

Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship in Valletta, c.1630 - c.1798



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Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship in Valletta, c.1630 – c.1798

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2016

Written work submitted to the Doctoral Committee of the University of Malta in fulfilment of
the requirements for Ph.D.



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

FACULTY/INSTITUTE/CENTRE/SCHOOL

Faculty of Art

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship
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Preface

This research was originally conceived in 2002 through my ethnographic study on female hairdressing in the village of Mellieħa, submitted in partial fulfilment for my Bachelor's degree in anthropology, which explored the role of village hairdressers as centres of female social life. It investigated the entrepreneurship of hairdressers and how they served society, accepting challenges, taking risks, whilst catering for female ideas and desires.¹ It is also a continuation of a Masters dissertation on the history of the Magdalene monastery in Valletta, presented at the University of Malta in 2011, and the subsequent publication of my monograph *Magdalene Nuns and Penitent Prostitutes, Valletta*.² My Masters dissertation and my book focused on the entrepreneurship of the Magdalene nuns in Valletta, 1595-1798. Some nuns were penitent prostitutes who contributed to the success of the monastery in many ways.³ In the face of all adversity, these cloistered nuns went beyond their traditional role of praying and meditating in providing a welfare service and participating actively in trading, money lending, legal negotiations and real estate transactions.

In February 1612, during a legal battle between the Order of St John and the Inquisitor about jurisdiction over the monastery, Frà Nicholas La Marra accused the nuns of galliard oppositions (*gagliarde oppositioni*).⁴ He was referring to their aptitude at strategically playing one camp against another to get what they wanted. Galliard tactics were not simply their survival kit but an entrepreneurial ploy they adopted to enrich and enhance their monastery. This dissertation embarks on an exploratory journey questioning, interpreting and weighing up the sources in an attempt to examine the vicissitudes of the lives of non-penitent prostitutes and their entrepreneurship. It questions who the entrepreneurial prostitutes in early modern Valletta were. It investigates when, where and why they were entrepreneurial. It also seeks to find out in what ways their entrepreneurial tactics were manifested and how this helped them. These are the central questions that guide this research. The Archives of the Order of St John (A.O.M.), the National Library Manuscripts (N.L.M. Lib. Ms.), the National Archives of Malta Magna Curia Castellanice Archives

¹ Christine Muscat, 'Keeping up Appearances or the dreams we live by?' unpublished B.A. (Hons.) Anthropology dissertation, Department of Arts, University of Malta, 2002.

² Christine Muscat, 'The Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene Valletta 1595-1798', M.A. Hospitaller Studies dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011. Christine Muscat, *Magdalene Nuns and Penitent Prostitutes*, (Malta, BDL publishing, 2013).

³ C. Muscat (2013), 100-105, 127-144.

⁴ A.O.M. 1391, f. 87v. (17 February 1612). C.Muscat, (2011), 77. The galliard is a Renaissance dance made up of a complex set of steps occupying one or more measures of music.

(N.A.M.), the Notarial Archives of Valletta (N.A.V), the records of the Parish of Porto Salvo and the Parish of St Paul, the Archiepiscopal Archives of Malta (A.A.M.) and the Archives of the Inquisition (A.I.M.) are the primary sources on which my doctoral research is based. My focus is less on the Archives of the Inquisition (A.I.M.) for two reasons. Firstly, these archives have been scoured by various other social historians. Secondly, as Carmel Cassar noted, there was a high tendency for women who faced trial for witchcraft in the Inquisitor's court to be also accused of prostitution.⁵ A careful investigation on archival sources that have not been studied for evidence on prostitution will serve to balance out information, correct inflated notions, reveal some motivations that may have driven them to prostitution and shed light on other contemporary social perceptions and control methods. The historical documents will not simply serve as background material for the mechanisms of prostitution, but will provide a field of knowledge on which this exploration of female opportunistic traits will be harvested. Evidence emerging from these sources will be compared to stories featuring in visitors' accounts and contemporary literary works. Achieving status and public recognition, for early modern women, was a challenge. Yet some prostitutes succeeded. They managed to carve a comfortable economic and social niche for themselves and their dependants. These women are figures whose reality and everyday life we can only see by reading the archival documents, and which are, to date, barely taken into account in the history of women in Malta.

The study's spotlight on Valletta and the c.1630-c.1798 time-frame serve to give the research a more explicit focus by narrowing down the area and period being covered and also reflect the findings in the archival sources. This research roughly covers the period from when a law regulating the residence of *donne cortiggiane* in Valletta came into force in 1631 to 11 June 1798 when the Order surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte. It represents a period of time when the fortification of Valletta and the security of the harbour in the years following the siege were no longer a major preoccupation for the Order.⁶ This was the time when from a cloister-citadel of the Late Renaissance and mannerist phase, Valletta developed into a port city integrating its two flanking harbours and the heart of the city into a functional baroque whole.⁷ The period under study was marked by demographic growth and change.⁸ The

⁵ Carmel Cassar, *Daughters' of Eve*, (Malta, Mireva Publications, 2002), 159-177. Carmel Cassar, 'Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Control in Seventeenth-Century Malta', in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology* Vol. 5, Brian P. Levack, (ed.), (New York, London, Routledge, 2001), 232-235.

⁶ Stephen Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Knights*, (Malta, Book Distributors Limited, 2001), 54. The Order's obsession with fortification building never subsided but after 1630 the focus shifted to the outer areas.

⁷ Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'Hospitaller Baroque Culture: The Order of St John's Legacy to Early Modern Malta', in *The Military Orders* Vol. 3, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Hampshire, Burlington, Ashgate, 2008), 286.

timeframe c.1630-c.1798 represents the pinnacle of visitors' allegations on rampant prostitution in Valletta.⁹ Early modern Valletta was the nodal point for economic, social, political and cultural interactions. It was a small metropolis with strong geographical, natural, and cultural ties. It was geographically, economically, socially and politically tied to the three cities across the *Porto Grande*. Together with the lower quarters of Valletta, the 'Three Cities' eventually came to form part of the poorer district.¹⁰ Following its genesis in 1724, these ties extended to its suburb of Floriana.¹¹ Valletta's urban walls and its geographical borders were highly porous. The harbour connected the city and brought communities living around it closer. The communities were interdependent and the relationship between them was symbiotic. One of the consequences of this close network was that urban connections and interdependencies increased with the growth of the port. This close relationship facilitated the distribution of all sorts of products and services.¹² Prostitutes, similar to other service providers, not only moved from one city to another according to circumstance but also travelled back and forth in search of opportunities.

In c.1763, a Maltese woman confided to a female friend that after dinner her husband habitually went out for a stroll. She said that she felt it was necessary for her to go with him even when she was tired because she did not trust him especially at night time. She forewarned her friend that a woman had to stand constantly by her man's side with a burning candle in her hand.¹³ It is likely that this woman was alluding to the possibility of her husband meeting a prostitute during one of his nightly strolls. A year later, in his manual on how a young knight should behave whilst performing his caravans on the island of Malta, the knight Camillo Spreti warned Hospitallers to beware of local women. He said that they were highly covetous (*avide*). Once an innocent knight was deprived of all that he possessed, they

⁸ See Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'Introduction to Hospitaller Malta' in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993), 1-42.

⁹ See Thomas Freller, *Malta and the Grand Tour*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2009), 541-564.

¹⁰ Carmel Cassar, *Society, Culture and Identity in Early Modern Malta*, (Malta, Mireva Publications, 2000), 18.

¹¹ Stephen Degiorgio, 'Pietro Paolo Floriani: the Genesis of a Fortress City' in *Floriani*, Raymond Saliba (ed.), (Malta, Raymond Saliba, Christopher Ebejer, 2012), 27, 28.

¹² C. Cassar, (2000), 18.

¹³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 144, ff.195-196.(1750-1767). Nuova Scuola dell'Antica Lingua Punic Scoperta nel Moderno Parlare Maltese Gozitano. 'En ghidlek. Uara l'ekel Żeugi irit e Leila phhal ma dari, imur idur daura, u n-ahhtieg en kun mighu, u e mur ghat li jiena ghajjena, ghasc biesc enghidha f-uahhda ma n-hhallisc uahhdu, l'ezied ghas be Leil. Ma daun e Rgiel trit tokghod mahhom be scemgha t escghel'. On Gio Pietro.FrancescoAgius de Soldanis (1712-1770) see Joseph Bezzina, 'Canon Francesco Agius the erudite priest from Gozo', in *De Soldanis an eighteenth century intellectual*, Godwin Vella & Olvin Vella (eds.), (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2012), 12-23.

threw him out of their house, shut the door in his face and admitted other innocents.¹⁴ These early modern female and male descriptions of prostitutes being a formidable group of women do not fit well in the current prevalent feminist scholarly perspective. Most local modern historians who include prostitution in their study persist in suggesting that early modern prostitutes were victims of patriarchy, poverty and religious post-Tridentine austerity.¹⁵

This doctoral thesis takes a different path. In this study prostitutes are seen as women of substance who did not necessarily rely on male support, or resort to begging, stealing, borrowing or supplicating. They engaged in sex work exclusively or non-exclusively because it was a means to an end, which they perceived to be worthwhile. This does not signify that all prostitutes were entrepreneurs or that victims did not exist. An entrepreneurial approach to understanding early modern prostitution proposes the development of another scholarly approach at explaining and interpreting prostitution. This study has a dual orientation. It is both a study on female prostitution in Valletta c.1630-c.1798, and an attempt to explore prostitution from an entrepreneurial perspective. It moves away from framing prostitutes as victims or deviants and focuses on how the enterprise was meaningful to some early modern prostitutes in Valletta. Against limited opportunities, confining laws and religious opposition some women took initiatives through discrete manoeuvres and outright dissidence. Some prostitutes were active agents who channelled their resources to cope on a daily basis, plan for the future and progress. The varied ways how some prostitutes actively sought change, rather than waited to adapt to change, showed that innovation was not lacking. This study joins forces with explorations that seek to offer an alternative shift of optic on prostitution in the past. It seeks to shed light on how the women themselves experienced prostitution and endeavours to understand the motivations and the aspirations behind the decision to embark on such a high risk undertaking.¹⁶

This scholarly trail largely builds on historical studies by Kathryn Norberg, Lucia Ferrante and Tessa Storey. Norberg suggests that prostitutes were not victims but

¹⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, 12. (1764). 'Essendo avide per loro natura, appena che avranno spogliato quell cieco Cavaliere di tuttoquello ch'egli possederà, lo cacceranno fuori di casa, serrandogli in faccia la porta ammettendo altre persone, per fargli poi il medesimo'.

¹⁵ See Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, (Malta, Associated News Ltd., 1988). C. Cassar, (2002). David Rossi, 'Vulnerable and deprived: of prostitutes and nuns in the fourteenth to eighteenth century', in *Sacra Militia* xii, (2013), E. Attard, (2014). Mark Camilleri, *A Materialist Revision of Maltese History: 870-1919*, (Malta, Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2016).

¹⁶ For exploratory works that seek to offer an alternative shift of optic on prostitution see for instance Laura J. Rosenthal, *Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*, (Ithaca & London, Cornell University Press, 2006). Tessa Storey, *Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008). Lotte Van de Pol, *The Burgher and the Whore*, Liz Waters (trans.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011).

independent entrepreneurs who controlled their own labour.¹⁷ Lucia Ferrante's study on prostitutes in post-Tridentine Bologna shows that some prostitutes considered themselves to be 'free women' and that prostitution did not necessarily signify marginalisation.¹⁸ Tessa Storey writes extensively on the economic achievements of prostitutes in Counter-Reformation Rome.¹⁹ These are the cues that usher in this study. The present study moves forward by placing prostitution under an anthropological lens. It endeavours to understand prostitution by attempting to learn how some prostitutes who featured in archival records saw their world. It questions how these women lived, how they perceived their work, how they circumvented restrictions imposed upon them and the reasoning behind their pursuits. This study argues that various considerations apart from economic pursuits may have made prostitution a meaningful choice. Pursuing prostitution included taking risks, making choices and sacrifices, the aptitude in negotiating social opprobrium, circumventing legal restrictions, being in charge of one's destiny as well as exploiting the economic environment. Prostitutes, like other types of entrepreneurs, had achievements and failures, some were good entrepreneurs and others less so. They were nonetheless all active contributors to early modern society.

