

to the Ho'y City of Jernsalem and that there a hospital existed, which was a refuge for sick and weary pilgrims. At the beginning of the eleventh century, with the permission of the Moslem Caliph, some rich Neapolitan merchants founded and endowed a hospital in Jernsalem, or rather, as is believed, placed the old one on a more solid and enduring footing; and thus was established the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jernsalem. The Order instituted branch hospitals in many of the maritime countries of Europe, and its splendid history is written in the annals of all the great nations of western Europe. It was both a religious and military order; it ministered to the wants of the sick and distressed and at times it fought to preserve Europe from the onrush of the Turks.

In 1291, the Knights were driven from Palestine by the Turks and they went to Cyprus and nineteen years later to the Island of Rhodes which they occupied as their headquarters for more than two centuries.