

Barbicans and posterns: new fifteenth-century documentation on the Mdina land-front

The main gate of Mdina is depicted in a number of sixteenth century maps, among others, the Gastaldi map (c. 1551),¹ the Camocio map (c. 1562), an anonymous map (1565),² and the Zündt map (1565),³ as protected outside the city walls by a bridge, a crenelated parapet flanking both sides, its bridge-head defended by a barbican consisting of two round towers; in the Zündt map the twin towers are linked by an interconnecting wall. Gian Francesco Abela, writing in the early 1600s, presumes without stating why, that this barbican was built by the Arabs. It was dismantled on the occasion of the 1551 corsair invasion, since it was then deemed to be more of a liability than an asset for the defence of the city. A century after the event, however, Abela could still discern vestiges of the construction which he described as follows:⁴

Fin'hoggi si conserua innanzi la porta principale della Città vna reliquia di fabrica d'vn Maschio, ò Torrione forte, di forma circolare con fosso, e cisterna dentro.

Abela's description certainly confirms the round plan of the towers appearing in all maps of the preceding century mentioned. In view of Abela's comments, one can deduce that all maps, with the possible exception of the Gastaldi map, must have been based on earlier visual information as the barbican was non-existent when the maps were drawn.

Apart from Abela's undocumented assertion, what do we really know about the origins of this barbican? In this paper, two important new documents are presented to shed some light on this question. Working backward in time from 1551, the year they were dismantled, one notes that in the aftermath of the 1488 attack on Birgu and Gozo by twelve Turkish vessels and consequently King Ferdinando *el Católico* realising the precariousness of these islands, a visit by the Viceroy of Sicily, Fernando d'Acuña, was made at the behest of the King in order to obtain first-hand evidence of the state of the islands' defences.

We learn about one of the decisions taken by the Viceroy concerning the islands' fortifications and defence arrangements from the third document (Doc. III) being published here. Very interestingly, it is now learnt that the twin-towered enigmatic barbican, or bridge-head, at Mdina's main gate, knows its construction to d'Acuña's intervention in 1492, judging by a chance comment of his: *li belguardi che foru per Nui ordinati si fachissiru innanti la porta di ipsa chitati*. This document of May 1494 is replete with much revealing information. It consists of a vice-regal letter replying to requests by a certain Spaniard from Castille, Diego de Zavallos, recently settled on the island as



**Portrait of Ferdinand the Catholic
painted by Michel Sittow**

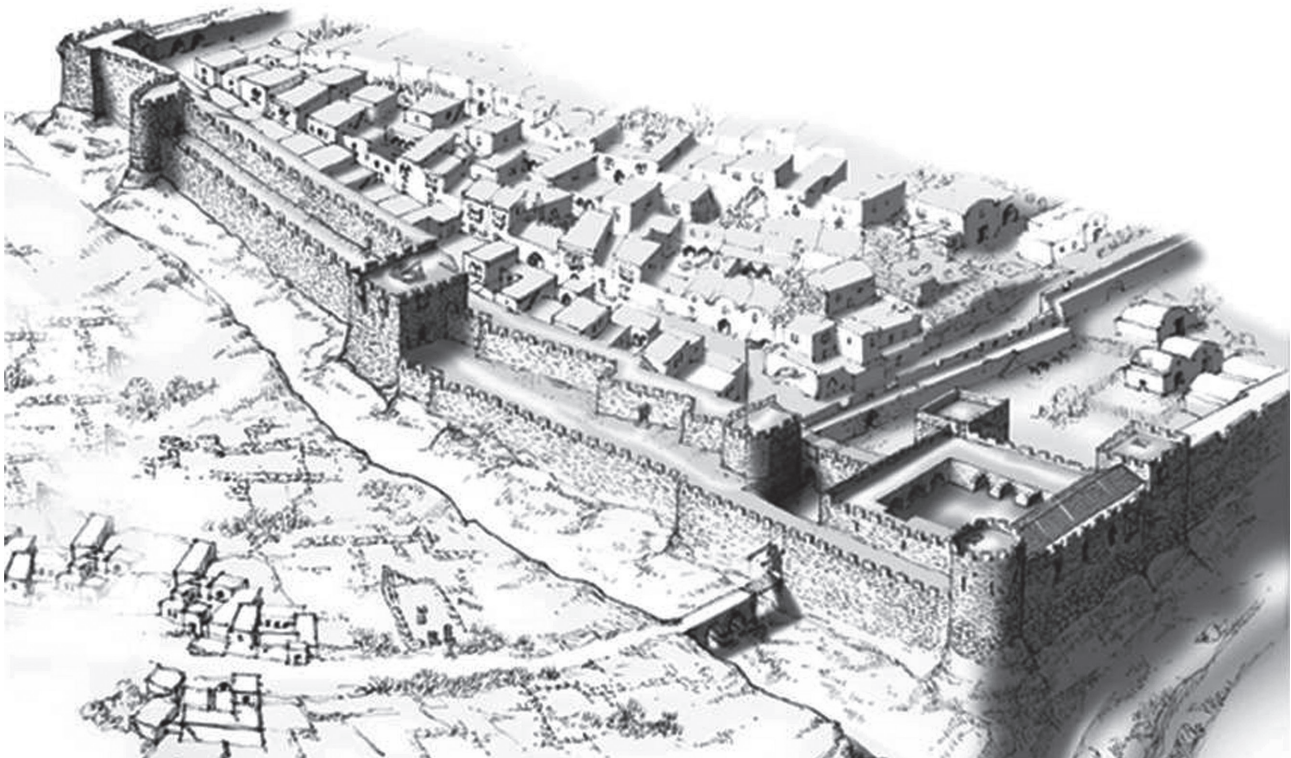
a citizen of Mdina.⁵ Zavallos who, according to Abela, was *soprintendente alle fortificazioni*,⁶ had requested funds from the Viceroy for various expenses in connection with the defence of Mdina.

Firstly, he wanted to motivate the bombardiers and spingardiers defending the barbican who had to have their residence inside Mdina, to remain on their toes, capable of handling their armament efficiently and accurately. For this purpose, he wanted to institute shooting competitions amongst them, with each winner being awarded a trophy consisting of a silver goblet; the shooting competitions were to be held each year on the feast of St Paul, probably suggesting that this event was to be part of similar competitive events held on *Mnarja* – the *palju* races – prizes for which consisted, at the time, of spears, swords, bucklers and similar arms.⁷ The cost for making the two silver goblets amounted to three *uncie*. Zavallos also needed another *uncia* annually to pay for the alarm bonfires that used to be lit atop the *Torre Mastra* to give due notice to the islanders of enemy sightings and landings.⁸ The interesting further information that emerges from this document is that, till 1492, the onus of lighting the bonfires rested with the Jews and that, moreover, these fires were not only seen, by relay action, from all *casali* (and hence also from the watch-posts on the coastline), but also from Gozo. As part of the Jews' contribution towards the defence of the city and island, they were also responsible for the lighting of a lamp in the city *loggia* where the names of the *mahras* guards were read out every evening: “*la lampa sunnu tenuti li Judey tenir allumata intra la logia undi si fa et legi la guardia.*”⁹ In view of this new information, one can interpret the word *alluma*

against some of the names of Jews in the Militia List of 1425 as indicating who, in particular, had to provide the oil for the lamp.¹⁰