The nuclei of this research are the church of Our Lady of Safe Haven known as Santa Maria di Porto Salvo (in short Porto Salvo), and the church of St Paul the Apostle (in short San Paolo). Technically the former is dedicated to the Visitation of Our Lady, but in recent times it is generally known as St Dominic's,²⁰ the latter is nowadays referred to as St Paul Shipwrecked Church.²¹ These two parish churches fell under the Episcopal Diocese of Malta.²² The study endeavours to offer a faithful description of prostitution in Valletta from the standpoint of members of a micro-culture rather than victims of society or economic need

¹⁷ Kathryn Norberg, 'Prostitutes' in *A History of Women in the West Vol. 3 Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Zemon Davis, Natalie, Farge, Arlette (eds.), (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993), 458-474.

¹⁸ Lucia Ferrante, 'Pro mercede carnali. Il giusto prezzo rivendicato in tribunale', in *Memoria xvii* (1986), 42-58, 'Il valore del corpo' in *Il Lavoro delle Donne*, Angela Groppi (ed.), (Rome, Bari, Laterza, 1996), 219-228.

¹⁹ Tessa Storey, 'Storie di Prostituzione nella Roma della Controriforma', in *Quaderni Storici*, cvi, 1, (2001), 'The Clothing of Courtesans in Seventeenth Century Rome', in *Clothing Culture 1350-1650*, Catherine Richardson (ed.), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004), 'Fragments from the 'life-histories' of jewelry belonging to prostitutes in Early Modern Rome', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xix, 5 (2005), *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', in *Alternative Exchanges*, Laurence Fontaine (ed.), (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2008).

²⁰ Nicholas De Piro, *Valletta: A City Built by Gentlemen for Gentlemen*, (Malta, Miranda Publications, 1997), 96.

²¹ John Ciarlò, *The Hidden Gem*, (Malta, Progress Press, 2000), 8.

²² See Stephen Degiorgio, 'The Hospitaller Church of Our Lady of Victory', M.A. Hospitaller Studies dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011. The third parish was The Parish of Our Lady of Victory. It became the parish church of the Order of St John in 1617 and catered for the dependants of the Order. This parish was independent from the Episcopal Diocese of Malta.

or passive reactors. It advocates strict adherence to relevant texts available in a range of archives. The aim is to avoid reaching generalisations through overreliance on court records, panic scripts and travel narratives. Confronting information emerging from different scenarios provides a dynamic understanding of female entrepreneurship. This study does not attempt to offer a wide repertoire of prostitution. It is an investigation grounded in social and cultural life in a given geographic context. In this research biographical data assumes an essential role in providing a database of comparative material to complement, confirm or qualify the inquiry on special cultural knowledge and entrepreneurship. The objective is to create a framework that will serve to underpin and develop a clear, comprehensive understanding of the shared knowledge and resourcefulness of female prostitutes.

The biggest stumbling block any historian who takes up the challenge of studying prostitution faces is the perennial issue of distinguishing between women who were earning some form of material gain through sex work, and the multitude of ‘other’ women who were labelled prostitutes but were not sex workers. This issue is further complicated through ‘loose’ terminology. A myriad of different terms were used to refer to dishonest or unconventional women; these terms may at times indicate prostitution but do not necessarily refer to prostitution. Identifying who’s who is at times an impossible task. This research attempts to reduce the margin of error by restricting the focus on labels that are specific. The second pitfall is the fact that some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century chroniclers appear to have been willing to provide information on prostitutes, whilst others were completely silent about the subject. This is particularly evident in the *Status Animarum* records of the two parish churches under study.²³ Some parish priests in the Parish of Porto Salvo singled out *pubbliche meretrici* (women engaged in non-marital sexual relations) in their annual report whereas others refrained. In San Paolo *pubbliche meretrici* were included in a list entitled *Contumace nel Presente Anno* (present-year contumacies) but not singled out.²⁴ The list included all sorts of women who were rebellious or resisted the authority of the Church.

Another caveat is that a significant number of texts speak of crimes, dramas, infringements, disorderly behaviour or threats that prostitutes posed. These descriptions pertain to particular women or particular moments in women’s lives when they were likely to

²³ Stanley Fiorini, ‘Status Animarum I: A Unique Source for 17th and 18th Century Maltese Demography’, in *Melita Historica*, viii, (1983), 327. The Status Animarum were registers drawn up by the parish priest to record the state of souls of parishioners. In particular marital status and whether the precept of yearly confession and communion during Paschaltide was adhered to.

²⁴ For a definition of contumacies see Bryan A. Garner, *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*, Second Edition, (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), 220. Contumacies are people who default by not appearing and are wilfully in contempt of authority.

have been very vulnerable or otherwise unstable. While these descriptions offer important snapshots of a person's life, they certainly do not represent the person's entire life, the reality of prostitution or the entire world of prostitution. Moreover, as a largely informal economic activity one needs to emphasise the fact that the enterprise was largely covert and that there's a lot about it that we will never know. Similar to other recent studies of prostitution this one is limited to the overt cases.²⁵ Gaps and lacunas in archival documentation and the inaccessibility of certain archives are to say the least frustrating for any historian.²⁶ These voids and barriers were, however, not dead ends but intriguing challenges that this study sought to face with optimism. The protagonists of this study, Valletta's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prostitutes, similar to other women, lived a precarious life. Economic considerations, family worries, health issues, betrayal, slander, gossip, manipulation, hurt feelings and emotional attachments were some of the challenges that they faced. Notwithstanding the high risks intrinsic to the enterprise for some women pursuing prostitution made sense.

The first two chapters constitute the contours of the study. These chapters set out to provide the requisite bearings. They provide a concise summary of the main elements in the historiography of prostitution and discuss conceptions of prostitution and the sources that deal with the practice. They take issue with prevalent modern arguments suggesting that prostitution in Valletta in the early modern period was rampant and widespread and that prostitutes were largely victims of circumstance. Chapter One 'History and Historiography of Prostitution' argues that scholarly investigations on prostitution largely work towards a common goal of locating the prostitute within the wider social framework. In the process the ideas, values and beliefs of the prostitutes themselves may have been obscured. It proposes an ethnographic approach as an alternative way of looking at the practice. The insiders' view point may contribute towards understanding how and why prostitution was meaningful and made sense to some early modern women. Chapter Two 'Sources, Myths and Realities' questions lingering, prevalent theories on high numbers of prostitutes and examines some realities of prostitution. It engages with issues concerning terminology, migration, household

²⁵ See for instance Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, (Oxon, New York, Routledge, 1999).

²⁶ Attempts at accessing the archives of the Parish of St Augustine in Valletta failed. Access to the Archiepiscopal Archives of Malta (A.A.M.) during this research was limited.

compositions, age and permanence. Prostitution in early modern Valletta, similar to other forms of trading, may have adapted to the port's fluctuating vitality.

The following chapters deal with different realities that these women faced. These realities are placed under social, religious, regulatory and geographical lenses. These areas of interest are interwoven to give a consolidated picture of the experience of various circumstances prostitutes in early modern Valletta faced and the initiatives that they took. Chapter Three 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation' questions their capacity to negotiate their social status and image. It shows how community and church attitudes and views were mediated through a specific social background. It suggests that social attitudes towards prostitutes and prostitution were not always intolerant, hostile or negative. Chapter Four, 'Regulating Prostitution', examines the strictures and structures that controlled prostitution. It suggests that sumptuary laws and laws restricting carnal commerce failed to address change and offered ample leeway for entrepreneurial prostitutes to navigate their way around legal obstacles and plough more deeply into their practice.

Chapter Five 'Lawbreakers, Deviants and Troublemakers', essentially argues that there were good entrepreneurs and there were bad ones. This chapter focuses on the latter. An analysis of the incarcerations of prostitutes from 1741-1798 revealed that prostitutes who featured in court records were real troublemakers and some were even criminal. It argues that in modern histories of prostitution this overarching perspective may have overshadowed non-deviant entrepreneurial pursuits. Chapter Six, 'A Geography of Prostitution', suggests that notwithstanding the fact that Valletta was a small, compact male Convent city characterised by face-to-face relationships, prostitution was sustainable. It shows how this was possible because some early modern women were endowed with the capacity to manoeuvre their way around restrictions, work diligently, sacrifice certain expenses, save money and invest wisely. Some prostitutes successfully navigated male terrain, negotiated social, cultural, legal and religious norms, improved their condition and battled on with their lives. The city of Valletta in early modern times was above all a city that hosted men and women from different cultural backgrounds. The evidence suggests a dynamic image of a city in transformation, rather than a bleak narrative of exploitation and exclusion.

Glossary

Auberges: The official residences of the Langues at Headquarters.

Bandi: Proclamations having the force of law that were read by a town crier to a public gathering in the squares of Valletta.

Calèche: A type of carriage with two low wheels normally pulled by a single horse or other animal.

Casemates: Spaces underneath the ramparts for the accommodation of troops.

Castellano: A high ranking official of the law court. He was a knight appointed by the Grand Master by rote from each of the langues according to seniority. He held office for two years.

Chapter-General: The Supreme Assembly of Knights.

Contumace: A person who has defaulted because he/she has failed to appear and is obstinately disobedient.

Convent: The seat of the Central Government of the Order of St John.

Conventual Chaplains: Priests who served and officiated in the churches of the Order and had special papal permission to say mass on the galleys of the Order. They were also known as priests of obedience

Curtain Wall: A fortification wall typically linking towers.

Faldetta: A hooded mantle generally in cotton or silk

Grand Master: The head of the Order, invested with the powers of secular ruler of the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino 1530-1798.

Guva: The *guva* was a kind of circular tower without windows with only one opening at the summit.

Jus Patronatus: The right of patronage or presentation to a benefice (benefit of clergy).²⁷

Lazaretto: A quarantine station.

Magna Curia Castellaniæ: The Civil and Criminal Court of the Knights of St John.

Massa Frumentaria: A fund which formed part of a special loan floated for the purchase of grain from abroad. This fund was set up during the rule of the Knights of St John.

Panic Scripts/ Moral panics/ Sex panic/ Moral crusade: The scapegoating of prostitutes through moralising campaigns that define prostitution as a threat to societal values and interests.

Specie: Money in the form of coins rather than notes.

Spoglio: The property left at death by a knight.

Università: The municipal body.

²⁷ Frederic Jesup Stimson, *Glossary of Technical Terms, Phrases and Maxims of the Common Law*, (New Jersey, The Lawbook Exchange Ltd. Union, 1999), 179.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My three wonderful sons Jan, Alain and Kris and to my adorable Timothy.

My doctoral research project owes much to the altruism, wisdom and experience of my doctoral supervisors Dr Emanuel Buttigieg (University of Malta) and Prof Laura Gowing (King's College London). I consider myself to be privileged in having two wonderful enthusiastic and inspirational mentors. Words can never express my appreciation and gratitude for their constant guidance, motivation, optimism, patience and perseverance. When a person embarks on a doctoral research project it is not an individual enterprise it is a collective effort. This study is indebted to my family. I have endeavoured to maintain a degree of normality but I know and appreciate that many important people in my life have made sacrifices and their sacrifices were not small. My sons and Lorna, Debbie and Fran have unconditionally supported my studies and spurred me on. Special thanks to my youngest Kris who helped me out with graphics. I am infinitely grateful to Neville for his reassurance and unfailing support. An endless list of selfless people helped me along the way. The latter includes cousins, friends, professors, librarians, priests, curators, academics, researchers and many other people who graciously gave me space and time and heard me, talk about my work. Special thanks to Stephen Degiorgio who helped me unequivocally. I have attempted to list the names of all those who contributed to this dissertation in one way or another in full awareness that this list can never be complete.

