

EIGHT
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CROSS



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To Mom – for constantly bursting into my room
to offer me tea as I worked on this novel.

To Dad – for not constantly bursting into my
room to offer me tea as I worked on this novel.

COSTANTINOPOLI



PREFACE

Though *Eight-Pointed Cross* is above all, a work of fiction, I have made every effort to remain as true to the history, cultures, and settings of the time as research and observation would allow. In cases where several authors gave differing accounts or interpretations of the same event or individual, I used the version that seemed most plausible.

With regrets to purists, I have favoured consistency in handling certain aspects of the novel. For example, Istanbul is the city of as many names as it has had masters: Lygos, Byzantium, Augusta Antonina, New Rome, Constantinople. At the time of Suleiman, the city was officially Konstantiniyye on coinage and government documents. In common parlance, it was already referred to as Stamboul, or Istanbul, which derives from the Greek phrase “Istinpolin” or, “in the City.” Therefore, throughout the novel, the city is called Istanbul. The term for Mother in Turkish is Anne; however, to aid with pronunciation and to avoid confusing the word with the European name, I have added a final h, creating Anneh. Similarly, correct spelling for the noble members of Malta’s civil authority is gurati; for the sake of pronunciation, I have spelled it jurati. The Maltese letter Ħ (or ħ) produces the same sound as the h in the English word happy. Finally, an adjustment was made to the age of French knight Mathurin Romegas—he is represented in this novel as being about ten years older than he actually was in order to have him fully established as a master admiral and suitable rival of Dragut Raïs.

While researching *Eight-Pointed Cross*, I was privileged to travel to Malta, Turkey, Italy, and France. I was immersed in these breathtaking places, their paces, their flavours, their scents, their vitality. In an attempt to experience what it might have felt like to be a defender during a siege in mid-summer Malta, I spent an afternoon on the open walls of fortress St Angelo under the most intense sun I’ve ever known. I was rewarded with severe heatstroke and a day spent in bed shivering, sweating, cramping, and convinced I contracted plague. How the knights

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endured such heat in over fifty pounds of plate armour while being shot at for months on end is beyond me.

Heatstroke aside, Malta is my second home, and one of my favourite places in the world—four compass points of natural beauty, the smell of the sea in the air no matter how far inland one ventures, colour and life and church bells and pastizzi, and some of the most amusing, authentic people I've ever encountered. I am indebted to my dear Maltese friends, especially Andrei Xuereb, for his tireless work designing the novel's cover according to my concept, Ruben Xuereb, Mark Brincat, Franco Davies, Chris Abdilla, and Clive Farrugia, for being impromptu tour guides, language specialists, fencing consultants, researchers, drivers, and finders of awesome wine bars. It is an honour and a privilege to know them.

Istanbul is equally unforgettable, and the time I spent there is among the happiest of my life. As I walked along the Golden Horn and contemplated how lucky I was to be in this most magnificent of cities, this living museum, something drew my attention from the shimmering water and across the street. There was a statue, majestic yet discreet, standing peaceful and dignified in the shade of Topkapi Palace. I had to go see who he was, this solemn man standing there with an open view of the sea before him and the pride of Istanbul at his back.

Of course.

It was Dragut Raïs, one hand on the globe, the other around a sword. All around us was perfect quiet. In the time that I stood there with Dragut, I think a moment of understanding passed between us.

As a first-time novelist undertaking a historical epic as a debut, I am most and forever indebted to the people who gave their time to offer suggestions and constructive ass-kickings.

I am particularly grateful to the brilliant David W. Ball, author, mentor, friend, counselor, confidant, best-advice-in-the-world giver, and invaluable resource, who never once turned down a request for guidance. He is a person for whom I have unrelenting admiration and respect.

I am thankful also to the incomparable Karen Connelly, celebrated author and editor whose no-bullshit approach forced me to produce the best work I could. And then, to try harder. I hope I have not let

her down. My gratitude extends to writer Chris Humphreys, a pal and support, who interrupted his breakfast on numerous occasions to read my work and offer his feedback; John Heighton, a relentless champion of my manuscript; author Marsha Skrypuch, who invited me into her online writing group, without which I don't think I would have managed the last few passes of rewrites; I am especially grateful to members Eric Emin Wood and David Krauskopf for the time they spent reading and rereading scenes from my manuscript and challenging me to do better; writer Antanas Sileika, one of the best teachers I've ever had, a grammar genius who made studying syntax fun; Carol Rasmussen, an exceptional editor, always available to lend her expertise to help find the right words and omit the wrong ones.