From the information in Doc. III, one may be led to think that in 1492 the twin towers were built for the first time by order of D'Acuña. But this is not the case, as our second document (Doc. II/a,b,c) informs us. This second document clearly shows that, in 1447, the barbican was already standing. In summary form, Doc. IIa, dated 19 June 1447, describes how Antonius Desguanes and Antonius de Vagnolo had come to an agreement to transfer, from Vagnolo to Desguanes, rights and duties, including the annual payment of a census to the *Secretus*, over a stretch of land, intended for the construction of warehouses, outside the main gate of Mdina on condition that the *Universitas* would grant Desguanes permission to build his warehouses. In this agreement, drawn up by Notary Petrus de Caxaro, three of the Jurats of Mdina, while confirming this transfer of rights from Vagnolo to Desguanes, grant the latter permission to build the warehouses (which he had actually started to construct), not only on this land but also on an extension thereof, provided that, at his own expense, he would rebuild the outer barbican wall to their specifications, namely, that it had to be crenellated and endowed with a rampart gallery.

In order to reconcile the two documents, which both



The Medieval landfront of Mdina showing the main entrance and ditch
artwork by Dr Stephen C. Spiteri

speak of a construction of the barbican, one needs to make an important consideration concerning the land-front of Mdina in the two distinct periods of time, namely, before 1480 and after 1490. During this crucial decade the excavation of the Mdina ditch – *fossatum* – was undertaken. It is well documented that, in January 1480, Viceroy Gaspar Despes had ordered the cutting of this ditch which had to be carried out by the Maltese by unpaid *angara* work. The task had to be performed with urgency in view of a threatened Turkish attack on the island.¹¹ Two months later the Viceroy wrote again urging the Maltese to press on with the work, a warning that was repeated in May of that year.¹² By November 1480, the *Universitas* was given permission to impose a tax of up to 300 *uncie* to expedite this crucial excavation.¹³ Fortunately, in this connexion, there has survived a list of all men, without distinction, engaged on this task; it is datable to July 1484 - December 1486.¹⁴ The cutting of the ditch most certainly affected all constructions close to the city walls, including the barbican. In fact, an item on the agenda of the town council discussion of 19 June 1481 concerned the building of a number of warehouses in some locality and the material that was to be used for their construction.¹⁵ Nardus Calavà, one of the members present, was of the opinion that they should not be made of wood (which was the Captain's idea) but with the stones that came from the barbican in the ditch. The wording used to describe the stones is most illuminating: “*li [apoteghi] non si faczano di lignami; si faczano cum li cantuni ad cayd fard et ki a lu presenti si fazano intra la barbacana intra di lu fossu.*” Calavà's comment implies that in June 1481, the part of the ditch outside the main gate had already been cut and work on the barbican (which would have been dismantled) was in progress. He uses a very interesting and rare term to describe the *cantuni* (ashlars), namely *cayd fard*. In their fascinating paper, *Maramma*, on architectural terms in Sicily,¹⁶ the Brescs, citing a document of 1343, list the architectural term *gaytifardum*, (certainly identical to *cayd fard* in the Maltese context), which they interpret tentatively as a parapet, somewhat less than a metre in height. The word appears to have a dual etymology, (i) Late Medieval Latin, *gaita* (Old Germanic *wacta*) meaning guard-duty,¹⁷ and (ii) Semitic, *fard*, separation; in particular, Malt. *fardsaff*, as in Agius de Soldanis, who explains: *cavalcando un muro con un piè che tocca terra da una parte mentre l'altro e ancora dall'altra parte*;¹⁸ hence a low wall. Putting the two components together, one interprets *gaitfard* as a low parapet behind which stood the guards, in our context, clearly referring to the barbican parapet. In view of these comments it is possible to surmise that the construction of the barbican was

begun but remained unfinished in the 1480s so that Viceroy D'Acuña needed to give instructions for its re-building or completion in 1492.

Turning to the earlier document of 19 June 1447 (Doc. IIa) in an attempt to identify the land in question as accurately as possible, one notes that the deal actually concerns two distinct stretches of land: (a) Vagnolo's land and (b) other land granted by the *Universitas*. Vagnolo's land was situated in the open space outside the city's principal gate adjoining the wall of the first barbican, “*in planiczia janue exterioris civitatis juxta murum primi barbacani sive valli quod est in frontispicio janue prime ipsius civitatis.*” Thus, Vagnolo's land was close, on its north side, to the city wall and flanked on one of its lateral sides (the east or west) by one of the barbican walls. In this document, Desguanes is requesting an extension of this land from the *Universitas* in order to be able to build his warehouses more conveniently. He is requesting a double extension towards the city's wall and gate – “*latitudinem versus muros et januam civitatis*” – firstly towards the city wall, implying that Vagnolo's land did not quite reach to the wall, and secondly, encroaching on the barbican: “*nec minus dictum murum barbacani a parte interiori posse a suo loco movere et ultra solum dicti barbacani quemdam murum construere pro parvarum dictarum apothecarum*” The text, unfortunately, stops abruptly here; he seems to be requesting permission to dismantle the interior wall of the barbican and to rebuild it further away in order to be able to fit in some smaller stores in the space. The Jurats, deciding that the space in question is not of much use to the city, accede to Desguanes' request, sanctioning the encroachment – “*includendo solum sive fundamentum dicti barbacani in dictis apotecis*” – and, in return, get from him a reconstruction at Desguanes' expense – “*suis propriis sumptibus et expensis*” – of the barbican wall, now incorporating the warehouses, with crenellation and rampart: “*hedificare cum mergulis et curritorio in parietis exteriori earumdem apothecarum.*” The text continues:

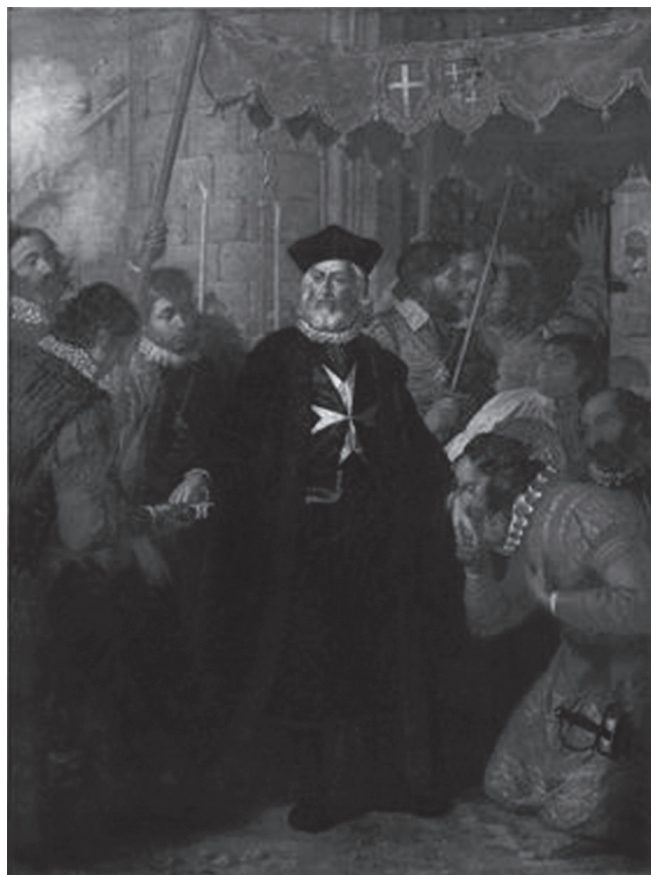
et quod possit eamdem partem exteriorem ... hedificare et construere prout procedit quoddam fundamentum antiquum parietis olim exterioris prime apothece juxta dictam januam secundam existentis, procedendo per directum dicti fundamenti parietis predictae usque ad murum barbacani carceris animalium ab oriente versus occidentem.