Thank You All.

Acknowledgements

Dr Emanuel Buttigieg (University of Malta)

Prof Laura Gowing (King's College London)

Prof Yosanne Vella (University of Malta)

Prof Samuel Cohn (University of Glasgow)

Prof Carmel Vassallo (University of Malta)

Prof Maria Attard (University of Malta)

Prof Paul Clough (University of Malta)

Dr Stephen C. Spiteri (University of Malta)

Dr Marjorie Bonello (University of Malta)

Rev Michael M. Camilleri O.P., Parish Priest and Prior Rev. (St Dominic's Parish, Valletta)

Archpriest Vincent Borg Parish Priest (St Paul's Shipwreck Parish, Valletta)

Fr Alexander Cauchi o.s.a. (St Augustine's Parish, Valletta)

Lorenzo Zahra (Archives Archbishopric of Malta)

Joseph Amodio (National Archives of Malta, Rabat)

Noel D'Amato (National Archives of Malta, Mdina)

Mario Gauci (The Metropolitan Cathedral Archives, Mdina)

Paul C. Camilleri (Notarial Archives, Valletta)

Charles Hili (MGOZ - Ministry for Gozo)

Stephen Degiorgio

Philippe Le Moal

Olivier Chesnet

Dr Paul G. Pisani

Marquis Nicolas De Piro

Dr Noel Buttigieg

Kris Muscat

Paul Finger

Neville Ruggier

Caroline Tonna

Glorianne Mizzi

Dr Olvin Vella

Michael Zarb Adami

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Abbreviations

A.A.M.	Archives of the Archbishopric of Malta
A.C.M.	Archives of the Cathedral of Malta
A.I.M.	Archives of the Inquisitor of Malta
a.k.a.	Also Known As
Anon.	Anonymous
Arch.	Archives
A.O.M	Archives of the Order of Malta
A.P.S	Archives of the Parish of Porto Salvo
A.S.P	Archives of the Parish of San Paolo
B.C.E.	Before the common era
c.	circa
cf.	confer
Corr.	Correspondence
Crim.	Criminal
ed./eds.	editor/ editors
et al.	et alia
f./ff.	folio/ folios
fn	footnote
Mem.	Memorie
Misc.	Miscellaneous
Ms.	Manuscript
N.L.M.	National Library of Malta
N.A.M.	National Archives of Malta
N.A.V.	Notarial Archives of Malta
n.p.	no pagination
Proc.	Proceedings
Trans.	Translated
Treas.	Treasury
v.	verso
vol./vols.	volume/volumes

Early Modern Currency in Malta²⁸

6 <i>dinari</i> :	1 <i>grano</i>
5 <i>grani</i> :	1 <i>cinquina</i>
2 <i>cinquine</i> :	1 <i>carlino</i>
1 <i>carlino</i> :	10 <i>grani</i>
2 <i>carlini</i> :	1 <i>tarí</i>
1 <i>tarí</i> :	20 <i>grani</i>
12 <i>tarí</i> :	1 <i>scudo</i>
30 <i>tarí</i> :	1 <i>oncia</i>
1 <i>oncia</i> :	2.5 <i>scudi</i>

²⁸ C. Cassar, (2000).



Figure 1: A Map of Malta, Gozo and Comino



Figure 2 : A sixteenth century map of Malta's main harbour showing the Xiberras peninsula surrounded by fortifications prior to its' urban development.

Two churches (indicated with a white arrow) are visible in the otherwise barren stretch of land surrounded by defences. The larger building is likely to have represented the church of Our Lady of Victory (1566)²⁹ and the smaller church may be Porto Salvo from where the Dominican Fathers of the Annunciation Convent in Vittoriosa used to tend to the spiritual needs of the workers who were building the new city³⁰

Date : c.1566

A drawing of a map after an unidentified French engraving in *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, (Cologne, Braun and Hogenberg, 1572) Georg Braun (ed.). Dimensions are not specified.

Acknowledgement : The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library.

²⁹ See Degiorgio, (2011), 6, 7.

³⁰Adrianus Koster, 'The Knights' State (1530-1798), A Regular Regime', in *Melita Historica*, viii, 4 (1983), 308. Santa Maria di Porto Salvo was the oldest parish in Valletta allocated to the Dominicans by the Dominican Pope Pius V.

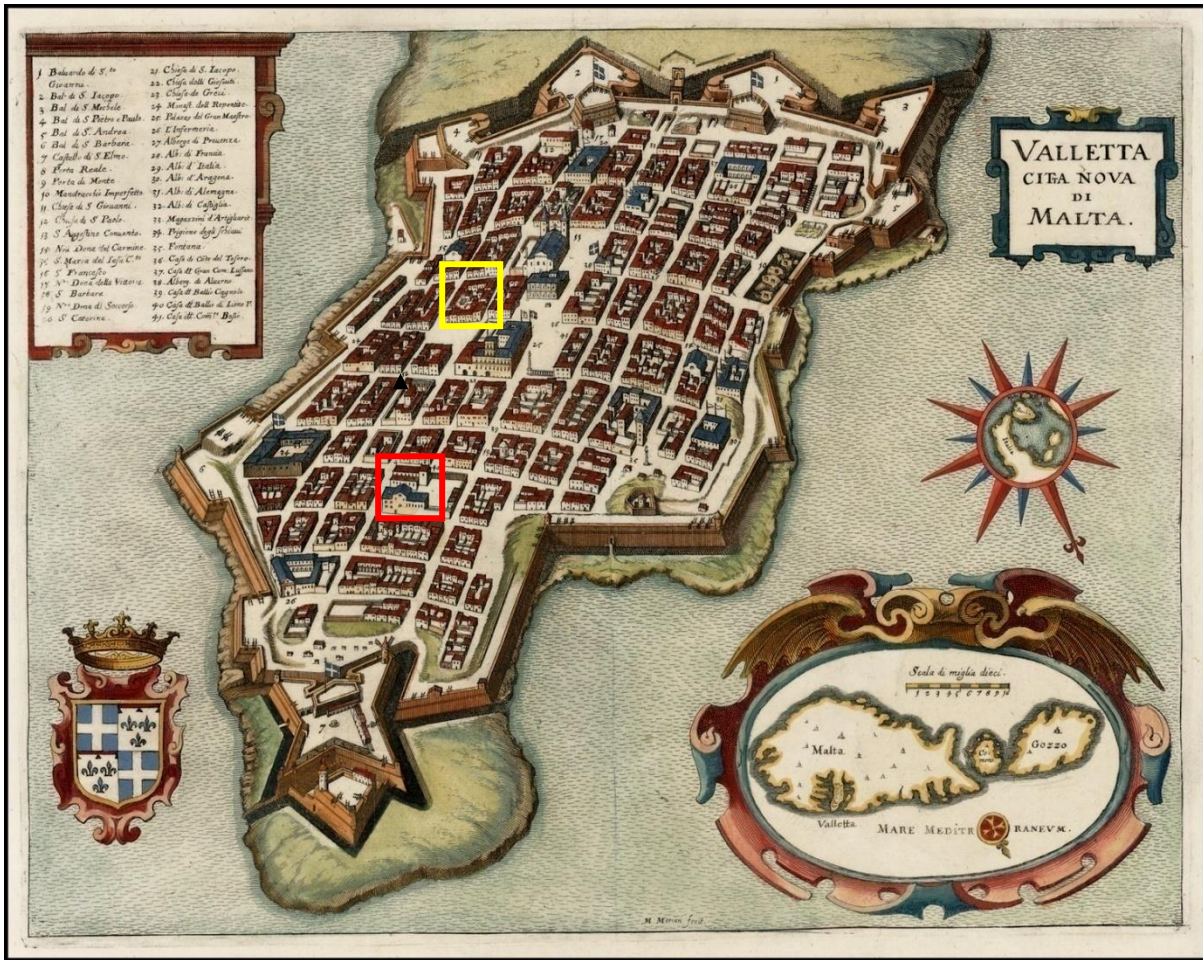


Figure 3: A seventeenth-century map of Valletta showing the location of the church of Porto Salvo & the church of San Paolo Apostolo.

Matthaus Merian, Frankfurt, 1635 (36.83cms x 26.67cms)

Detailed town plan of Valletta, showing the fortified walls, important buildings and squares. The red box indicates the location of the Parish Church of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo and the yellow box indicates the location of the Parish of San Paolo Apostolo.

Acknowledgement Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

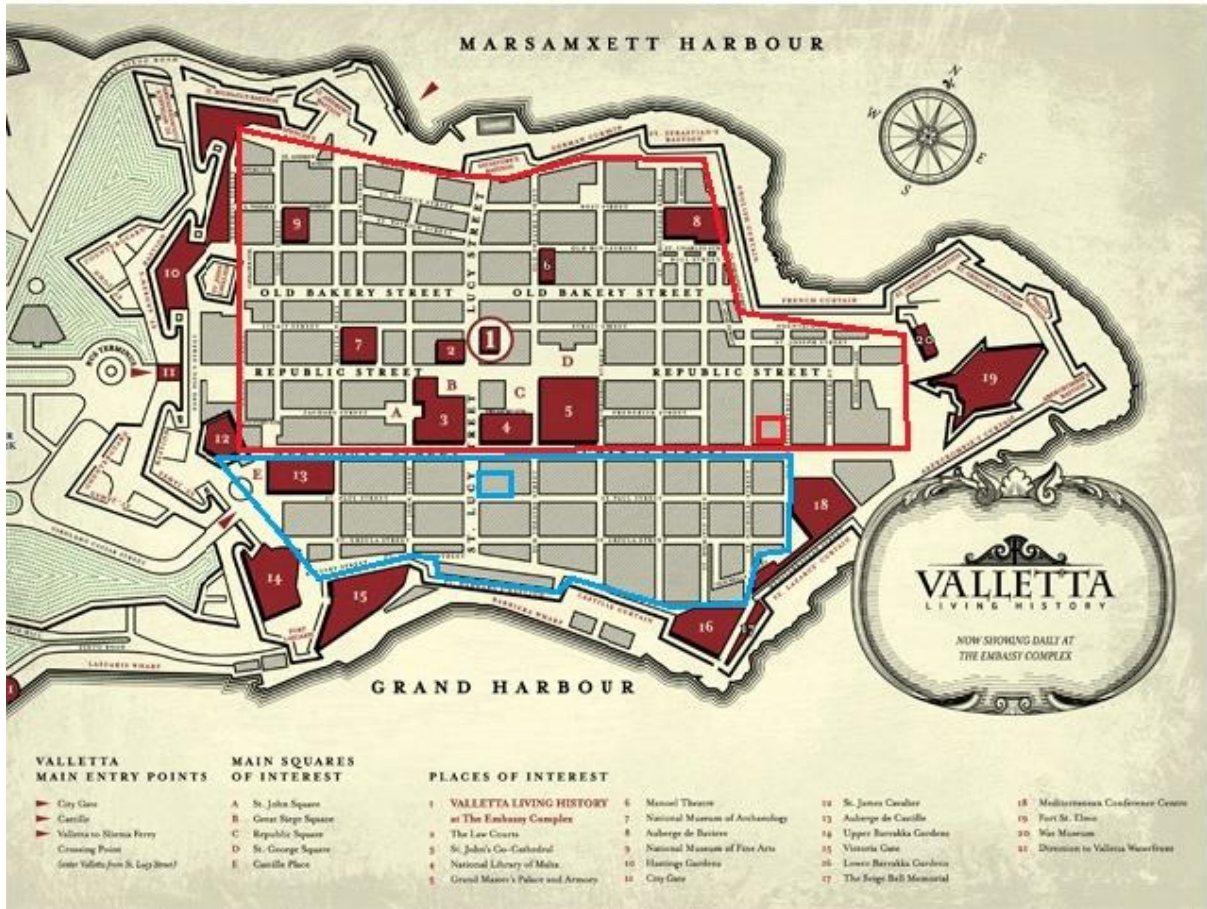


Figure 4: A modern stylised 17th century map of Valletta indicating the boundaries of the two parishes.