I am deeply and infinitely grateful to Tony Gatt and Stephen Said of BDL for having faith in my work and for making *Eight-Pointed Cross* a priority—their enthusiasm over this project has meant the world to me. I would like to thank Tony Mangion for his close reading of my manuscript and his attention to detail ensuring historical accuracy. Any mistakes that remain are my own. Dr Carmel Cassar and Dr Simon Mercieca have my great appreciation for their willingness to answer endless streams of history questions. I am grateful to Albert Vella and Lehen Malti for the opportunity to appear on the show and promote my yet-to-be published manuscript to the Maltese Canadian community.

My friends at home and abroad have been the very best a person could hope for—simply having them in my life has made the already incredible experience of writing this novel all the more enjoyable. Allowing me to bounce ideas off them and vent about the unfairness of it all, constantly yet gently enquiring about how things are going, forcing me to take hot chocolate breaks—for this and so much more, I am forever grateful. It is said that those who take friendship from life take the stars from the sky. Well, I have the very brightest of galaxies.

I am blessed with a wonderful family. My parents, Alfred and Doris, to whom this work is dedicated, have always been exceptionally positive forces in my life, and embody the very best of what it is to be Maltese. My siblings are perfect role models for a little sister to look up to: my brothers, Dave, Steve, and Lou opened my mind to the wonders this world has to offer through their amazing pursuits, travel experiences,

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stories, and photographs; they have passed on to me a passion for life, a love of adventure, and a dangerous sense of curiosity; my sister Carmen's quiet endurance and dedication have inspired me to treat this manuscript like one of her many marathons.

Finally, but forever first, my loving thanks to Brad. Beyond his unwavering faith in me, beyond reading my manuscript numerous times, painstakingly searching out plot holes and comma splices, beyond his patience when I was tethered to my desk, deaf to the world around me, to dinner and dishes, beyond every kind gesture grand or small, his love inspires me. Before Brad, I did not know true romance, and could not write a convincing love scene if my life depended on it. Perhaps I still can't. But it's not for lack of knowledge. Every single day, Brad shows me the kind of love we read about, the kind I try to write about. Any scene in this book that depicts love in its purest form owes to Brad making that kind of love a reality for me.

Malta—Florence—Istanbul—Toronto
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PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

MALTA

Domenicus Montesa, a Maltese peasant
Katrina Montesa, his younger sister
Augustine Montesa, their father, a soldier-at-arms in
service of the Order of the Knights of St John
Isabel Montesa, Augustine's wife
Father Anton Tabone, the *kappillan*,
or parish priest, of St Publius
Angelica Tabone, his niece
Robert Falsone, a Maltese peasant
Franco di Bonfatti, a knight
Marcello di Ruggieri, a knight
Gabriel Mercadal, *pilier*, or master knight,
of the langue of Aragon
Lilla, a Sicilian courtesan
Diana d'Alagona, a noblewoman married to the
Hakem, head of Malta's civil authority
Girolamo d'Alagona, the *Hakem*

ISTANBUL

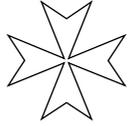
Demir, an Ottoman child
Al Hajji Hamid al Azm, Demir's father, a wealthy horse breeder
Yaminah, Demir's mother and Hamid's second wife
Ayla, Hamid's principal wife
Muharrem, son of Ayla and Hamid, half-brother of Demir
Jameela, servant in the household of Hamid

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Murad, Demir's best friend
Kemal, chief groomsman of Hamid's stables
Timurhan, a *sipahi*, or imperial horseman

HISTORICAL FIGURES

Juan d'Homedes, Grand Master of the Knights of St John
Suleiman, Sultan of the Ottomans
Jean Parisot de la Valette, knight
Dragut, a corsair, later Commander-in-Chief of
Ottoman Naval Forces in the Mediterranean
Mustafa Pasha, Ottoman general
Sinan Pasha, Ottoman admiral
Giuseppe Callus, Maltese physician
Alonso Predal, *Protomedicus*, or head of the Maltese medical profession
Antoni Zammit, Maltese apothecary
Cubelles, Bishop of Malta
Mathurin Romegas, knight and commander of the galleys
Nicholas Upton, knight and Turcopilier
Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon, knight
Galatian de Sesse, knight and Governor of Gozo
Gaspard de Valliers, knight and Governor of Tripoli



PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Malta, 1542

Immersed in a rare moment of quiet, the family does not sense the approach of the corsairs. They cannot see the North African slavers advancing over the island's rocky terrain and through the dark streets of the fishing village Birgu, now a mere fifty paces from the stone walls of the Montesa house. And they cannot smell the reek of the galleys, moored in a cove concealed by soaring headland. This night, the family senses only peace, smells only melting beeswax.

Domenicus sits on his father Augustine's lap. Winking candlelight creates shadows that move over his face.

"What story tonight, lad?" Pa asks. "Will I tell you of the battle for Rhodos, or of how good fortune blessed your mother the day we met?"

Across the room, Isabel gives a little smile without looking up from her embroidery.

"The story of you and Mama," Domenicus replies, resting his sandy head against Augustine's chest. The boy's hair smells of sea salt, dried into each strand after a mid-day swim. He sighs contentedly, as always feeling not the power in his father's strong hands but his gentleness, the easy smile in his eyes, the quiet dignity with which he carries himself. Other village men might brag and bully, but his pa never does. Domenicus often spends long moments staring at his own reflection in the surface of a puddle or the side of a pot, willing his features to develop as his father's have. Augustine's face is a smooth palette, glowing with the fresh sheen of a man mindful of indulgences. His jaw is sculpted into angles that meet at his chin, forming a countenance both beautiful and fierce. His dark hair seems forever windswept, heavy locks falling over his forehead.

Just as he opens his mouth, Katrina dashes out from behind a cedar chest. "We heard about you two yesterday! You haven't told us a battle story since forever." With an imaginary sword, she duels an

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invisible opponent. Mama laughs, the pretty sound broken by a cough. She brushes away auburn strands that have strayed over her eyes, returns her attention to the needlework. Katrina plops cross-legged on the stone floor, looks expectantly up at Papa. He glances to Domenicus for permission, and once it is given, folds battle-scarred arms loosely across his chest and leans with his back to the wall.

“Rhodos. June, 1522. It was my twentieth year, and I stood staring out over the sea from my vantage on the walls. The air was alive with jasmine from the island plains, salt off the Aegean, and fear from a city in ferment.” The small fire in the hearth flares suddenly, illuminating the whole house. It is a home like most in Birgu: bedrooms defined by sackcloth curtains separating straw pallets from the rest of the dwelling, one window casement panelled with oiled linen, easily removed to let in air.

“Two days following the feast of John the Baptist, she came: the Ottoman armada. Formidable. Beautiful. She was one hundred and three galleys strong, further strengthened by three hundred other vessels—triremes, brigantines, carracks, a tremendous fleet breaking the horizon.” Domenicus loves his father’s rich, deep voice, perfect for storytelling. “We soldiers, together with the Knights of St John, were positioned along the ramparts—” he pauses, distracted.

Domenicus looks up. He tilts his ear and listens closely but hears only the creak of crickets. “What is it, Papa?”

“Nothing. ...A stray dog, perhaps.” Augustine passes his fingers over the small, silver and turquoise eight-pointed cross, symbol of the Knights of St John, that dangles from a thin chain around his neck. “So. All men of Spanish ancestry were stationed at the bastion of Aragon, one of eight fortresses encircling the city. I had just returned from church, where every knight, every soldier, every citizen flocked once news of the coming siege had spread.”

“Then,” he continues, “Fra Gabriel Mercadal came to muster the men. The *pilier* of the Aragonese shook us: *Those who cannot bravely face danger are already slaves of the enemy! And not one among you is a slave!*” His words echoed off the walls into the very heart of me.”

“Were you frightened, Father?” Domenicus asks, though he has heard the story a hundred times and knows the answer.

“Not frightened enough. An army of one thousand sheep led by a lion is far more destructive than an army of one thousand lions led by a sheep. Suleiman the Magnificent led this attack—we faced an army of lions led by a lion.” He leans slightly forward on his seat, lowers his voice for effect. “The Muslim pride marched ashore, hungry for Christian flesh.”