This description of the extension of land granted by the Jurats to Desguanes clearly defines the line of allowed construction to be the foundation of an old

wall (parallel to the city wall) from east to west, as far as the second gate (of the city), that is Greek's Gate.¹⁹ This means that Vagnolo's land lay to the east of the first barbican (outside the main gate), whereas the animal pen was on the other side of the barbican. This lay-out can be compared with the information in Doc. II/b, dated 24 June 1447, which is a confirmation of the first contract, but now having also the fourth Jurat (Fridericus Calabachi) present. The description of the extension being given by the *Universitas* to Desguanes is somewhat differently worded:

[et] quod possit extendere barbicanum per eum construendum de novo in pariete exteriori apothecarum ... procedendo a muro carceris animalium per directum usque ad cantoneriam delfini existentis sub muro Castris ipsius civitatis.

Comparing and contrasting the two descriptions, we note that, in the first, the definition proceeds from east to west, ending at the animal pen, whereas the second starts at the animal pen and ends at the corner of the scarp – *cantoneria delfini* – below the city *castrum*, which is known to have been close to the main gate. Thus, we have to conclude that the animal pen lay close to Greeks' Gate. But then we have to interpret the term *barbicanum carceris animalium* as a second barbican (outside Greeks' Gate); this would seem to receive confirmation from the earlier mention of *primi barbicani*. It would then appear that the barbican outside Greeks' Gate was dismantled during the cutting of the ditch and never rebuilt. The *murum antiquum* may have connected the two barbicans. The scarp (*delfin / denfil*) was possibly a buttress wall, wide at the base and tapering at the top, built at some stage to reinforce the structure of the *Castrum Civitatis*, which, in 1453,²⁰ was stated to be 'above' – straddling or overlooking – the City Gate.



Grand Master L'Isle Adam depicted while receiving the keys of Mdina on his first entry into the city in 1530 as painted by Antoine de Favray

These excerpts call for various comments.

i The *Castrum Civitatis*

The land in question extended from the east end of Mdina's land front – present-day St Paul's *sive* d'Homedes' bastion – which was then occupied by the fortress of the city – the *castrum civitatis* or the so-called 'tyrants' castle' – before this structure was incorporated within the city precincts, with the dismantling of the interior wall separating the two, towards the end of the 1460s. This *Castrum Civitatis* was seen in the XVth century as a symbol of 'the tyrants' power', and referred to as "[lu] castellu edificatu per li baruni et tirampni in li tempi passati."²¹ The Maltese claimed, incorrectly, that it was built by the Chiaromonte tyrants in the XIVth century,²² when, in fact, it was already standing a century earlier, in Angevin times.²³ It is more likely that the Chiaromonte used it as their stronghold in the city as they did with Lo Steri at Palermo. The Maltese had been complaining about its ruinous state in their *capitula* at least since 1409, wanting to rid themselves of it. Between 1411 and 1416 the *castrum* was being used as *habitacio et casa plana* of the Captain of Mdina.²⁴ Following a detailed inquiry into its state of preservation and recommendations of experts in the 1450s,²⁵ permission was still not yet obtained to have it dismantled, as in 1468 the request was still being repeated.²⁶ The last time the *castrum* is mentioned is in 1492 when the *capitula* of that year assert that "*lu castellu esistenti in la prefata citati, al presenti tractatu per casa plana, teni carrico di uncia una et tareni XII.*"²⁷ By 1516 it had definitely been razed to the ground as we know that in that year the census of seven florins (the 1 *uncia* and 12 *tareni* of 1492) that was still being paid annually on the site of the former *castello de' tiranni* was waived for good.²⁸ Be that as it may, we learn here that

the lower section of the *castrum civitatis* was already scarped in 1447, evidence of which fact has been obliterated by the constructions around Grand Master d'Homedes' bastion.

ii The *abattoir* and the animal pen

The land in question extended westward as far as the animal pen, near Greek's Gate, incorporating the barbican at the principal gate, which is sometimes referred to as the *Porta di Xiloccu* (South-eastern Gate) of the City.²⁹ This animal pen was probably an enclosure where animals waiting for slaughter at the city's *abattoir* (well documented but not precisely located) nearby were kept. Its existence is attested both before the excavation of the ditch, in 1472, and afterwards, in 1499.³⁰ Works on its fabric under the supervision of the city's *supramammerius* are recorded in the 1520s and 1530s when reeds, sand and a small beam were required for its ceiling.³¹ In 1560 it was still there when a document gives evidence that it was visible from D'Homedes' bastion.³²

The associated animal pen appears to have been the responsibility of the guardian of the city gate from at least 1458, when Johannes de Malta was appointed to the post and made responsible for receiving every evening the keys of the city, which he then had to hand over to the Captain.³³ This responsibility, however, may have gone back much further, judging from the fact that in 1499 the *Universitas* had protested that the appointment of the guardianship of the city gate and animal pen rested with the Captain since olden times, even if of late this right was being usurped by foreigners.³⁴ In 1521, the animal pen was still functioning when a proclamation issued by the *Universitas* forbade all and sundry from taking animals (presumably for slaughtering) anywhere else except at the city's animal pen.³⁵ With the arrival of the Order of St John, the pen continued to be located in the ditch as appears from the fact that, in 1538, one of the heifers which the *Universitas* had placed in the pen in preparation for the Grand Master's visit to Notabile, escaped: "*havia fugitu dilu fossatu*".³⁶

iii The warehouses

The warehouses Antonio Desguanes built or had received from Vagnolo would certainly have been among those which were dismantled in 1551 – together with the barbican – had they survived till then. A whole lot of these were claimed for by their owners from the Grand Master in subsequent pleas and litigations.³⁷ Yet, even if these and other stores were rebuilt after the cutting of the ditch in the 1480s, there is evidence for the dismantling of warehouses

outside Mdina in 1496 – "*potiki fora li mura disruptati per fortificari la Citati*" – among them a couple that belonged to Diego Zavallos, (the same who has been seen to be so zealous in the fortification of Mdina), and which came to him through his wife. Now his wife was none other than Antiona/Enziona Desguanes, daughter of Giacomo, son of Angarau, son of the Antonio Desguanes of our documents. It may well be the case that here we are dealing with the same warehouses of the document which had been rebuilt after the cutting of the ditch.³⁸

iv The barbican wall

Most importantly, the second document records the fact that the flanks of the rampart gallery were already crenellated at the time, confirming the accuracy of description in the maps cited.

v The notary

The contract between the Jurats and Desguanes was drawn up by none other than Notary Petro Caxaro – the author of the *Cantilena* – who, till now, was thought of as a notary public who never exercised his profession. Here we have a notarial deed drawn up by him in 1447, nine years after he received his warrant to practise as a notary public.³⁹ That it was Caxaro who drew up the contract transpires from Doc. II/b.

