize the Templar property, and the Hospitallers were never able to take possession of it. Aragon was in a similar position to Portugal. The enormous Templar estate at Miravet was one of the most important military fiefs in the kingdom, and its transfer to the Hospital would be all the more significant because it lay contiguous to the great Hospitaller estate of Amposta. It is evidence of the high favour in which the Hospital stood in Aragon that King Jaume II was prepared to allow this transfer, reserving only the Templar endowments in the kingdom of Valencia, which he used to found the military order of Montesa. In Aragon proper and Catalonia all the Templar wealth passed to the Hospital, with the result that practically the whole of Catalonia beyond the Ebro became a Hospitaller property. The number of Hospitaller commanderies was more than doubled by this change, and as a consequence a separate priory of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands was created from the Castellany of Amposta. Its southern boundary however was the river Ebro; the huge combined fief of Amposta and Miravet was attached to the Aragonese priory, which continued to be known as the Castellany of Amposta.

The Priory of Catalonia consisted of some 30 commanderies, many of them of Templar origin, and castles or houses of the Order can still be seen in many villages of Catalonia, such as Barbens, Vallfogona de Riucorb, L'Espuga de Francolí (where the medieval hospital has recently been restored), Barberà de la Conca, Horta de Sant Joan and Ulldecona. The 14th Century church of St. John built by the commandery of Vilafranca del Penedès is of special architectural merit. The commander of Barcelona had a large palace in what is now the Via Laietana, then known as the Riera de Sant Joan, and in 1561 this became the residence of the Prior of Catalonia. It continued in existence until 1880, when the works of the *Eixample* necessitated its demolition. There is also visible a large building called the Hospital de Malta, in the carrer de Sant Joan de Malta near El Clot. This building was not in fact a hospital but a summer residence of the Priors of Catalonia, built I believe in the 17th Century. It now forms part of a school.

Besides the commanderies one should also mention another type of houses of the Order, the women's convents. Spain produced the grandest and richest of the convents of the Order of St. John, the royal monastery of Sijena, near Fraga, founded by Queen Sancha of Aragon in 1188. Within four years of its foundation this convent established the first of its daughter houses at Cervera; but in 1264 this community transferred itself to Alguaire on the western border of Catalonia, where it acquired important baronies, and the Count of Urgell gave the nuns the title of Baronesses of Portella. Alguaire was the second most important convent of the Order in Spain, and perhaps in Europe. A second Catalan convent was founded in the late 13th Century at Sant Carles de la Ràpita, perhaps by nuns of the Hospitaller convent of Acre fleeing from the conquest of that city. In 1579 it moved to Tortosa, where it remained till 1956.

The nuns of St. John were noble ladies who liked a degree of comfort, and this was especially seen at Alguaire, where the Prioress in 1505-25 was Margarida d'Urrea, an illegitimate daughter of the Archbishop of Tarragona. She introduced considerable relaxation in the life of the convent and the nuns began building themselves private houses, where they lived with their own servants. By 1699 the convent was deserted and falling into ruin, and this was taken as an excuse to move the community to Barcelona, where they occupied the prioral palace in the Riera de Sant Joan. The vicissitudes of the Order's houses in the 19th Century are illustrated by the long career of one of the nuns of Barcelona, Raimunda de Pont i de Travi. She entered the convent before the *Desamortización* of 1835, which confiscated the house, and she was not able to return till 1860, when she and one lay sister were the only survivors of the old convent. As Prioress she had built up the community again to thirteen when the revolution of 1868 again evicted them. They returned briefly after the restoration of 1874, but in 1880, as I mentioned before, the old palace of the Priors of Catalonia was demolished to create Via Laietana, and the nuns were installed in a new convent in Sant Gervasi de Cassoles. Here the Prioress Raimunda de Pont died in 1893, at the age of 93. The convent continued in Sant Gervasi till 1973, when it moved to Valldoreix. It is now the mother house of the four convents of St. John in Spain, and the nuns still wear the cross of Malta as the sign of their order.