Clearing her throat, Mama sets down her embroidery. “Time for bed, little ones. Papa can finish the story tomorrow. Or,” she winks “perhaps he’ll tell you of our adventures raising flowers in a reluctant plot instead.”

As the three open their mouths in protest, violent commotion rumbles from the narrow village streets. Hooves trample cobblestone, rattling shelves, sending pottery jugs to crash and break on the floor. The four stand as one, Domenicus and his sister huddling close to their father.

“*Slavers!*” It sounds like Nicolo, the cobbler.

“*Corsairs!*” shouts another villager. Domenicus is not sure which one. “Hide!”

“*Hide,*” a Moor snarls in the pidgin dialect of the Barbary Coast, “And when we find you, we cart you to *El Djezair* in pieces!”

El Djezair. Algiers. Domenicus shudders at the name. *The Whip of the Christian World* they call it, *the Wall of the Barbarian*. He knows the stories. For centuries, Malta has been plagued by pirates, but none so efficient, so terrifying, as the Barbary corsairs from Algiers.

Smoke from the burning reeds of North African torches permeates his house and makes Mama cough—a deafening sound in this need for silence.

“Damn them,” Augustine mutters. “Isabel, the candles. Domenicus, help me bar the door.” Son pushes as Father pulls the heavy cedar chest across the floor. Papa finds his sword, and under cover of darkness, draws his family with him to the ground. He kisses the nape of Mama’s neck.

Outside, whips snap on empty air, bite into flesh. With the sound of each lash, Domenicus winces as though the leather flog bloodies his own skin. His eyes fix on the door, and with shallow breath, he watches,

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waiting as each second brings the corsairs closer. Every shudder of the wooden door, every rattle of its hinges, sends pangs into his stomach. He wonders if they should hide in the dung pit, a hollow behind the house where the chamber pot is emptied. He hears the sobs of children younger than he is. Boys and girls make corsairs rich.

“I hate them,” his sister whispers. “I’d kill them all.”

Augustine crawls to a crack in the door unblocked by the chest. Domenicus moves slowly over cold stone to join his father and peers out. Wailed entreaties for God’s mercy rise with the smoke billowing from the scattered torches.

“Resist at your peril, infidels!” The voice belongs to an Algerian slave trader. His authority marks him as captain of this corsair fleet. He is tall and full-bearded, wearing loose-fitting green pantaloons, the bloodstains on them sure indication that he *is* peril.

Paces down the road, the baker Emanuel staggers from his open doorway, his hands closed around his throat. Blood seeps through his fingers, onto his shirt and the dusty ground below. He falls face down, shuddering as he dies in a pool of his own blood. Treading over the body, a dark-skinned Moor drags Emanuel’s wife from the house. Sarah is one of the many peasants who scratches out a livelihood by selling goods at Birgu’s market.

“Dirty animal! *Mahmuğ!*” She smashes her captor square in the face with her elbow and, in his moment of blindness, tears away. The corsair roars with pain and chases her, catching a fistful of her hair. His nose a bleeding mess, he thrusts Sarah at the captain and tends his injury. Those already bound look on, hopeless. Sarah struggles fiercely, scratching, kicking, biting. She rakes her fingernails across her captor’s bare chest, broad and scarred.

“Quiet!” he thunders. He blows two sharp blasts on a silver whistle. “*Yalla! Yalla!*”

He pins Sarah’s arms behind her back. She cries out, but will not yield, driving her bare heel into his shin. He reaches around her chest to squeeze one of her breasts with crushing force.

“This spitfire will fetch a handsome purse,” the captain rumbles. “One heavy with doblas.” Two turbaned corsairs emerge from Sarah’s

home carrying what few trinkets they could find, some majolica jars and a fat, headless Venus of Malta statuette.

“Waste no more time on trifles!” he barks. “To the anchorage. *Move!*”

Domenicus breathes deep. If the corsairs follow their orders, his family will be safe. He watches through the crack as slavers gather the captives. There are twelve, most of them children younger than his sister. The smallest are hoisted to men on horses. By the points of daggers, the corsairs force the prisoners to wherever it is the Moorish ships make berth.

“Put out your torches,” the captain orders. Again, his whistle trills.