Una pusterina

Our third document (Doc. I) takes us back a further forty years and concerns another entrance to Mdina, differing from the principal gate, which has been discussed. Although this document has been known for some time, as the whole set of *capitula* were published by Valentini in 1937,⁴⁰ an interesting detail, contained in the XVIIIth *capitulum*, appears to have been overlooked by many. It concerns the request by the *Universitas* to the King to have the Mdina walls pierced, at some convenient point, by a postern – a side entrance or *porta falsa* – to be used for the carting out of refuse from the city. The document in question is undated but it can be shown to have been drawn up between July and November 1409.⁴¹ What has survived from this document is a draft of the *capitula* without the usual royal assent to each, so that it may be entirely possible that these *capitula* were never presented for approval and what we have is a set of *desiderata* of the *Universitas*. In this case, the postern may never have been constructed.

Yet, a number of references to a *porta falsa* and a *porta ultima* do exist,⁴² and in the above discussion

reference was made⁴³ to the *janua secunda* which was taken to refer to the *Porta Grecorum*. In one document the *porta falsa* is clearly identified with Greeks' Gate: *Porta dili Grechi czoe ala Falcza Porta*.⁴⁴ The association of an entrance to the city for the carting of refuse immediately brings to mind the *Porta Grecorum* which was certainly used for this purpose in the first half of the fifteenth century. The drive to prohibit people from using it for this purpose in the 1470s would not, otherwise, make sense. In spite of this, unanimous opinions in Council in 1475,⁴⁵ stressed the need for Greeks' Gate to revert to its original purpose, which it did by 1478: "*Nemo audeat extrahere mundiciam per Portam Civitatis sed exiant per Portas Grecorum*."⁴⁶ One difficulty that has to be faced at the outset is the date of the earliest reference to *Bieb l-Gharreqin / Porta Grecorum* which, if this predates 1409 would immediately entail discarding the hypothesis. The earliest reference cited by Wettinger, dated as it is 1399,⁴⁷ would appear to militate against our suggestion. On a closer look at the evidence, however, it appears that the *Porta Grecorum* cited by Wettinger does not refer to Malta but to the gate with the same name in Palermo, even if the person in question is a certain Maltisi (in fact, *Johannes Maltisi de Panormo*), which fact, probably, misled Wettinger. The full text runs:⁴⁸

Martinus etc.

Nobili Magistro Justiciario consanguineo, Judicibus Magne Regie Curie, consiliariis ceterisque officialibus regni nostri et presertim Capitano, Pretori et Judicibus Felicis Urbis Panormi, presentibus et futuris gratiam nostram et bonam voluntatem.

Johannes Maltisi de Panormo coram Nostris Majestatibus noviter constitutus a Nostris Excellenciis humiliter supplicavit ut, cum olim sibi concesserimus et dederimus suis exigentibus meritis et serviciis quoddam hospicium situm et positum in urbe predicta in contrata Chalze apud Portam vocatam Grecorum suis confinibus limitatum quod fuit olim condam Antonii de la Chabica nostri rebellis ...

Datum Cathanie anno Domini M^o CCC^o XC^o VIII^o, die XXII^o VII^o indictionis.

This, of course, does not mean that Malta's *Porta Grecorum* did not exist in the fourteenth century, even if hitherto known written records only take it back to 1434.⁴⁹ Two very strong arguments can certainly be adduced in support of this statement: (i) the architecture of the internal opening of the gate which, with its very high slightly pointed arch, speaks

of Islamic influence,⁵⁰ and (ii) the very name of the gate, in Maltese, preserved in the oral tradition, even if not enjoying early written documentary support – *Bieb l-Gharreqin* – which, likewise, is clearly Arabic, Maltese *Gharreqi* being nothing else but the Arabic *Aghriqī*, meaning 'Greek'.⁵¹

One can reconcile the opening of the postern after 1409 with the pre-existent gate by postulating that, at some time before 1400, possibly during some threat of an invasion, Greeks' Gate had been blocked up but the name of the aperture lived on in the people's collective memory.⁵² It is worth remarking that in Wettinger's monumental volume on Maltese place-names the Maltese/Arabic name, *Bieb l-Gharreqin*, is not documented before 1647. This is proof of the strength of the oral tradition which must have carried the Maltese/Arabic name from Islamic times without ever recording it in writing. This, of course, is not surprising in view of the same kind of treatment meted out to place-names like *Mdina*, which first appears recorded in script in 1543, in spite of the sure fact that people always referred to it as the city (recorded in documents as *Chitati*, *Civitas*, *Cità*), much in the same way that, till today, people verbally call Valletta *Il-Belt*, a form not very popular in print.

A final comment. Irresponsible persons did puncture the walls for their own private use and the blocking up of illegal undesired apertures in the city walls, albeit later, is not unknown and is recorded.⁵³

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THE DOCUMENTS

I

MCM ACM Misc. 34, ff. 171-175A^v

Malta, July-November 1409.

An intended petition by the Maltese *Universitas* to King Martin II to have the Mdina walls pierced, at some convenient point, by a postern, or minor gate, for the purpose of carting out rubbish from the enceinte.⁵⁴

[XVIII] Item, supplikira ala Sua Maiestati ki cum zo sia cosa ki [sia] necessaria una pusterna in una parti apta di li mura di la dicta chitati per la quali si poza gictari la mundiza di la dicta chitati, ki plaza ala Sua Maiestati permectiri ki liberamenti [f. 174] et di voluntati di la Sacra Regia Maiestati la dicta pusterna si poza et vagla fari in locu aptu et debitu et cussi da undi la dicta chitati rechipia grandi lesioni et gravamentu da quilli \per/ la dicta pusterna sirra liberata.

IIa

CDR 29, ff. 176-177.

[Malta], 19 June [1447], ind. X.

Three of the four Jurats of Malta confirm an agreement between Antonius Desguanes and Antonius de Vagnolo whereby Vagnolo transfers to Desguanes rights and duties, including the annual payment of a census to the Secretus, over a stretch of land adjoining the first barbican outside the main gate of Mdina for Desguanes to build on certain warehouses. Furthermore the *Universitas* grants Desguanes permission to extend the acquired land as far as the city walls and beyond the barbican on condition that, at his own expense, Desguanes rebuilds the barbican wall to the Jurats' specifications.^a

Imperpetuum anno XI^e indicionis.

Dominus Antonius de Isguanes.

Tenor contractus concessionis et confirmacionis facte per Juratos Civitatis et Insule Meliveti eidem Domino Anthonio Dezguanes cuiusdam cessionis et renunciacionis sibi facte per Dominum Anthonium de Vagnolo cuiusdam spacii seu soli apothecarum siti in Planicia Janue Exterioris civitatis, ac dictum spacium terre dicti Jurati dare <dict> et confirmare dicto Anthonio ad inscensum annuatim, per se et eius heredes et successores <solve> imperpetuum solvendum Regie Curie Secrecie dicte civitatis, prout dictus Anthonius de Vagnolo solitus erat solve et eidem Curie respondere, et hoc ad opus in dicto loco construere, prout ad presens inceptum habet, certas apothecas sub certis pactis et condicionibus in eodem contractu adiens tenoris sequentis:

Testes etc. infrascripti sunt hii, videlicet, Venerabilis Dominus Guillelmus Tunne, Antonius de Lamanno, Presbiter Georgius Gualtaruni.