The red outline indicates the boundaries of the Parish Church of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo. The blue outline indicates the boundaries of the Parish of San Paolo Apostolo.

Acknowledgement Chris Mahoney



Figure 5: A modern map of Valletta showing the main area (red dotted line) where most prostitutes resided.

The brown shaded area is the Due Balle area and the blue circle shows the Mandraggio. The majority of prostitutes in the parish of Porto Salvo 1741-1763 lived in these areas.

Acknowledgement: Malcolm Borg and Ms. Samantha Fabry (Heritage Enterprise Action Plan Coordinators)

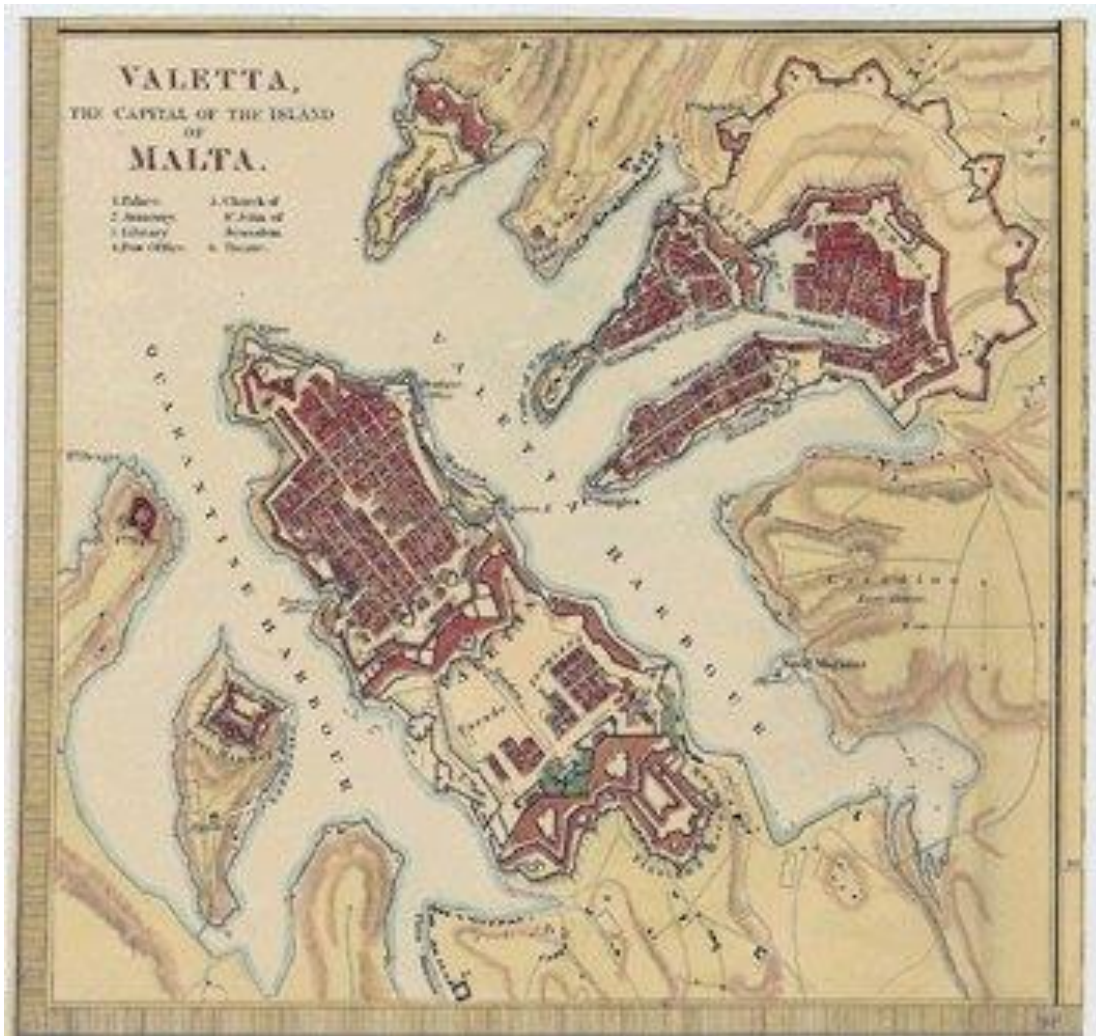


Figure 6: An eighteenth century map showing the Harbour Cities

Date: c.1705

Pierre Mortier, Amsterdam, c. 1705 (51.5. x .56.7 cms)

This map entitled *Valleta ou Valet Ville Forte de l'Isle De Malta* is a copy of a map by Joan Blaeu originally published in *Theatrum Admiradorum*.

Acknowledgement: *Art Menagerie* - Malta's Art online magazine



Figure 7: Modern facade of the Church of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo in Merchant's Street, Valletta.

The church of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo in Valletta was declared “the principal parish and matrix of the whole of the new city” by Pope Pius V through his Apostolic Bull *Ex Debito Pastoralis*. On the 25 May 1816, it was elevated to the dignity of a Minor Basilica. The original church, constructed by Girolamo Cassar, had to be pulled down on account of the 1693 earthquake which damaged the church extensively.

The current population of the Parish of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo is 3,000 (900 families).³¹

³¹ Malta Diocese, retrieved on 15 April 2015 from <http://thechurchinmalta.org/en/posts/1040/valletta-st-dominic>



Figure 8: Modern facade of the Church of San Paolo Apostolo, in St Paul's Street, Valletta.

The church was first built in 1570 by Girolamo Cassar. Although the church of Porto Salvo run by the Dominican fathers had already been declared a parish of Valletta, the Cathedral Chapter insisted on having a church of its own from where to administer sacraments to the inhabitants. The church was rebuilt between 1639 and 1679 according to the design of Bartolomeo Garagona. In 1733 it became a collegiate church. The facade of the church was redesigned by Nicola Zammit (1815-1899), in 1885.³²

The current population of the Parish of San Paolo Apostolo is 1,800 (800 families).³³

³² John Ciarlò, *The Hidden Gem*, (Malta, Progress Press, 2000), 4-6.

³³ Malta Diocese, retrieved on 15 April 2015 from <http://thechurchinmalta.org/en/posts/1044/valletta-st-paul>

Introduction

People tend to have strong feelings about prostitution. An article published in *Time* magazine in August 2015 claimed that proposals on the decriminalisation of prostitution set-off a ‘firestorm of opposition from faith groups, other human rights advocates, feminist organisations and celebrities like Meryl Streep and Lena Dunham’.³⁴ On 22 November 2015, the headline of *The Sunday Times of Malta* read ‘Work permit increase sparks prostitution fear’. This article voiced various concerns regarding thirty-nine new work permits issued to Chinese women to work as massage therapists. According to the police, massage parlours were doubling up as brothels.³⁵ On 10 April 2016, Grace Attard, the vice-president of the (Malta) National Council of Women, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Malta Independent on Sunday* arguing that legalising prostitution would confirm that women are a commodity. She suggested that this was the worst form of degradation for women.³⁶ Prostitution is an inherently social activity.³⁷ It has been used to evoke emotionally laden ideas and images: compassion, panic, aversion, fear and hate. These notions are deeply rooted and well-illustrated in the Bible:³⁸

at dusk as the night grew dark;
suddenly a woman came to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute, full of wiles
flighty and inconstant,
a woman never content to stay at home,
lying in wait at every corner,
now in the street, now in the public squares.³⁹

³⁴ Charlotte Alter, ‘An influential human-rights group weighs the legislation of sex work’ in *Time*, 17 August 2015, 12.

³⁵ Leonard Callus, ‘Work permit increase sparks prostitution fear’ in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 22 November 2015, 1, 12. *The Sunday Times of Malta* is Malta’s best-selling Sunday newspaper. Information on the readership of the *Times of Malta* retrieved can be accessed from <http://www.alliednewspapers.com.mt/products>. See GhSL Policy Paper, ‘An Insight into the Legalisation of Prostitution’, 7 retrieved on 1 December 2015 from www.maltatoday.com.mt/ui/files/Policy-Paper-1.pdf. Article 1618 in The Civil Code of Malta states that if a place is being used for prostitution purposes it will be automatically closed down and operators are punishable by law. See also Lianne Bonello, ‘Legalising Prostitution as a Job Description Comparing Malta with the Netherlands’, unpublished B.A.Criminology dissertation, Institute of Criminology, University of Malta 2014, 3-5.

³⁶ Grace Attard, ‘No to the Legislation of Prostitution’, in *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, 10 April 2016, 24.

³⁷ Roger Matthews and Maggie O’Neill, *Prostitution International Library of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Penology*, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), xiii.

³⁸ Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex*, (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012), 235.

³⁹ R.N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972), 43. See also Wesley Lloyd Cann, *The Origin of God*, (Bloomington, Indiana, Wesley Lloyd Cann, 2009), 188.

To date, the study of prostitution in Malta has attracted nominal academic interest. In the past two decades interest in women's history has increased and the notion of prostitution being a sordid academic sidebar has gradually started to change. In 2013 two monographs on Strait Street Valletta claiming to give it a fair hearing by letting it tell its own stories were published.⁴⁰ This street was nicknamed 'the Gut'. In its heyday, in the 1950s, Strait Street was the hub of entertainment. Bars, restaurants, lodging houses and music halls lined the street offering fun and amusement to a large community of British and NATO servicemen. This was a street where opportunists from all walks of life, including prostitutes, gravitated.⁴¹ Both books are based on the accounts of men and women (including prostitutes) who experienced the street. The interviewees largely represent the loss of a better era that is a part of a general myth of a former golden era of Valletta. In 2014, a new book on prostitution in Malta was published by Edward Attard.⁴² This book is based on nineteenth- and twentieth-century jail records of incarcerated prostitutes. It reveals stories of some infamous crimes committed by prostitutes. A year later, in 2015, a fictional television series entitled *Strada Stretta* was aired on Malta's national TV station 'Television Malta'. The series attracted over 112,000 viewers (nearly a quarter of the population). It relates the vicissitudes of the life of a young woman named Lydia who ran away from her rich parents' home in search for love, freedom and fun.⁴³ Abandoned by her lover, she befriends Lilly, a barmaid who draws her into the realities of living in the Gut. This is a nostalgic narrative that offers an idealisation of the past. This dissertation follows – but with a critical eye informed by recent academic movements – this rapidly increasing interest in the lives of Valletta's past prostitutes. In her study on life in the Roman town of Pompeii, Mary Beard argued that prostitutes loomed larger in Roman imagination than reality.⁴⁴ The picture that emerges from this research of early modern Valletta likewise shows a rather complicated and diverse reality than is currently thought.

⁴⁰ George Cini, *Strada Stretta: 'The Gut' which for many years lit up Valletta*, (Malta, Allied Publications, 2013). John Schofield, Emily Morrissey, *Strait Street: Malta's 'Red -Light District' Revealed*, (Malta, MidSea Books, 2013).

⁴¹ For a recent study on prostitution in Strait Street in the 1920s see Kimberley Vella, 'Prostitution and Entertainment in Valletta in the First Year of the Self-Government period', unpublished B.A. (Hons) dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2016.

⁴² Edward Attard, *Il-Prostituzzjoni f'Malta*, (Malta, BDL Publishing, 2014).

⁴³ Retrieved on 30 May 2016 from <http://www.tvm.com.mt/mt/news/1-ahbarijiet-ta-tvm-jibqghu-jzidu-fl-udjenja-tvm-com-mt-it-3-l-aktar-segwita-fmalta>

⁴⁴ Mary Beard, *Pompeii: the life of a Roman town*, (London, Profile Books, 2008), 236.