Domenicus glances over his shoulder, as if to make sure his mother and sister are still there. He then fixes his gaze on the window. Shadows grow and pass across the translucent coverings, grow and pass. Suddenly, a flash of bright orange. A reed torch flies through the casement and lands on Katrina’s bed, the sacking and straw instantly catching. The room comes alive with fire. To terrified gasps, Father snatches up Mama’s embroidery and smothers the flames with it. She crawls over to a basin of water and throws it on the bed, choking the flames to silence. The safety of darkness returns.

Domenicus looks to his mother. Her hands are shaking. His own are trembling. But he has to be brave. Brave like his papa. He moves back to his spot by the door. Outside, a Moor leads a splendid white horse into the path of the departing corsairs. The animal’s bare back is glossy, almost blue, in the moonlight. A semi-conscious woman is draped like a sack of grain over the man’s shoulder, his yellow pantaloons streaked with blood.

The captain halts to seize the horse’s rein and scowls at the Moor. “A minute longer, you would have been left behind, idiot.” He swings onto the mount, gives it a gentle kick.

“I hit upon this sweetmeat just beyond the village,” the corsair says, jerking his head at the woman thrown over his shoulder as he scrambles into step with his captain’s new horse. “Her husband is dead. Skewered.” He spits on the grainy cobbles. “Their girl-child got away.”

The captain’s eyes flash. “Girl-child?”

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“The little mouse scurried into a field before I could grab her.”

“Thou mewling hedge-born ratsbane! A girl is worth more than double any grown woman. Yet you, you errant toad, you bring me a woman.”

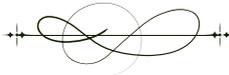
The sobbing of the captives, the banter of the corsairs, and the hoof beats of their steeds are soon swallowed by the night, the entire raid over within ten minutes.

Father stands. He pauses, looking up as if to thank God his family was spared. “Gabriel will be expecting me,” he says, turning. He takes Mama’s hands into his, squeezes them. “They’re gone. We’re still here. *Kollox sem*. But I will not know ease unless you know safety. Come to your cousin’s house.” He unlocks the door and opens it slowly, sword raised, Domenicus peering around his waist.

At first glance, the fallout of the raid does not seem severe. There are a few small fires from discarded torches, but the houses are unscathed. Still, trails of blood mark the grisly passage of injury and death. One such trail leads to the baker Emanuel’s doorway, where he lies sprawled across the step, his legs still inside the house. Pa crosses himself, saying he is not sure who is in more need of God’s mercy now: the baker or his wife.

At the end of the street stands the lodging of Mama’s cousin, the carpenter Bellizzi. In Maltese, he is known as *Ta’mastrudaxxa—the master carpenter*. To Domenicus and Katrina, he is Belli. Papa raps on the door. Half a minute brings no answer. Then, with alarming suddenness, the door flies open. A thick man, bald and muscular, stands wild-eyed in the entrance, his hands clutching a hammer he is poised to swing.

“By the holy hairs of Pope Paul’s sacred anus, it’s you.” Belli lowers his weapon. “But a corsair wouldn’t knock, would he?” He grins, nudges his chin towards the road. “Go, Augustine. See your knights. And tell them next time Algiers decides to visit, they might get off their idle asses and offer some goddamn resistance.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marthese Fenech was born the youngest of five to Maltese parents in Toronto. She has traveled extensively across four continents, and in the course of researching for *Eight-Pointed Cross*, toured Malta, Turkey, Italy, France—a wealth of fascinating places that introduced her to her characters and their cultures in a most authentic way.

When she was twelve, she lived in Malta for six months, enrolling in an all-girls private school run by nuns. She lasted three days before getting kicked out for talking too much. Back in Toronto, she started her own business recording, editing, and selling bootleg heavy metal concerts. While in high school, she took a position with a popular seafood chain as its first female dishwasher. She later worked with special needs children and adults, where witnessing small miracles on a daily basis was part of the job.



Photograph by Gordon Lau

A former kickboxing instructor, Marthese currently teaches high school English and history. She speaks fluent Maltese and French and is learning Italian. As part of her research for *Eight-Pointed Cross*, she took up archery, and ended up accidentally becoming a certified instructor. She has a passion for adventure, photography, running, music, snowboarding, and yoga.