Decimonono Junii X^e indicionis, testamur quod nobis etc. convocatus et personaliter constitutus coram Nobilibus Johanne de Labica, Notario Ffriderico Calava et Guillelmo Axac, Juratis eiusdem anni Civitatis Malte, ex una parte, et Nobili Domino Antonio Dezguanes, milite, cive ipsius civitatis, ex parte altera, prefati Nobiles Jurati et Dominus Antonius, animo et intencione infrascripta celebrandi, coram nobis expositione narraverunt, videlicet, quod cum noviter fuerit eidem Domino Antonio concessum per Nobilem Dominum Antonium de Vagnolo quoddam spacium, sive solum apothecarum positum in Planiczia Janue Exterioris eiusdem civitatis juxta murum primi barbacani sive valli quod est in fronti- [f. 176^v] -spicio janue prime ipsius civitatis quodquidem spacium idem Dominus Antonius de Vagnolo, ut verus dominus, spatium seu solum habebat, tenebat et possidebat et hactenus tenuit et possedit sub jure census Regie Secrecie eiusdem civitatis, singulis annis resolvendi. Et quia prefatus Dominus Antonius Desguanes, intendens dictum spacium beneficari et in eodem apothecas construere, petierit ab eisdem Juratis aliqualem latitudinem versus muros et januam civitatis eiusdem sibi concedi debere ut haedem apothece comodius hedificari possint, nec minus dictum murum barbacani a parte interiori posse a suo loco movere et ultra solum dicti barbacani quemdam murum <insto> construere pro parvarum dictarum apothecarum \...^b. Tandem hodie pretitulato die prefati Nobiles Jurati, considerantes spacium dictarum apothecarum nullius esse utilitatis, nullum dampnum eidem

reypuplice obvenire, ratificantes et conservantes, confirmantes et acceptantes concessionem factam per dictum Dominum Antonium de Vagnolo eidem Domino Antonio, alteri ex dictis exponentibus, non vi, sed sponte etc. dederunt, cesserunt et habere (corrected) concesserunt eidem Nobili \Domino/ Antonio Desguanes, presenti etc. ad incensum perpetuum spacium soli ipsius barbacani in modum infrascriptum ac cum pacto tali inter eos adiecto, videlicet, quod dictus Dominus, includendo solum sive fundamentum dicti barbacani in dictis apotecis sibi per dictum Dominum Antonium de Vagnolo concessis, teneatur et debeat dictum murum barbacani de novo suis propriis sumptibus et expensis construere et hedificare cum mergulis et curritorio in parietis (sic) exteriori earundem apothecarum et quod possit eandem partem exteriorem que esse debet, nullum ut predicatur hedificare et construere prout procedit quoddam fundamentum antiquum parietis olim exterioris prime apothecae juxta dictam januam secundam existentis procedendo per [f. 177] directum dicti fundamenti olim parietis predictae usque ad murum barbacani carceris animalium ab oriente versus occidentem. In quoquidem spacio idem Antonius possit et valeat modo et forma jamdictis ad sue libitum voluntatis dictas apotechas fundare et illas aprire a parte interiori, et per murum de novo per eundem, ut predicatur, construendum et edificandum, juxta solum dicti primi barbacani perventum admovendum, et hoc sub prestacione juris census spacii predicti soliti et assueti singulis annis exsolvendi et [j]us ultra quod Secretus et Credencerius ordinaverunt et taxaverunt pro addicione soli quod dicti Jurati de novo concesserunt, inducentes proinde dicti Nobiles Jurati et eundem Dominum Antonium in corporalem possessionem etc., permictentes ambe dicte partes etc. premissa omnia et singula etc., rata etc., habere etc., obli[gantes] etc., renunciantes etc. Unde etc.

- a. That it was Notary Petrus Caxaro who drew up this contract is not stated here but it transpires from Document IIc (further down) wherein it is unambiguously asserted.
- b. In the left-hand margin on f. 176^v, a hand points at the blank, implying the omission of some words (patently missing) which, however, are not supplied.

IIb

CDR 29, ff. 177^v.

[Malta], 24 June [1447], ind. X.

Further to the preceding document IIa, the fourth Jurat, Fridericus Calabachi, ratifies the agreement between his colleagues and Desguanes, supplying further details on the lay-out of the land. Here, the land is described as extending between the scarped buttress wall below the fortress of the city, on the eastern corner of the land-front, and the animal pen, incorporating the barbican outside the principal gate.

Testes rey infrascripti sunt hii, videlicet, Venerabilis Dominus Matheus Galie, Dominus Antonius de Lamanno, Magnificus Nicolaus Cusbarella.^c

XX^o IIII^o Junii X^e indicionis.

Testamur quod in nostri presencia serio constitutus Fidericus Calavachi, alter ex Juratis dicte civitatis eiusdem anni, non vi sed sponte etc., ratificavit et acceptavit concessionem <eamdem> factam de solo cuiusdam barbacani existentis in frontispicio prime janue civitatis per Juratos eius consocios Nobili Domino Anthonio Dezguanes, nunc eciam presenti et presentem confirmacionem stipulanti juxta seriem et continenciam pleniorum dicte concessionis. Et nichilominus prefatus Fridericus, una cum dictis ceteris suis consociis et Juratis, videlicet, Nobile Johanne de la Chabica, Notario Friderico Calava et Guillelmo Axac, presentibus etc., non vi sed sponte etc., concesserunt eidem Domino Anthonio presenti etc., quod possit extendere barbacanum per eum construendum de novo in pariete exteriori apothecarum, in dicta prima concessione declaratarum, procedendo a muro carceris animalium per directum usque ad cantoneriam delfini existentis sub muro Castri ipsius civitatis, concedentes eciam dicti Nobiles Jurati eidem Domino Antonio totum illud spacium quod remanebit a parte interiori barbacani predicti post novam construcionem [f. 177^v] juxta spacium quoddam idem Dominus Antonius ibidem possidet retro quamdam apothecam. Et hoc sub prestacione juris census imperpetuum anno quolibet et singulo per dictum Dominum Anthonium exsolvendi et taxandi per Secretum et Credencerium, quam concessionem etc., premissa etc., rata etc., habere etc., renunciando etc., inducentes etc. Unde etc.

- c. In the left-hand margin on f. 177: *Reliquus contractus factus inter eosdem Juratos et dictum Ant[onium] Dezguanes quod possit se ampliare et augmentare dictum \eius/ spacium terre pro edificandis dictis apothecis sub prestacione dicti census.*

CDR 29, ff. 178^v.

Palermo, 29 July [1448], ind. XI.

A year after the agreement between Antonius Desguanes and the Jurats of Malta, Desguanes appeals to the King, complaining that the Jurats were not keeping to their side of the agreement and were molesting him, at the instigation of jealous neighbours, in the peaceful enjoyment of his property. It appears that now Desguanes is talking about two sites outside the City's main gate and not just the one he had obtained from Vagnolo. The King confirms the agreement and orders the *Universitas* to comply.