Modern histories of prostitution are largely dominated by feminist notions of male exploitation, oppression and victimhood. Prostitutes are traditionally believed to be victims of various circumstances: patriarchy, poverty, weak family ties, marital breakdowns, abandonment and squalor.⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the fact that these theories have withstood the pressure of time, they fail to offer an integrated economic, social and cultural history of the practice. This research is concerned both with the practice of prostitution in early modern Valletta and with the entrepreneurship of those who practised prostitution. In the prison records the verb to ‘practise’ (*praticare*) was used to describe a sexual affair.⁴⁶ This included prostitution but was not limited to prostitution. This eighteenth-century convention will be adopted throughout this dissertation. Prostitution was a rational choice made by some women at a point in their lives when they perceived it to make sense. The situations and conditions why it made sense are endless. Perceiving the rationality to be solely based on monetary pursuits is restrictive and fails to recognise the realities of female life. It rejects the risks that these women consciously took to face such realities. Facing danger, despair, back breaking work and heart breaking loss and loneliness are some realities of the women who forged a life by occasionally or regularly engaging in prostitution. These women have never been celebrated and their stories have still to be told.

Interest in the history of prostitution largely stemmed from three main scholarly areas of study: the history of marginal social groups, the history of sexuality and the history of women.⁴⁷ This research does not engage with the body and sexuality. This is not an oversight or due to stigma but because reference to sexuality in the historical sources that were examined is minimal. Tessa Storey’s research on a range of post-Tridentine Roman archival sources similarly noted the absence of sexuality.⁴⁸ Conversely Ruth Mazo Karras’s research on prostitution in medieval England showed that the defining social nature of prostitutes in

⁴⁵ See for instance Mary E. Perry, *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville*, (Hanover, New Hampshire and London, University Press of New England, 1980), 212. Erica-Marie Bénabou, *La Prostitution et la police des mœurs au XVIIIe siècle*, P. Goubert (ed.) (Paris, Éditions Perrin, 1987), 501-503. Henderson, (1999), 14. Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 21. Camilleri, (2016), 29.

⁴⁶ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.71. (14 May 1751). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f.12. (5 November 1760). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1764-1767, f.113. (7 January 1766) and f.152. (4 August 1766). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.133. (9 February 1771).

⁴⁷ Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, (London, The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 1.

⁴⁸ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 24.

the eyes of contemporaries was their indiscriminate sexuality.⁴⁹ This study endeavours to understand the entrepreneurship of a group of women who are traditionally believed to be undesirable.

The legal status of prostitutes and a firm definition of prostitution and entrepreneurship are fundamental to the viability and undertaking of this study.⁵⁰ In seventeenth and eighteenth-century Malta, prostitution was not an illegal activity. Procuring, living off immoral earnings, and incitement to prostitution were illegal activities.⁵¹ This study thus concerns a non-criminal activity. There are no coherent, all-embracing, generally accepted definitions of the terms prostitution or entrepreneurship.⁵² Paul Goldstein's definition of prostitution is short and simple. It describes prostitution as a 'non-marital sexual service for material gain'.⁵³ The findings of this study propose expanding Paul Goldstein's short definition to include the distinct concept of the activity being a public affair and the notion of freewill (to eliminate cases concerning coercion). For the purpose of this study, prostitution is thus being defined as a 'freely chosen, non-marital, public, sexual service for material gain'.⁵⁴ A prostitute is therefore 'a woman who freely chooses to offer a non-marital sexual service publicly for material gain'. The constitution of entrepreneurship that will direct this research is 'the independent active pursuit of opportunities at one's own risk'. Stephanie Drescher argues that entrepreneurs are 'not like other people'. She shows that they differ possibly by personal attributes, family background or gained experiences in their private or professional life.⁵⁵ An entrepreneur is a self-employed, dynamic person who actively works on tasks. Active pursuits of tasks involve networking, innovation and the ability to identify and implement new possibilities in economic fields. Bearing uncertainty and taking and managing risks are inherent to commercial practices.⁵⁶ This study shows that these qualities were intrinsic to prostitution.

⁴⁹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

⁵⁰ For a discussion on the legal definition of prostitution see Jill McCracken, *Street Sex Workers' Discourse: Realizing Material Change Through Agential Choice*, (New York, Oxon, Routledge, 2013).

⁵¹ Giovanni Bonello, 'Knights and Courtesans' in *Histories of Malta* Vol.3, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2002), 20.

⁵² For a discussion on the different definitions of prostitution see Jill McCracken, 'Terminology' in *Prostitution and Sex Work* Vol. 2, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Connecticut, London, Greenwood Press, 2006), 476-478. For a discussion on the different definitions of entrepreneurship see Stephanie Drescher, *What is Entrepreneurship? – Historical Approach and Critical Discussion*, (Aberdeen, The Robert Gordon University, 2007), 5.

⁵³ Paul Goldstein, *Prostitution and Drugs*, (Lexington, Mass, Lexington Books, 1979), 33.

⁵⁴ cf. Goldstein, (1979), 33.

⁵⁵ Drescher, (2007), 4.

⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion on entrepreneurship see Drescher, (2007), 5-16.

Prostitution is a diverse practice. In early modern Valletta, it was largely seasonal. It depended on the number of men with money in the city. The presence of sailors, knights, merchants and salaried soldiers fluctuated. The activity was flexible and open to women from all strata of society. It could be covert or overt, occasional or regular, elite or low-class, domiciliary or outdoor. Earning money was at times necessary for women. Some applied for charity and others sought employment mainly in domestic services.⁵⁷ Besides cleaning, cooking and laundry, women also worked as dressmakers, cooks, spinners, nurses, roof beaters and at times also joined the male labour force in the building trade.⁵⁸ Balancing work and the expenses of independent living or the demands of caring for parents, siblings and/or raising children may have posed a heavy burden on some working women. References to female wage rates up to the seventeenth century are scanty, however male labourers earned two *tari* per day and presumably females earned less.⁵⁹ This means that in the seventeenth century, women in sweat trades could afford to buy less than five kilograms of bread a day.⁶⁰ The average income of female workers in July 1773 varied between two *scudi*, to two *scudi* two *tari* per week.⁶¹ Dressmakers earned two *scudi* for the production of an elegant dress that would probably have required one week of work.⁶² Thus, on average, a working woman in the second half of the eighteenth century earned roughly 3.5 *tari* a day. In the eighteenth century, the cost of one loaf of bread weighing approximately 200gms was 5 *grani*.⁶³ It can be assumed that with 3.5 *tari* as a day's wages, a woman employed in one of the sweat trades could buy around two and a half kilograms of bread a day.⁶⁴ On the other hand in 1732, Domenica de Cutelli, a prostitute from Valletta known as '*Calcariza*' (possibly because she hailed from the town of Birkirkara) charged one *scudo* for a service.⁶⁵ Basically with one client de Cutelli earned nearly four times as much as a maid earned in a day's work. She could afford to buy ten kilos of bread a day. Prostitution for de Cutelli offered immediate money and an income that was far superior to other forms of female labour. In the same year,

⁵⁷ C. Cassar, (2002), 152.

⁵⁸ Paul Cassar, 'Women in Malta a Historical Vignette' in *Scientia*, Vol. xxxviii (1977), 17, 18.

⁵⁹ C. Cassar, (2000), 56. Women's wages were lower than men's wages. In 1773 a male farm worker earned around 3 *scudi* per week whereas a female farm worker earned 2 *scudi* per week.

⁶⁰ C. Cassar (2000), 56, 57.

⁶¹ Yosanne Vella, 'Women and Work in Eighteenth Century Malta', in *Women's History Notebooks* Vol. vi:1, (1999), 4-7.

⁶² A.O.M. Treas. A. Vol. 151. B, Loose Leaf n.p.

⁶³ Noel Buttigieg, 'Setting the Stage: Banquet for a Knight' in *A Timeless Gentleman: Festschrift in honour of Maurice de Giorgio*, Giovanni Bonello (ed.), (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2014), 333.

⁶⁴ Giovanni Bonello, 'Feasting and Fasting at the time of the Knights' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. i, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2000), 119. The weight of a loaf of bread in 1779 was 7.5 ounces equivalent to 212.621 grams. Bread was the staple food of the masses.

⁶⁵ N.A.M. Ms Box 378, f.5. (1732). Testimonium Joseph Picau.

Margarita Virau, another prostitute from Valletta, had clearly stacked away a nice sum of money as she asked her clients Giorgio Carli and Andrea Buzzetti to pay her not in money but in works of art.⁶⁶ For Virau prostitution offered power and status.

In May 1771, a young unmarried woman escaped from the village of Mqabba, and sought refuge at an elderly prostitute's house in Valletta. Her father offered ten *scudi* to anyone who offered information on her whereabouts. The woman met a procuress and worked as a prostitute. She was known to hang around taverns drinking and eating sweets long after midnight. She was eventually caught and forced to marry a man from Żejtun. Thirteen clients she had been with were incarcerated and forced to pay a fine that went towards paying her dowry.⁶⁷ For this woman from Mqabba, prostitution in Valletta was not about lack of male support or money. It was a moment in her life when it appears that she managed to break away from her father's control and experienced a short-lived freedom and some thrills. Entry into prostitution was instigated by a myriad of female wants, needs and aspirations; some may seem bizarre to us today. The ambition to drink and eat sweets after midnight, or to own gold earrings, gold buttons, a silver belt buckle and a woollen burgundy-coloured jacket,⁶⁸ or 'shine in sumptuous dresses',⁶⁹ or to kill monotony⁷⁰ are a few motivations that may seem odd. The intention to satisfy a dream indicates that prostitution was not limited to economic agency but also involved varying degrees of personal motivation.⁷¹

Prostitutes took care of family members and at times provided homes for unmarried spinsters, sponsored charities, offered benefactions to religious institutions, sponsored renovations and decorations in churches in Valletta, invested and traded in immovable and movable property, commissioned works of art and much more. Some may have offered other women an inspirational model. As workers, members of families and communities, and as social and cultural actors the experience of prostitutes was a multi-layered experience. This

⁶⁶ N.A.M. Ms Box 379, Loose Leaf, (1732). Testimonium Simonem Schembri.

⁶⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 II, f.60. (1771). This story was also reported by the Inquisitor of Malta to the Holy See on 2 May 1771. See transcription in William Zammit, *Kissing the Gallows*, (Malta, BDL Publishing, 2016), 277.

⁶⁸ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, ff.15-22v. (16 January 1737), Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel' Angelo Sammut.

⁶⁹ Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, (Paris, J.B. Baillière, 1835), 100.

⁷⁰ William Sanger, *The History of Prostitution*, (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1858), 488.

⁷¹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 137.

study acknowledges the fact that prostitution, to a certain extent, cannot be regarded as a neutral occupation.⁷² Sweat trades cannot be regarded as neutral either. Female wage labour was generally perceived to be of a low order and cases of exploitation were not uncommon.⁷³ Some forms of female occupation involved long hours of strenuous labour. Some servants were impregnated by their masters, while others were regularly beaten, tortured or abused.⁷⁴ This research argues that not unlike sweat trades, prostitution was a risky occupation. At the same time, earnings were higher than other occupations, though in certain cases the risks may have been higher too. Immediate money, higher earnings, more free time and the option of generating one's income directly from customers made prostitution a rational entrepreneurial choice for some women. Moreover, it offered some women the possibility to be autonomous and to participate in economic life. This inquiry offers a lively picture of Valletta's early modern prostitutes by seeking to draw on the insiders' view. The wills prostitutes drew up, their voices in trials, the opinions of their peers, their dependants, their acquaintances and their customers will be kept in view throughout, particularly in discussions on perceptions, practices of sociability and financial arrangements.

⁷² Mazo Karras, (1996), 8, 84.

⁷³ C. Cassar, (2002), 151. P. Cassar, (1977), 18.

⁷⁴ Ciappara, (1988), 80.