Visit her website: www.marthesefenech.com

GLOSSARY

- Al-fatihah*: the first chapter of the Muslim holy book, the Koran. Its seven verses are a prayer for God's guidance and stress the lordship and mercy of God
- Apostates*: people who renounce their faith, generally adopting the faith of their captors to secure more favourable treatment
- Apothecary*: a pharmacist trained in the art of preparing and dispensing drugs
- Arquebus*: an early muzzle-loaded trigger-based gun used in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, to which a burning match was applied, and from which the musket was later derived
- Auberge*: a hall of residence assigned to each tongue, or *langue*, where the knights lodged and took their meals
- Barberot*: barber-surgeon
- Barnuža*: a hood or cloak
- Bitha*: in Malta it is a small courtyard usually behind or within a house
- Bosun/boatswain*: highest ranking petty officer in the deck department who has immediate charge of all deck hands and who in turn comes under the direct orders of the master or chief mate
- Carrack*: a large European sailing vessel of the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries
- Corsairs*: privateers who operated in the Mediterranean. The most famous were the Barbary Corsairs from the Barbary Coast of North Africa (so called by the European crusaders who called their Muslim opponents "barbarians") who were authorized by their governments to attack the shipping of Christian countries
- Cortège*: a solemn procession, especially for a funeral
- Devshirme*: the practice by which the Ottoman Empire conscripted boys from Christian families. The children were taken by force, converted to Islam, trained, and enrolled in one of the four royal institutions: the Palace, the Scribes, the Religious and the Military. The slave soldiers of the Sultan, the Janissaries, were products of the *devshirme*
- Galley*: a sailing ship which could be propelled by oars when necessary
- Galliot*: smaller, swift galley, using both sails and oars
- Hadith*: narrations originating from the words and deeds of the Islamic prophet Mohammad
- Hakem*: head of the *Università*, or Maltese civil authority
- Harem*: a usually secluded house or part of a house allotted to women in a Muslim household
- Hocam*: in Turkish, it is a combination of *hoca*, a flexible term bestowed upon people who are devout Muslims and /or renowned for their wisdom as teachers, and the possessive suffix. The "m" at the end of *hocam* denotes possession—not just teacher but *my* teacher
- Janissaries*: elite infantry units that formed the Ottoman Sultan's household troops and bodyguard. The force was created by the Sultan Murad I from

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Christian boys boys levied through the devshirme system

Langue: tongues or *langues* were the geographic-cultural sub-groupings of the members of the Knights of Saint John from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. The Knights of St John hailed from the richest estates in civilized Europe. While serving in Malta, these young men were assigned to one of eight halls accommodating the various the *langues*, or tongues, depending upon their European homeland: Provence; Auvergne; France; Aragon; Castile; Italy; Germany; or England

Luzzu: a Maltese fishing boat. Traditionally, they are brightly painted in shades of yellow, red, green and blue, and the bow is normally decorated with a pair of eyes. These eyes may be the modern survival of an ancient Phoenician custom (also practiced by the ancient Greeks); they are sometimes referred to as the Eye of Horus or of Osiris

Madrasah: translated as “a place where learning and studying are done.” The term *madrasah* usually refers to the specifically Islamic institutions. In the Ottoman Empire, the study of hadiths (recorded sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad) was introduced by Süleyman I. In addition to religious studies, Ottoman madrasahs also taught styles of writing, grammar, syntax, poetry, composition, natural sciences, political sciences, and etiquette

Mokkadem: a holy man, prayer leader

Moor: North African Muslim of mixed Arab and Berber descent

Müderri: a madrasah teacher

Musket: a muzzle-loaded, smooth bore long gun, intended to be fired from the shoulder

Ottoman: the Turkish dynasty that ruled the Ottoman Empire from the thirteenth century to its dissolution after World War I

Padishah: supreme royal title denoting the highest rank, and composed of the Persian *pād* (master) and *shāh* (king)

Pilier: each tongue, or *langue*, was headed by a Pilier (also known as Bailiff or Baillis), who would also hold one of the high offices of the order: Grand Commander, Marshal, Hospitaller, Admiral, Turcopilier, Drapier. Only the Treasurer was independent of the Tongues. The Piliers were answerable only to the Grand Master, the supreme office each tongue always sought to gain

for one of its own

Postulant: a person preparing to be admitted as a novice into a religious order

Sipahi: a fief-holding soldier of the elite imperial cavalry

Vizier: a high executive officer of the Ottoman Empire