Alfonsus etc.

Vicerex etc.

Magnifico et Nobilibus eiusdem regni Magistro Justiciario eiusque locumtenenti, Judicibus Magne Regie Curie Capitaneis, Judicibus et aliis officialibus et subditis regis ad quos seu quem spectet et presentes pervenerint, et signanter Capitaneo, Judicibus, Juratis et aliis officialibus et personis Civitatis et Insule Meliveti, tam presentibus quam futuris etc.

Cum idem Serenissimus Dominus noster Rex per quamdam eius provisionem scribat et mandet sub hac forma:^d

Alfonsus Dey gracia Rex Aragonum, Sicilie citra et ultra Farum, Valencie etc.

Magnifico, Nobilibus et dilectis consiliariis et fidelibus nostris in dicto regno nostro Sicilie ultra Farum, Viceregi, Magnifico Justiciario eiusque locumtenenti, Judicibus Magne Curie Capitaneis, Judicibus et aliis officialibus et subditis nostris ad quos seu quem spectet, presentesque pervenerint, salutem et dileccionem.

Pro parte fidelis nostri dilecti Anthonii Dezguanes, militis, civis Civitatis et Insule Meliveti, fuit Nobis humiliter supplicatum ut, cum prefatus supplicans habuisset ad incensum pro se et heredibus suis imperpetuum, quoddam spacium seu solum situm et positum juxta portam eiusdem civitatis a parte exteriori, quod spectabat ad Universitatem civitatis predictae, a <offic> Juratis et officialibus jamdictae civitatis, sub certo jure census anno quolibet Regie Curie Secrecie eiusdem civitatis exsolvendo, per quam se obligasset ad construendum de novo suis sumptibus et expensis quemdam murum barbacani seu valli eiusdem civitatis contiguum solo predicto, juxta formam convencionis inite inter prefatum supplicantem et prefatos Juratos, in quoquidem solo jam cepisset construere certas apothecas et essent quasi complete, necnon fabricasset murum barbacani sive valli predicti, et denuo asseruisset eiam habuisse prefatus supplicans confirmacionem ab eisdem Juratis alterius soli apothecarum renunciati, eidem supplicanti per Anthonium Vagnolo, militem et fidelem nostrum, siti et positi prope portam predictam juxta prefatas alias apothecas, noviter vero prefatus supplicans intellexisset molestiam sibi motam seu jam de proximo movendam per aliquos eius emulos super renovacionem utriusque soli concessi eidem supplicanti et confirmati per eosdem juramento, quare supplicato Nobis humiliter ut dictas concessionem et confirmacionem utriusque soli concessi eidem supplicanti et confirmati per eosdem Juratos, acceptare et confirmare eidem deberemus juxta formam et tenorem convencionis et contractus inter prefatos Juratos et dictum supplicantem, confecti manu Notarii Petri de Cassaro. Nos vero [f. 178^v]actendentes dictam supplicacionem fore justam et consonam rationi, considerantes eiam utilitatem Universitatis predictae ex nova constructione dicti muri barbacani sive valli ac dictas apothecas redundare ad decus et honorem civitatis eiusdem, cum grave esset et inhonestum prefate civitati et eius officialibus fidem fallere et a contractu predicto resiliare, jamdictam concessionem et confirmacionem de certa nostra sciencia et consulte acceptamus, laudamus et asserbamus juxta seriem contractus predicti. Et de novo damus et confirmamus ac concedimus eidem supplicanti et eius heredibus quibuscumque imperpetuum juxta dicti contractus seu privilegii seriem et tenorem, mandantes vobis per hasdem, scienter et consulte quatenus forma presencium per vos diligenter actenta nichil contra premissa atemptetis aut atemptari faciatis pro quanto gratiam nostram caram habetis, iramque et indignacionem nostras, ac penam florenorum mille a bonis contrafacientis inremissibiliter exigendorum, cupitis non subire. Data in nostris felicibus castris prope Montem Pulcianum, die XXII^o mensis Octobris XI^e indicionis anno Domini M^o CCCC^o XXXVII^o.

Rex Alfonsus.

Johannes Bellus Flos mandato regio, per Valentem Claver.

R[egistrata per] Cance[llarium] qui eas vidit et visa eiam per Conservatorem.

Quare, volentes ut tenemur regiis obtemperare mandatis, vobis et unicuique vestrum ad quos seu quem spectabit, dicimus et mandamus expresse quatenus preinsertam regiam provisionem et omnia et singula in ea contenta, eidem Anthonio Dezguanes, militi et eius heredibus, teneatis et observetis juxta ipsius seriem et continenciam pleniorum, contrarium nullatenus temptaturi, sicut gratiam regiam caram habetis, iramque et indignacionem ac penam in eadem provisione contentam cupitis evitare.

Data Panormi, die XXIII^o mensis Julii XI^e indicionis.

Lop Ximen Durrea.

Raymundus pro Magistro Notario mandato Domini Viceregis.

- d. In left-hand margin on f. 178: *Privilegium confirmacionis facte per Serenissimum Dominum nostrum Regem Alfonsum dicto Domino Antonio Dezguanes et heredibus et successoribus suis imperpetuum de dicto spacio pro edificandis dictis apothecis, quas jam edificare incepit, cum onere census annuatim prestandi imperpetuum Regie Curie Secrecie dicte civitatis, juxta formam contractus firmati et inhihi inter eundem Antonium et Universitatem dicte insule, ut patet(?) per dictum privilegium insertum in executoria Domini Viceregis [tenori]s sequentis.*

III

Cancellaria 189, ff. 408^{rv}.

Catania, 15 May 1494.

This document, replete with interesting details, shows how Diegus de Zavallos suggested to the Viceroy to favour the four bombardiers serving on the bastions, recently erected by order of the same Viceroy, in front of the City gate. His suggestion is to institute competitions for two silver goblets among the city's spingardiers and catapult handlers, and to set aside one *uncia* for those who lit the fires that gave the alarm of invaders to the villages and to Gozo. The Viceroy, agreeing with this suggestion, authorizes Zavallos to see to the making of the silver goblets as trophies to be won by the best shot over four-days' competitions during feast days, including that of St Paul. Zavallos is also given the brief to organize these games and the right to collect the necessary firewood on the island for the alarm bonfires, free of charge, in the same way that the Jews used to operate before their banishment from these islands.⁵⁵

Pro Nobili Diego Zavalles.

Ferdinandus etc.

Vicerex etc.

Nobilibus Secreto et Magistro Procuratori, Juratis, Thesaurario et aliis officialibus Civitatis et Insole Meleveti presentibus et futuris ad quos seu quem spectet et presentes presentate fuerint f[idelibus] r[egiis] d[ilectis] s[alutem].