Chapter 1

History and Historiography of Prostitution

Introduction

Prostitution was and is still a high risk practice, with potentially adverse health and social consequences. This chapter examines whether the current prevalent theories on early modern prostitution sufficiently address why some women engaged in prostitution. From the early nineteenth century to present times, theories on prostitution largely pivot around paradigms centring on oppression, crime, evil, disease and victimhood.¹ On a significantly lesser level some modern historians approached the topic from a worker, agency perspective.² These binary approaches do not do justice to the study of the history of prostitution. The historiography of prostitution cannot disregard the initiatives of early modern prostitutes who succeeded in carving a comfortable niche for themselves and their dependents or forego engaging with the question of why prostitution was meaningful to them. Exploring prostitution from an entrepreneurial perspective is worthwhile pursuing because it looks at prostitutes as active initiators and doers, rather than passive observers or absorbers. This perspective does not wholeheartedly or simplistically assert that prostitution was never oppressive or that it was a form of labour just like any other female job. It does on the other hand recognise that some early modern women used ‘what they got to get what they want’.³ There were certain conditions at certain points in women’s lives when prostitution made sense. It was a rational choice some women made to better their lives in a society structured hierarchically by class and gender.

¹ See for instance Mary Elizabeth Perry, ‘Deviant Insiders: Legalized Prostitutes and a Consciousness of Women in Early Modern Seville’, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxvii, 1, (1985), 138-158. Kevin P. Siena, ‘Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English Venereology and the Early Modern Medical Discourse on Social and Sexual Danger’, in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, viii, 4 (1998), 553-574. Ruth Mazo Karras, ‘Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity in Medieval Europe’ in *Journal of Women’s History*, xi, 2 (1999), 159-177. See Paul Griffiths, ‘The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London’ in *Continuity and Change*, viii, 1 (1993), 39-63.

² Tessa Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008). Theo van der Meer, ‘Medieval Prostitution and the Case of a (Mistaken?) Sexual Identity’, in *Journal of Women’s History* xi, 2 (1999), 178-185. Carla Freccero, ‘Acts, Identities and Sexuality’s (Pre) Modern Regimes’, in *Journal of Women’s History* xi, 2 (1999), 186-192.

³ These words are taken from a popular, classic song called *Think (About It)*. This song was recorded by Lyn Collins and released as a single on James Brown’s People Records in 1972. The song was written by James Brown. In this song Collins exclaims to her independent female audience ‘use what you got.....to get what you want’.

The chapter starts with a journey through the socio-political movements and developments that shaped nineteenth-century perceptions on prostitution, because most of these perceptions are still prevalent today. It proceeds with an overview of the core theories on prostitution in early modern Malta proposed by modern historians followed by a survey of some socio-cultural perspectives on prostitutes in contemporary narratives which demonstrated ulterior views that do not tally with the current prevalent theories. The view taken here is that generalisations and rigid standpoints do not necessarily recognise diversity and fall short of explaining the cultural ideas, values and beliefs of the women who engaged in the trade. Perhaps the future of the historiography of prostitution is in understanding the insiders' view and why for some early modern women it was rational and meaningful. Studying prostitutes as entrepreneurs rather than victims, misfits and criminals or disorderly, unruly and lost people, proposes a shift from top-down questioning to looking at history from below. It can be worthwhile in offering an alternative to monolithic models and a way forward to adopting a multiple structural approach in understanding different possibilities on how females approached and maybe still approach sex work.

Nineteenth-Century Perspectives on Prostitution

In Paris, London and New York, scholarly studies on female prostitution made their grand, yet torpid and trepid entry onto the book market in the early part of the nineteenth century. This happened alongside the emergence of sociology. Interest in prostitution was based on growing concerns regarding the popularity of eroticism in the literary and visual arts that emerged in the aftermath of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment,⁴ the growing scourge of venereal disease in the armed forces, vagrancy, and increasing migration.⁵ The Industrial age gave rise to significant demographic movements. Cities expanded as opportunity seekers moved in, and increasing numbers of rootless and unemployed men, women and children

⁴ Paul Lacroix, *History of Prostitution* Vol. II, Translated by Samuel Putnam, (New York, Covici – Friede, 1931), 1443. In France, Gustave Flaubert's carousals, and the growing popularity of his immoral self-indulgent novels in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as the reappearance of Tabarin's and the Baron of Gratelard's jovial farces in Parisian theatres were a matter of concern to upholders of values. See also Acton Bell (Anne Brontë), *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, (New York, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1858). In England increasingly popular Victorian 'mildly-pornographic love-novels' like for instance Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell* published under the pseudonym Acton Bell, were believed to disturb readers.

⁵ Brian Joseph Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France*, (New Hampshire, University of Hampshire, 2011), 33. The notion of citizenship ensuing from the French Revolution awarded political rights in return for military service. This concept was later adopted by all five great European Powers (France, Austrian Empire, Prussia, Russia and the British Empire). Conscription led to the dramatic increase of numbers of soldiers in armed forces from a few thousands in 1800 to millions in the 1900s.

thronged city streets. Some vagrant female migrants earned a living through sex work.⁶ Prostitution was considered to be a major social malaise.⁷ The manner and conditions in which these prostitutes lived, growing concerns on the consequences of prostitution (with special emphasis on venereal disease) and the desire to abolish or regulate the practice attracted scholarly attention to the matter. The first wave of scholars split into two camps. One camp advocated abolition and the other lobbied for regulation. These pioneering nineteenth-century scholarly works on prostitution were placed into scientific, historic, criminal, medical and sociological moulds. These studies were primarily based on cities with immigrant-heavy populations. Despite pursuing different goals the two camps were motivated by the common will to moralise, cleanse society and resolve social problems.⁸

One of the first scholars to advocate regulation was the French physician Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet (1806-1884).⁹ His proposal was resisted by co-patriots historians Paul Lacroix (1806-1884)¹⁰ and Auguste-Philippe-Édouard Rabutaux (1814-189?).¹¹ Lacroix and Rabutaux traced the history of prostitution and argued that prostitution was ‘one of the saddest afflictions of humanity’ and should thus be abolished.¹² Parent-Duchâtelet’s empirical study (1835) sought to understand the different situations that induced entry to prostitution. He concluded that lack of male support, poverty, limited work opportunities and insufficient salaries were common.¹³ Laziness, vanity and the desire to ‘shine in sumptuous dresses’, were at times, also conducive to prostitution.¹⁴ Parent-Duchâtelet’s latter observations on vanity and dressing up hinted at the pursuit of aspirations. This does not fit well with the notion of laziness.

Though the act of beautifying seems to be a passive activity, it is in reality, absorbing and time-consuming.¹⁵ Vanity and prostitution share a long historical link, dating back to

⁶ Helen J. Self, *Prostitution, Women and Misuse of the Law: The Fallen daughters of Eve*, (London, Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 37.

⁷ Lacroix, (1931), 2.

⁸ See for instance Parent-Duchâtelet, (1835), Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a comparative view of that of Paris and New York*, (London, H.Bailliere, 1839), Auguste-Philippe-Édouard Rabutaux, *De la Prostitution en Europe depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle*, (Paris, Sere, 1851), Sanger, (1858), and Lacroix, (1931).

⁹ Lacroix, (1931), ix.

¹⁰ Lacroix, (1931). Lacroix’s book was originally authored under the pseudonym Pierre Dufour.

¹¹ Rabutaux, (1851)

¹² Lacroix, (1931), 1.

¹³ Parent-Duchâtelet, (1835), 104.

¹⁴ Parent-Duchâtelet, (1835), 100.

¹⁵ See for instance Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, (New York, Morrow, 1991), Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, (New York, Routledge, 1990), and Dean MacCannell and Juliet Flower MacCannell, ‘The Beauty System’ in *The Ideology of Conduct*, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, (eds.), (New York, Methuen, 1987), 206-238.

classical antiquity.¹⁶ In the ancient world beautiful clothing, cosmetics, jewels and ornaments were considered to be lethal follies that threatened female integrity and were thus regulated through sumptuary laws.¹⁷ In Christianity, Saint Paul advocated that women ought to ‘adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array’ (1 Tim 2:9).¹⁸ This notion was adopted by medieval preachers who personalised vanity through the cult of Saint Mary Magdalene.¹⁹ Female innate taste for beauty is intrinsic to the very notion of femininity.²⁰ The Roman Catholic Church endeavoured to suppress practices linked to female vanity, but notwithstanding repressive regulations and severe ramifications, practices persisted.²¹ Although Parent-Duchâtelet may have harboured a negative perception on vain pursuits in reality they involved high degrees of entrepreneurship.

Parent-Duchâtelet’s campaign to regulate prostitution inspired various academics and rallied support from different fields of study.²² In New York, Reverend John R. McDowall (1814-1868) and medical physician William Sanger (1819-1872) favoured regulation. McDowall’s main focus area was the Five Points neighbourhood, one of New York City’s slums. His objective was to reform society by offering homes for prostitutes whilst rallying public opinion against procurers and licentious men.²³ Sanger’s research revealed that most women were young (median age 15), foreign and unskilled although more than half were daughters of skilled workers or elite artisanal families.²⁴ The most common reasons for entering the practice were male desertion, widowhood, single motherhood, economic factors, low wages and the monotony of life.²⁵ One fourth of the women he interviewed said that they were attracted to the easy life. Both Sanger and Parent-Duchâtelet suggested that prostitutes were driven by a predetermined destiny. Yet their findings do not tally with this perspective. Engaging in prostitution to face or overcome financial difficulties, kill boredom or because it is perceived to offer an easy life entails a decision to pursue an objective through a course of action. It is a courageous choice that demonstrates personal mastery rather than a matter of chance.

¹⁶ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, and Slaves*, (New York, Schocken Books, 1975), 46.

¹⁷ Pomeroy, (1975), 46, 57, 63, 131, 182.

¹⁸ cf. Kathrine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2000), 155

¹⁹ Ludwig Jansen, (2000), 145-167.

²⁰ Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, (New York, Metropolitan Books, 1998), 4, 5.

²¹ Ludwig Jansen, (2000), 155, 157.

²² Parent-Duchâtelet, (1835). See also Ryan, (1839), 42.

²³ John R. McDowall, *Magdalen Facts Issue I* (New York, the Author, 1832), 95

²⁴ McDowall. (1832), 535, 536.

²⁵ Sanger, (1858), 488.

Simultaneously in London in 1839 British medical physician Michael Ryan (1800-1840) developed a pathological approach.²⁶ He identified various biological and psychological disorders that caused prostitution. Ryan admitted that biology did not have the answer for what he perceived to be irrational behaviour.²⁷ A significant number of prostitutes were perfectly normal with no psychological or physical abnormalities yet they took risks and pursued sex work.²⁸ In 1857 British surgeon William Acton (1813-1875) reiterated more or less what Parent-Duchâtelet, McDowall, Sanger and Ryan had said. He claimed that distress, misery and hunger drove women to prostitution but female traits like vanity, greediness and love of dress were likewise significant instigators.²⁹ These pioneering concepts were perpetuated through the studies of several subsequent scholars.

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, increasing industrialisation pressures, the rise of the medical expert, demographic imbalance and the ideology of ‘a woman’s place’, heightened concerns on the calamities of prostitution.³⁰ High levels of venereal diseases in the armed forces engaged in the Crimean War (1853-1856), the Austro-Prussian War (1866) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) called for stricter measures against prostitution. In Britain, the issue of venereal diseases once again instigated stricter legislative control through the enactment of the Contagious Disease Act. Inequalities in the Act provoked the reaction of feminists. Josephine Butler (1828-1906) was at the forefront of this campaign.³¹ She protested against injustices, harsh policing and forced medical examinations stipulated in the Act.³² Her efforts were not in vain. In 1886 the act was repealed.³³

Butler’s research rekindled the importance of establishing a proper legal definition for prostitution. This issue had been raised in 1835 by Paul Lacroix. The *Dictionnaire de l’Académie* (1835) came up with a definition that described prostitution as the ‘abandonment

²⁶ Ryan, (1839), 65-70. Ryan concluded that venereal disease, syphilis, miscarriage, infant mortality, cancer of the womb, tumours, abscesses, haemorrhages, fistulæ, convulsions, various forms of hysteria and mental problems were inherent to prostitution.