After this digression to modern times, I would like to go back and speak about two Catalan knights who became Grand Masters of Rhodes in the 15th Century. The first was Antoni de Fluvià who held office from 1421 to 1437 and left a bequest for the building of the second hospital of Rhodes, one of the most beautiful medieval hospitals in Europe. The second was Ramon Sacosta, who was Castellan of Amposta when he was elected Grand Master in 1461. At that time Catalonia was in rebellion against Joan II, who immediately seized the opportunity left by Sacosta's vacation of the Castellany to gain control of that important seat of power in Catalonia. He imposed as castellan the knight Bernat de Rocaberti, who played an important part in the restoration of royal rule. The Grand Master Sacosta however supported his fellow Catalans and refused to recognise Rocaberti as castellan, an attitude which the king punished by sequestering the commanderies of the Priory of Catalonia. It was not until after Sacosta's death in 1467 that the rift was mended, the commanderies were restored, and the Order recognised Rocaberti as castellan.

We have now reached the period of the end of the Spanish *Reconquista*, which led to the decline of the Castilian military orders following annexation of their Masterships to the Crown. The Order of St. John by contrast acquired new importance with the donation of Malta to the Order by Charles V in 1530 and the close naval co-operation between Malta and Spain in the latter's long war with Turkey. When Charles V conquered Tunis in 1535, the flagship of the Order of Malta was the pride of the Christian fleet. When he attempted unsuccessfully to repeat his success at Algiers six years later, it was the rearguard action of the Knights of Malta that prevented the retreat from turning to rout and massacre of the imperial army. In 1565 the Knights defended Malta against the Turks for four months until rescued by a Spanish army. And the galleys of the Order played a heroic role in the epic of Lepanto, which led to the ending of the Turkish war. This strategic co-operation was reflected in the increased prestige of the Knights of Malta in Spanish society.

In the 17th Century the main naval danger came from North Africa, from where the corsair states preyed upon Christian shipping in the Mediterranean. At its height about 1640 Algiers was a city of 100,000 inhabitants, built entirely on state piracy. It was far larger than Barcelona at the time, and a quarter of its inhabitants were Christian captives. A hundred marauding vessels sailed from its port,

and it may be that the damage they inflicted on Christian trade was one of the factors in creating the discontent which led to the Catalan revolt of 1640. From this danger the Knights of Malta were unable to provide much protection, since the situation was so grave that they were fully occupied fighting the corsairs of Tunis and Tripoli, but it was common for the galleys of Malta to sail to the Balearic Islands in their patrol against Barbary corsairs.

As the European states gradually won the corsair war, a new pattern of trade was established to the benefit of the West. In the 18th Century the nascent textile industry of Catalonia was being largely supplied by cotton from Malta, which was winning a position as the commercial centre of the Mediterranean. Part of the reason for this was the excellence of the island's quarantine arrangements. All ships sailing between Africa or Asia and European ports were obliged to submit to quarantine, and those heading for Italy or Spain generally preferred to do this by making a stay in Malta. This was an example of the Order's hospitaller traditions resulting in important practical benefits.

In the late 18th Century the Order of Malta occupied a prominent position in the society of Barcelona, with the prioral palace and its convent of noble ladies, together with other well-known figures such as the Virrei Amat, who was a member of the Order. The cross of Malta can still be seen behind his coat of arms on the façade of the Palau de la Virreina. The decline of the Order began after the capture of Malta by Napoleon in 1798. Four years later King Charles IV turned the four Spanish priories into a national order, in the lines of those of Santiago and Montesa. Ferdinand VII conferred the castellany of Amposta on his brother, the Infante Francisco de Paula. With the *Desamortización* all the women's convents of the Order were expropriated. The knights' commanderies were spared for the moment, for fear that the knights might flock in support to Don Carlos. It was only after the end of the first Carlist war that the commanderies too were confiscated, in 1841.

The Concordat of 1851 intended to abolish the extensive ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the Order, but this provoked a reaction from the Castellan of Amposta. He had put himself in an influential position by marrying his son, Don Francisco de Asís, to Queen Isabel II, and he was thus well placed to resist attacks on his prerogatives. He had the castellany of Amposta and the Priory of Catalonia combined in his own person, and his prelacy over the Order's convents was confirmed. It was not until two years after his death that these rights were abolished, in 1867, and the Order of St. John ceased to have any legal status in Spain.

This has brought us to my point of departure, the 1860s and the foundation of the Red Cross under the patronage of the Order. With the loss of the Order's historic endowments, however, that may be considered the first step in the revival of the Order's hospitaller function which has characterised the modern period and is the beginning of a wholly different story.