Per lo Nobili Diego de Zavallos citatino di quista citati Ni e stato supplicato Ni plachissi farili gracia di li quatro bombarderi li quali su in li belguardi che foru per Nui ordinati si fachissiru innanti la porta di ipsa chitati obligandosi fari omni anno dui taczi di argento la una per opu di jocarisi per li spingarderi in exercicio di tali misteri et laltra per li balestri, et di pagari unza una similiter quolibet anno ad opu dila guardia dilu focu si fa per dari aviso ali casali et alu Gozu quando apparissiro cursali oy altra armata. Nui vero atendendo che czo reddunda in beneficio et utilitati universali di quissa chitati et per altri respecti lu animo nostro dingne moventi, li quali exprimiri non curamo, lo havimo facto comu per la presenti de certa nostra sciencia Ni fachimo gracia dili quatro bombarderi ad nostrum beneplacitum li quali pocza locari ad opu di putighi como meglu li parra et a vui vurra di quissa chitati et lo loheri applicari assua utilita, declarando perche quilli li quali locheranno li dicti bombarderi hajano di gaudiri et usari tucti preheminecii et prerogativi usano li chitatini di quissa chitati et hajano di intendirisi et tractari como habitassiro dintra la chita predicta, ita quod anno quolibet hajano di fari et vui, essendo renitenti, lo constringirili viribus Curie a fari dicti dui taczi di preczo di unci tri, videlicet, omni una di florini secti e menczo li quali si hajano di jucari omni anno per spingarderi et balistreri in alcuna festa e di pagari dicta unza una la quali si hagia di convertiri ad opu dila dicta guardia dilu focu et eciam(?)

ad altri opu, maxime che non chi su li Judey li quali erano tenuti fari dicta guardia. Volumus tamen che in lo jorno dila festa dilo glorioso Sancto Paulo si hagia di incomenzari a jucari [f. 408^v] ali dicti taczi czo e ala una per li spingarderì et ad laltra per li balistreri et in quilli hagia dicti spingarderì et balistreri jocari per jorni tri, videlicet, omni jorno quatro colpi per unu et ala fini dili dicti jorni quatro, quillo havira facto meglo colpi tanto dili spingarderì como dili balistreri digiano haviri li taczi. Et per tanto vi dicimo et comandamo expresse che actenta per vui la forma dila presenti nostra provisioni et concessioni quilla digiati inviolabiliter alu dicto N[obili] Diego ad nostrum beneplacitum ut supra exequiri et observari juxta eius seriem et tenorem dandoli di continenti la po[ssessio]ni dili dicti quatro bumbarderì et fachendoli fari la cautela et obligacioni oportuni et necessaria di haviri affari dicti dui taczi ed pagari dicta unza una per la dicta guardia dilu focu volimo puro et declaramo che lo dicto Diego libere et impune et absque aliqua contradicione et molestia pocza fari lingua in la dicta insola per la guardia dilo dicto focu sencza pagamento alcuno in quillo modo et forma fachiano et meglo potiano fari quilli pro tempore preterito erano tenuti et obligati ac costumavano et soliano fari lu focu predicto non di facendo pacto aliquo lu contrario sub pena florenorum mille.

Data Cathanie die XV Maii XII^e indicionis 1494.

Fernando Dacuña.

Dominus Vicerex mandavit mihi Luce Pullastra cum bene stat per Simonem, visa per Regium Thesaurarium.

Notes and references

- 1 Reproduced in M. Buhagiar & S. Fiorini, *Mdina – The Cathedral City of Malta*, vol. ii (Malta, 1996), 467, pl. 7.18.
- 2 Ibid., 451, pls. 7.9 (a & b).
- 3 Reproduced in A. Ganado & M. Agius-Vadalà, *A Study in depth of 143 Maps representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, vol. ii (Malta, 1995), 91, pl. 61.
- 4 G.F. Abela, *Della descrizione di Malta, isola nel mare siciliano* (Malta, 1647), 29.
- 5 Zavallos, also Savallos, was Jurat of Mdina in 1493-94 (S. Fiorini, *D[ocumentary] S[ources of] M[altese] H[istory]* II/4, Doc. 291) and Captain in 1510-11 (S. Fiorini, *The ‘Mandati’ documents at the Archives of the Mdina Cathedral, Malta: 1473-1539* (Malta, 1992) [hereafter, *Mandati*], M36, 69-91 *et passim*). He married into the Desguanes family and drew up his will in 1512 (NLM Lib. MS. 695, f. 86, # 458); cf. also Abela, 547.
- 6 Abela, 547.
- 7 Buhagiar & Fiorini, 552.
- 8 Ibid., 446.
- 9 A[rchivio di] S[tato] P[alermo] C[onservatoria di] R[egistro] 72, f. 64 (17.iii.1488).
- 10 M[useum of the] C[athedral,] M[dina] A[rchivum] C[athedralis] M[altae] Misc[ellanea] 437 n. 6; for example, f. 37: Salamuni Minahi (*aluma*); f. 37^v: Duki Girbi (*aluma*), Josef Dejen (*alluma*), Ximeon Misurati (*aluma*), etc.
In fact, work on the ditch had already begun but had slackened – *DSMH* III/1, Doc. 20. *Acta Jur.*, Docs 142 (1461), 621 (1475). In 1461, the *fossa* that had been cut was being used as a prison for men – *ibid.*, Doc. 163. For the wider background to this threat and eventual attack, cf. C. Dalli, ‘*In frontieria barbarorum: waiting for the Turks on Late Medieval Malta*’, *Proceedings of History Week 1994* (Malta, 1996), 115-126.
- 12 *DSMH* III/1, Docs 21, 22.
- 13 Ibid., Doc. 28.
- 14 MCM ACM Misc. 437 n. 7. For the dating of this document, cf. S. Fiorini, ‘*Li buky di lu Rabatu: The population of Rabat c. 1480*’, in T. Cortis *et al.* (eds), *Melitensium Amor. Festschrift in honour of Dun Ġwann Azzopardi* (Malta, 2002) 73–96, esp. 73–5, to which information one needs to add the comment that Notary Matheu Vassald (appearing in the list on f. 10^v) is known to have been given his warrant to practise as notary public on 17.vii.1484 – *DSMH* II/3, Doc. 413.
- 15 *Acta Jur.*, Doc. 834.
- 16 G. Bautier-Bresc & H. Bresc, ‘Maramma. I mestieri della costruzione nella Sicilia medievale’, *I Mestieri. Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Studi Antropologici Siciliani: 26-29 Marzo 1980* (Palermo, 1984) 145-184, esp. 156 and fn. 32.
- 17 J.F. Niermeyer & C. Van de Krieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, 2 vols (Leiden/Boston, 2002). Cf. also C. Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, 10 vols. (Niort, 1883): *gaitare* = *excubias agere; occurrit gaita et in tacte*.
- 18 E. Serracino-Inglott, *Il-Miklem Malti*, 9 vols (Malta, 1975-1989) s.v. *fard*, elaborates: ‘*b saqajh mhux fuq saffwiehed, wahda fl-art u l-ohra fl-ajru, hu u jirkebe žiemel jew jaqbež cint*’. The term is already documented in 1500: G. Wettinger, *Kliem Malti Qadim* (Malta, 2006) 49.
- 19 For a view of the land-front, unencumbered by the De Redin bastion, the reader is referred to the engraving of 1582 by Matteo Perez d’Aleccio, reproduced in Buhagiar & Fiorini, ii, 480, plate 7.25.
- 20 *DSMH* II/2, Doc. 534 (19.v.1453), esp. f. 423: *Menia dicti castrì et maxime Turrìs Mastre et la Turri dila Cammara, que Turrìs Mastra stat super portam et introytum et exitum dicte civitatis, minatur ruynam*. It is interesting that this document refers to a huge gate in the *castrum* which was then thought to have actually been the city’s entrance: *in dicto castro adhuc apparet porta magna que fertur quod erat janua civitatis* (f. 423^v).
- 21 R. Valentini, ‘Gli ultimi re aragonesi ed i primi Castigliani in Malta: Documenti’, *A[rchivio] S[torico di] M[alta]*, viii/1