²⁷ Ryan, (1839), 65-70.

²⁸ Ryan, (1839), 10, 11.

²⁹ William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life*, (London, Churchill, 1862), 105.

³⁰ Self, (2003), 24.

³¹ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980), 93. In a recent biography on Josephine Butler, Helen Mathers endows her with the title of Patron Saint of Prostitutes. See Helen Mathers, *Patron Saint of Prostitutes: Josephine Butler and a Victorian Scandal*, (Gloucestershire, The History Press, 2014).

³² Josephine E. Butler, *The Constitution Violated*, (Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1871), 92.

³³ Butler (1871), 91, 92. For an overview of the political climate that gave rise to pioneering feminist debates on prostitution see Self, (2003), 16-23.

to impudicity in which a girl or a woman inevitably lives in shame'.³⁴ This definition highlighted the chronic confusion between promiscuity and prostitution. The latter pitfall was also identified by Butler in the contagious disease act. She argued that the wording in the Act implied that any woman who associated with a man could be counted as a prostitute.³⁵ Animated by strong sentiments regarding higher wages, better living conditions and educational opportunities for women emerging from the women's suffrage movement, Butler-ite feminists adopted the plight of prostitutes in their campaign. This scenario provided fertile ground for the insemination of Magdalene asylums, penitentiaries and reformatories all over Britain and Ireland.³⁶ The establishment of Magdalene homes was supplemented with the closure of casinos, pleasure gardens and music halls. Notwithstanding harsh enforcement measures, this epoch 'represented a high point for prostitutes as independent operators'.³⁷

By the 1880s, it was clear that penitentiaries and Magdalene Asylums were ineffective in abolishing prostitution.³⁸ This encouraged the regulationists to take matters in hand. The regulationists' campaign was pioneered by social purity reformers. Unlike feminists who believed that raising awareness on the exploitation of women and insisting on the individual rights of women would eventually phase out prostitution, reformers lobbied for criminalisation.³⁹ Intra-European immigration was facilitated through the construction of railways and from 1870 onwards, bigger and more efficient steam liners facilitated migration to America and Australia.⁴⁰ Many European female jobseekers migrated to industrialised cities in countries like France, Germany, Great Britain, the USA and Australia, in the hope of finding a better life. Some female migrants were employed in sweat trades or engaged in

³⁴ Institut de France, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (6th edition), (Paris, Didot Frères, 1835), 523. 'Abandonnement à l'impudicité. En ce sens, il ne se dit que Des femmes et des filles qui vivent dans cet état de dégradation'.

³⁵ Butler (1871), 92. 93.

³⁶ Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylum since 1500*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), 133, 134. Mary Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19, 20. Self, (2003), 17. Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 26. Some scholars like for instance Paula Bartley, argue that reformatories and penitentiaries were not born out of the first wave of feminism but rather a response to the religious revival of the Evangelical Church of England.

³⁷ Walkowitz, (1980), 24. Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918*, (Baltimore, London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1982), 3.

³⁸ Bartley, (2000), 155.

³⁹ Stephanie Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010), 50. Reformers lobbied for the criminalisation of brothels, pimping and living off the earnings of prostitution, the termination of the medical regulation and the registration of women in prostitution.

⁴⁰ Dudley Kirk, *Europe's population in Interwar Years* Vol.3, (New York, London, Paris, Ontario, Gordon and Breach, 1946), 97. By 1870, a number of inventions, such as the screw propeller, the compound engine and the triple expansion engine made trans-oceanic shipping on a large scale economically viable. From 1880 onwards the size of ocean liners increased to meet the needs of immigration to the United States and Australia.

seasonal jobs. Being young unsupported and far away from home with hardly enough money to make ends meet, may have encouraged some women to work as prostitutes.⁴¹ These migrant prostitutes referred to as white slaves were the scapegoats adopted in the social purity reformers' crusade.⁴² Scholarly reports on prostitution emerging from this crusade, like for instance those published by former Butler-ite Ellice Hopkins (1836-1904) in 1879,⁴³ Laura Ormiston Chant (1848-1923) in 1895,⁴⁴ and William Alexander Coote (1842-1919) in 1916,⁴⁵ mostly reiterated what had been said by earlier scholars. These studies amplified the magnitude of white slavery with the aim of instigating harsher regulations and strengthening law enforcement.⁴⁶ In 1893 Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) a physician and his son-in-law criminologist Guglielmo Ferrero (1871-1942) reiterated Michael Ryan's pathological theory in suggesting that prostitutes were born criminal. They had small heads with limited cranial capacity, heavy jaws and more body hair.⁴⁷

In Malta evidence of similar movements has just started to surface. Organisations aimed at rescuing prostitutes,⁴⁸ the transformation of part of the Magdalene monastery into a House of Industry for prostitutes, and its subsequent transfer to the *Ospizio* in Floriana under the care of the Sisters of Charity echo what was happening in contemporary Europe.⁴⁹ From 1800-1898, efforts were made by the state to prevent venereal diseases by legislating the registration and examination of prostitutes. This failed to have the desired effect.⁵⁰ In 1930s Paul Knepper reiterated ideas pioneered by social purity reformers in saying that significant

⁴¹ Self, (2003), 22. Rosen, (1982), 3.

⁴² Self, (2003), 2, 25. See also Walkowitz, (1980), 22, 130. In France white slavery was referred to as *La Traite des Blanches* and in Germany *Mädchen-Handel*. White Slavery was also used to refer to the procurement of white females against their will. See discussion on the diverse cultural meanings of the term 'white slavery' in Jo Deezema, 'Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-Emergence of the Myth of White Slavery in Contemporary Discourses of Trafficking Women' in *International Sex Trafficking of Women & Children*, Leonard Territo, George Kirkham (eds.), (New York, Loose leaf Law Publications, 2010), 156-158.

⁴³ Ellice Hopkins, *A plea for the wider action of the Church of England in the prevention of the degradation of women*, (London, Hatchards, 1879).

⁴⁴ Laura Ormiston Chant, *Why We Attacked the Empire*, (London, Horace Marshall & Son, 1895).

⁴⁵ William Alexander Coote, *A Vision and its Fulfilment*, (London, National Vigilance Association, 1910).

⁴⁶ Cecily Devereux, 'The Maiden Tribute and the Rise of the White Slave in Nineteenth Century: The Making of an Imperial Construct' in *Victorian Review*, xxvi, 2 (2000), 1-23. Recent studies argue that the number of white slaves was in reality much less than what the reformers claimed. See Walkowitz (1980), 23.

⁴⁷ Teela Sanders, Margaret O'Neil, Jane Pitcher, *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics*, (London, Sage Publications, 2009), 3.

⁴⁸ See Herbert Ganado, Michael Refalo, *My Century Vol. II*, Herbert Ganado's, *Rajt Malta Tinbidel; Translated and Adapted*, (Malta, Be Communications Ltd., 2005), 126-128. Ganado mentions a society called *Soċjetà ta' San Vincenz* that used to help the poor and rescue prostitutes.

⁴⁹ See N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 409, ff.13v-14.

⁵⁰ E. Attard, (2014), 87.

numbers of prostitutes operating in Strait Street were white slaves. They were female British performing artists who were forced into prostitution.⁵¹

In Europe, in the 1960s, the sexual revolution ushered in a new epoch characterised by sexual liberalism.⁵² This gave rise to new academic investigations. Sexologists and historians like for instance Vern Bullough, and Lujo Bassermann advocated a return to the time when prostitution was not an illicit affair.⁵³ These scholarly works were instrumental in pushing forth the legitimisation of prostitution and in promulgating, the myth of the golden age of prostitution.⁵⁴ They were backed by some medical academics like for instance Harry Benjamin and Alex Comfort who revelled in highlighting the positive benefits of prostitution and the negative consequences of its suppression.⁵⁵ These writings challenged lingering puritan and feminist ideologies. In the 1970s, debates concerning prostitution once again split into two camps with feminists lobbying for criminalisation and liberals favouring legislation.⁵⁶ Some scholars like Reay Tannahill attempted to offer unbiased objective histories of prostitution.⁵⁷ Few managed to sit on a fence. Notwithstanding her efforts to remain neutral Tannahill endorsed censorship in suggesting that prostitution should be a private affair. She argued that liberals could never prove that prostitution was ‘good for all involved and bad for no one’.⁵⁸ Tannahill’s monograph was succeeded by several histories of prostitution that demonstrate the acute tension between the subordination of women and empowerment.⁵⁹ This tension persists in present day debates on prostitution.

Historiographical Approaches to Early Modern Prostitution: A Monolithic Perspective

Since the 1980s, trends in social history propose a more sensitive understanding of prostitution. An analysis of prevalent theories shows that albeit hinting at alternative thinking patterns, the overall discourse maintains strong links with the traditional monolithic

⁵¹Paul Knepper, ‘The White Slave Trade and the Music Hall Affair in 1930s Malta’, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xlv, 2, (2009), 205-220.

⁵² Sheila Jeffreys, *The Idea of Prostitution*, (Melbourne, Spinifex Press, 1997), 35-37.

⁵³ Vern Bullough, *The History of Prostitution*, (Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1964). Lujo Bassermann, *The Oldest Profession*, James Cleugh (Trans.), (London, Arthur Barker Ltd., 1967).

⁵⁴ Jeffreys, (1997), 36. The golden age of prostitutes refers to the classic period when prostitutes were allegedly sacred or otherwise held in high esteem

⁵⁵ Harry Benjamin, R.E.L. Masters, *Prostitution and Sexual Morality*, (New York, The Julian Press, 1965). Alex Comfort, *The Joy of Sex*, (New York, Octopus Publishing Group, 2002).

⁵⁶ Jeffreys (1997), 36-37.

⁵⁷ Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History*, (New York, Stein & Day, 1980), 12. ‘On every aspect of the subjects with which it deals, it is as straightforward and objective as I have been able to make it.’

⁵⁸ Tannahill, (1980), 426.

⁵⁹ Mazo Karras, (1996), 8.

theoretical structure.⁶⁰ Mary E. Perry's study echoed Parent-Duchâtelet's and McDowall's nineteenth-century findings in perceiving prostitutes in early modern Seville to be an integral part of the underworld. They were women who 'grew up in a context of rapid urban development, spawned in congestion, commercial activity and anonymity'.⁶¹ Perry suggested that prostitution was shaped by variables such as geography, the state, religion, gender and class. They were victims of poverty and of a patriarchal moralising society exploited by the authorities, clerics, procurers, innkeepers and at times also husbands, fathers and/or male relatives.⁶² She argued that prostitution was essential to the authorities as it was a means through which they purported public morality and maintained the social order. The evil images of prostitutes as lascivious persons and home-breakers were adopted by the religious authorities as the antithesis of the ideal woman who was obedient, chaste and submissive like the Holy Virgin or repentant like St Mary Magdalene.⁶³ In order to control public disorder linked to prostitution, the early modern city authorities in Seville established licensed brothels that were placed under the responsibility of the religious authorities, who thus controlled prostitutes and also pocketed part of their profits. Moreover, brothel prostitutes served as a medium through which religious authorities maintained their surveillance of the underworld.⁶⁴ Repressive regulations on prostitutes were instrumental in maintaining male hegemony in Seville's early modern patriarchal society.⁶⁵

Erica-Marie Benabou likewise perceived prostitution in early modern Paris to be moulded by a corrupt state that oppressed the lower strata of society. She exposed the manner how the lieutenant and law enforcement officers controlled the lives of prostitutes and unchaste clerics. She argued that notwithstanding energetic measures to suppress prostitution, the occupation persisted and continued to provide a lucrative living for many women.⁶⁶ Benabou identified three categories of prostitutes: the courtesans who enjoyed protection and were allegedly beyond the reach of the law, brothel madams and their dependents who were likewise shielded because they were a useful medium through which the police sourced

⁶⁰ For a comprehensive review of histories of prostitution see Vern L. Bullough, Lilli Sentz (eds.), *Prostitution: A Guide to Sources, 1960-1990*, (New York, Garland, 1992).