- (1936-37), 72–101, esp. 73–9, Doc. II, the *capitula* of 1409, cap. XVII. *DSMH* II/2, Doc. 534, f. 423^v: *Quod dictum castrum fuit constructum tempore quo baroni dominabantur dicta insola, videlicet, alu tempu dila signuria dili Charamunti.*
- 22 *DSMH* II/2, Doc. 534 (19.v.1453). MCM ACM Misc. 34, f. 125^v (1507) cap. XX: *Temporibus tirannorum, jam annis centum peractis et ultra, fuit clausus certus angulus huius civitatis muro, ad effectum ut fieret fortilicium pro tirannide.*
- 23 V. Laurenza, 'Malta nei documenti angioini del R. Archivio di Napoli', *ASM*, v/1-4 (1934) 3-71, esp. 32, Doc. XL (29.vii.1274).
- 24 *DSMH* II/2, Docs 145, 152-3, 224.
- 25 *DSMH* II/3, Docs 534 (1453), 550 (1554).
- 26 In the *capitula* of 1468 the request for the demolition of the internal façade of the castle was still being made. These *capitula*, a copy of which is found in MCM ACM, Misc. 34, ff. 223-4, have been published by Valentini ('Documenti per servire alla storia di Malta: 1432-1450', *ASM*, viii (1937), 462-496, Doc. XI) who dated them tentatively (p. 476, fn. 1) to 1434 – possibly, unquestioningly following Abela, 467 – are datable to 1468 from strong internal evidence.
- 27 MCM ACM Misc. 34, ff. 113-115, cap. II.
- 28 MCM ACM Misc. 27, ff. 196-7 [olim, I, pp. 385-7] (20.vii.1516).
- 29 *DSMH* II/4, Doc. 212 (9.vi.1491).
- 30 *Acta Jur.*, Docs 455, 967-8.
- 31 *Mandati* M1, f. 279 (1522); M36, f. 193 (1523); M3, f. 504 (1538).
- 32 A document of 1560 refers to the side of d'Homedes' bastion *guardanti ala bucceria* (MCM ACM Misc. 441, quire B, f. 11).
- 33 *DSMH* II/2, Doc. 604.
- 34 *DSMH* II/4, Doc. 444 (1499); in that year the post was being held by Joannes Jambruno for his life's duration. On 20.iv.1490, the Viceroy had appointed Hieronymus Sollima of Messina to the post (*ibid.*, Doc. 175), in spite of which nomination, on 3 October Benedictus Briffa received from King Ferdinando himself, appointment to the same post when this became vacant on the death of Joannes de Malta (*ibid.*, Doc. 212). In 1465 the office of appointing custodians of Mdina was already out of the hands of the Captain, as in that year, Paulus de Allegritto was invested with this right by the Viceroy; on 16.v.1491, Paulus, who was getting on in age, requested and obtained leave to continue exercising the office jointly with his son Franciscus Allegritto (*ibid.*, Doc. 209).
- 35 NLM Univ. 12, f. 276^v (23.vi.1521).
- 36 *Mandati* M3, f. 687^v.
- 37 Cf. Buhagiar & Fiorini, 468 *et seq.*
- 38 *DSMH* II/4, Doc. 365; Abela, 547. Evidence also exists that, by 1494, the *Universitas* itself had, within the *angara* project, built warehouses within the barbican, which Zavallos was insisting should be removed: MCM ACM Misc. 34, f. 109, *capitulum* IX.
- 39 *DSMH* II/2, Doc. 423 (1.iv.1438).
- 40 R. Valentini (1936-37), 73-79, Doc. II.
- 41 The date of these *capitula* of Malta to be presented by Ambassador Franciscu Gattu is only given approximately as '1410' on the docket. It must certainly post-date 25 July 1409, the day of the death of King Martin I and of the accession of his father, Martin II, referred to in *cap. I et passim*. On the other hand, King Martin II died on 31 May 1410 and, although the Vicariate of Queen Bianca (widow of Martin I) only began officially on the date Martin II, her father-in-law died, she had been declared *Vicaria* on 31 August 1408 [Apulus 1497, ff. 52^v-53] and had been effectively in control at least since 26 October 1409 [*DSMH* II/2, Docs 132 *et seq.*]. Moreover, the four jurats – Bayada, De la Licata, Bordino and Billera – and the three judges of the Civil Court – Bertella, Bastiano and Sillato – subscribing the document were elected in 1408 [*DSMH* II/2, Doc. 125] and their term of office, which would normally have ceased on 31 August 1409, was extended to the following 8 November, the date when their successors were actually appointed [ASP Prot. 4, Doc. 252]. The date can, therefore, be narrowed down to July-November 1409.
- 42 *Mandati* M2, f. 160 (1527): *Porta falsa civitatis*. *DSMH* II/3, Doc. 373 (1482): *Porta ultima*. This last document is particularly interesting. In it Nardus Falzon requests permission to construct a wooden shed outside the *Porta Ultima* of the City to serve him as a workshop. Permission is granted subject to the payment of an annual census to be determined by the *Secretus* and, in the case of the threat of an invasion by enemy forces the final decision to remove the shed should rest entirely with the Jurats but that the shed can be put up again when the danger is over.
- 43 *Acta Jur.*, Docs 387, 423, 460, 646, 653, 677, 712.
- 44 *Mandati* M2, f. 346^v (1527).
- 45 *Acta Jur.*, Doc. 621.
- 46 *Acta Jur.*, Doc. 716.
- 47 G. Wettinger, *Place-names of the Maltese Islands: ca. 1300-1800* (Malta, 2000) s.v. *Porta dei Greci*.
- 48 ASP Real Cancelleria 36, f. 92.
- 49 NLM Lib. MS. 695, f. 235 #1210: Will of Lemo de Ferrario in the acts of Notary Lucas Sillato, dated 25.xii.1434, in which he bequeaths *una clausura Donno Matheo Galea et post eius mortem ad Ecclesiam S. Nicolai Porte Grecorum*.
- 50 Buhagiar & Fiorini, 443–5, esp. plates 7.4, 7.5.
- 51 A. De Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, i (Paris, 1860), 39.
- 52 This may possibly have been aided by the presence of the nearby church associated with the gate, documented as *Ecclesia Sancti Nicolai porte grecorum* in 1434, even if it, probably, existed well before that – NLM Lib. MS. 695, f. 235 #1210: Will of Lemo de Ferrario in the acts of Notary Lucas Sillato, dated 25.xii.1434.
- 53 In 1538, on two occasions one encounters: (i) *murari la porta dila putiga che apri alo fossato*, (ii) *per murari la porta dilu fossu et altri finestri* (*Mandati* M3, ff. 533, 631).
- 54 Published in Valentini (1936-37), 77.
- 55 Published in *DSMH* II/4, Doc. 313