⁶¹ Perry, (1980), 22.

⁶² Perry, (1980), 212-221.

⁶³ Perry, (1980), 224, 226.

⁶⁴ Perry, (1980), 212.

⁶⁵ Perry, (1980), 233, 234. Also see Benabou, (1987), 501-503. Bénabou claimed that policing in eighteenth-century Paris was only repressive on low class prostitutes - courtesans and brothel madams enjoyed varying degrees of freedom and autonomy.

⁶⁶ Benabou, (1987), 281,

information on criminals, and the low class prostitutes who were oppressed.⁶⁷ Benabou's neat tripartite classification is, however, unrealistic. Sex work, like any other commercial practice is highly volatile. Attempts at classification are arduous and highly inaccurate. Recent modern histories of prostitution tend to take a more fluid approach.

In the early 1990s, legal records from late Renaissance Rome were investigated by Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen. Their aim was to understand cultural perceptions and attitudes on ordinary people embedded in trials.⁶⁸ They mostly concurred with Perry and Benabou in suggesting that notwithstanding prohibitions and control, prostitutes in Rome persisted in being an integral part of the social landscape.⁶⁹ Repressive measures encouraged prostitutes in late Renaissance Rome to employ different strategies to protect themselves, overcome difficulties and maintain their income and status.⁷⁰ T. V. Cohen and E. S. Cohen argued that high profile prostitutes in Rome were never beyond the reach of the law. They were highly skilled women who ably negotiated their way around regulations and policing to maintain their occupation and their social standing.⁷¹ This perspective purporting the innovation and the initiative of courtesans to actively work on tasks in order to address restrictions hinted at entrepreneurship. T. V. Cohen and E. S. Cohen however did not pursue this any further. The ability of various courtesans to participate in a 'theatre of public competition' was explored by various historians. Margaret F. Rosenthal, for instance, showed how the literary works of sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco endeavoured to support defenceless women and expose power conflicts between men and women.⁷² M. Rosenthal, like other writers on courtesans like for instance Guido Ruggiero⁷³ and Fiora A. Bassanese,⁷⁴ viewed Renaissance courtesan to be victims of patriarchy and new social imperatives.

⁶⁷ Benabou, (1987), 495-508.

⁶⁸ Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen, *Words and Deeds*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 1993), 3.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Cohen, 'Seen and Unknown: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late Sixteenth-Century Rome' in *Renaissance Studies* 12:3 (1998), 394.

⁷⁰ T.V. Cohen & E. S. Cohen, (1993), 189-199.

⁷¹ T.V. Cohen & E. S. Cohen, (1993), 91-101.

⁷² Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan*, (Chicago, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 9, 10.

⁷³ Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance*, (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 26, 38. See also Guido Ruggiero, 'Who's Afraid of Giuliana Napolitana? Pleasure, Fear, and Imagining the Arts of the Renaissance Courtesan', in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (eds.), (New York, Oxford University Press, 2006), 280-292.

⁷⁴ Fiora A. Bassanese, 'Selling the Self; or, the Epistolary Production of Renaissance Courtesans' in *Italian Women Writers from the Renaissance to the Present: Revising the Canon*, Maria Ornella Marotti (ed.), (Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University, 1996), 69-78.

Through his study on prostitutes in eighteenth-century London, Tony Henderson, concurred with previous studies in arguing that prostitutes were victims of macro structural forces. He showed how prostitution in the capital was affected by economic, social and familial circumstances and policing agencies.⁷⁵ Most streetwalkers were underprivileged migrants from Ireland or from the countryside, who tended to gravitate in areas with looser police control, cheap lodging and docks where sailors used to disembark.⁷⁶ Henderson argued that the London police adopted the functionalist approach and generally accommodated prostitution through compromises because they believed that it fulfilled a public requirement. Moreover the crime was generally victimless and the police had other more urgent matters to attend to.⁷⁷ The idea of prostitutes being victims of policing and victims of an authoritarian state remerged in studies on prostitution in places that adopted Lutheran, Calvinist and Protestant Reformation moral policies. In her study on women in Augsburg, Lyndal Roper showed how as a consequence of reform in Protestant areas prostitutes were abhorred and demonised.⁷⁸ Ulinka Rublack's study dovetailed into Roper's findings in showing that in Memmingen and in other Early Modern German communities the Reformation resulted in harsher law enforcement measures that oppressed prostitutes.⁷⁹ She argued that prostitution was one of the very few independent labour options open to women who were otherwise practically completely excluded from the job market.⁸⁰ Albeit perceiving prostitutes to be victims of society and the state, Rublack's argument joined forces with dominant theories purporting sex work to be a rational occupational choice based on economic considerations.

Paul Griffiths's findings on prostitution in early modern London were situated on this continuum. In congruence with Perry, Henderson and Rublack, he adopted a criminal approach to prostitution and placed prostitutes in the victimhood camp. He revealed how early modern London's quick growth gave rise to different crimes including prostitution. Prostitution was one of the causes and consequences of the city's 'sprawl and squalor'.⁸¹ From 1550-1660 they were an integral part of Bridewell's 'misfits'; victims of a rapidly expanding city.⁸² Bridewell's early modern prostitutes were embedded in squalid, criminal

⁷⁵ Henderson, (1999), 2, 166-190.

⁷⁶ Henderson, (1999), 52-74.

⁷⁷ Henderson, (1999), 104-139, 141-165.

⁷⁸ Lyndal Roper, 'Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg', in *History Workshop Journal* xix (1985), 19, 21.

⁷⁹ Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999), 135.

⁸⁰ Rublack, (1999), 153.

⁸¹ See for instance Griffiths, (2008), 199-201.

⁸² Griffiths, (2008), 21.

infested fringe areas.⁸³ Griffiths' study however ventures beyond offering empirical descriptions of Bridewell's prostitutes and the dimensions of their work. He focuses on the emotions and anxieties of the individuals involved in the trade and suggests that one had to experience what it was like to be vagrant and pregnant with nowhere left to turn to, to understand prostitution.⁸⁴ Albeit subscribing to the socialist feminist sub-culture theory by arguing that economic conditions encouraged involvement in sex work, Griffiths draws heavily on individual experiences and links prostitution to emotion work. London's prostitutes like thieves, paupers and vagrants, were lost people but nonetheless resourceful.⁸⁵

The concept of prostitution being a female commercial enterprise driven by emotions, material wants and social desires was expounded by Tessa Storey in her research on prostitutes in Counter-Reformation Rome. Through her study on Roman judicial records, Storey revealed complex female economic and social initiatives inherent to sex work.⁸⁶ She acknowledged that squalor, poverty, marital breakdown and/or abandonment were important motivators. She however argued that prostitution was generally a cognitive choice driven by economic pursuits. The economic pursuits of Roman prostitutes were nonetheless negatively affected by the Counter-Reformation.⁸⁷ In her study on prostitution in early modern Amsterdam, Lotte Van de Pol likewise contended that prostitutes were oppressed by the authorities and society in many ways. Nonetheless it was an important social phenomenon and an economic activity.⁸⁸ In so doing, similar to all aforementioned contemporary colleagues, Storey and Van de Pol joined forces with earlier historians and confirmed Parent-Duchâtelet's 1835 findings. This traditional approach to prostitution is monolithic in consistently representing prostitutes as victims. In academia this feminist model rallies significant support.⁸⁹ It is nonetheless a reductionist model. Studies on early modern prostitution in Malta appear to be stuck in the same rut.

Historical Writing on Early Modern Prostitution in Valletta

Much has been written about early modern female prostitution in Europe. This lively debate appears to have circumvented the Maltese Islands. Prostitution was a social concern in

⁸³ Griffiths, (2008), 200, 201.

⁸⁴ Griffiths, (2008), 21.

⁸⁵ Griffiths, (2008), 422.

⁸⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 162-187.

⁸⁷ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 134, 135.

⁸⁸ Lotte Van de Pol, *The Burgher and the Whore*, Liz Waters (trans.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 199.

⁸⁹ Ronald Weitzer, 'Prostitution: Facts and Fictions', in *Contexts* vi, 4, (2007), 1.

Valletta, as it was elsewhere in Europe.⁹⁰ Scholarly interest in the enterprise, however, only started to surface in the last three decades. The first monograph on the history of prostitution in Malta 1530-2012, appeared in November 2014, with the section on prostitutes in early modern Malta being largely a compilation of previously published morsels of information.⁹¹ The last fifteen years have been particularly fruitful as interest in the history of women in Malta started to attract increasing interest in the topic. Information on prostitution emanating mostly from the archives of the Inquisition and the *Processi* of the *Magna Curia Castellaniae* revealed previously unknown aspects of the trade.⁹² New emerging insights on sex work in Hospitaller Malta demonstrated that the vicissitudes of prostitution are largely unexplored.

In 1965, in the introduction to his book *The Oldest Profession*, Lujo Bassermann said that taboos were always imposed on prostitution in historical literature.⁹³ Sicily got its first history of prostitution in 1971.⁹⁴ In Naples the first study on prostitution appeared in 1994.⁹⁵ If in the southern part of Europe, in relatively large societies like Sicily and Naples, histories of prostitution only started to appear forty years ago, one understands, that the reluctance on behalf of historians to investigate the topic in Malta may have been the result of underlying apprehensions about censorship and morality. Lingering concerns, typical of a polite society, may have precluded twentieth-century historians from participating in debates on prostitution.⁹⁶

Prostitution during the period under study (1630-1798) was regulated.⁹⁷ Laws prohibiting prostitutes (*donne di mal nome, ò cattiva fama*) from walking in the streets after six o'clock in the evening, or keeping their doors open between sunset and sunrise,⁹⁸ penalties

⁹⁰Felice Antonio de Christophoro d'Avalos, *Tableau Historique et Politique de Malte et de ses Habitants*, (London, Schulze et Dean, 1818), 36.

⁹¹E. Attard, (2014), 24-42.

⁹²For new information on prostitution emanating from the archives of the Inquisition see for instance Amanda Schembri, *Women in Hospitaller Malta 1565-1610*, unpublished M.A. Hospitaller Studies dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011, 97-111. For information on prostitution emanating from the Castellania processi see for instance R. Attard, R. Azzopardi, (2011), 101-144.

⁹³Bassermann, (1967), viii.

⁹⁴Antonino Cutrera, *Storia Della Prostituzione in Sicilia*, (Palermo, Editori Stampatori Associati, 1971).

⁹⁵Salvatore di Giacomo, *La Prostituzione in Napoli nei Secoli XV, XVI e XVII*, (Naples, Tipolitografia Volpicelli, 1994).

⁹⁶cf. Melissa Hope Ditmore, *Prostitution and Sex Work*, (Westport, Greenwood Press, 2006), xxv.

⁹⁷A.O.M. 99, f.62 (1591). Liber Conciliorum. Chapter Five Regulating prostitution and Chapter Six Control, Crime and Punishment explore the different legal and law enforcement measures implemented to control prostitution.

⁹⁸*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, Della Nostra Gran Corte della Castellania, Item 40, 7. (1724). The Castellania bell was a special bell that struck curfew at sunset it was nicknamed the *Ruffiana* (the procuress). See Giovanni Bonello, 'Notes for a history of time-keeping in Malta', in *Histories of Malta* Vol.II, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2001), 76. Churches rang the 'Pater Noster' at 04:00hrs to wake the country folk to start off a day's work in the fields away from the scorching sun. See Anthony Zarb Dimech, 'Bells and Bell Ringing in Malta', in *The Malta Independent*, 7 January 2014.

for innkeepers and tavern keepers who allowed prostitutes into their premises or served them wine, banishment and numerous other regulations and penalties restricted the enterprise.⁹⁹ Some laws targeted prostitutes whilst others were applicable to all licentious women. The first scholarly contribution on prostitution in Malta came from the field of medicine. Paul Cassar's *Medical History of Malta* published in 1964 included a brief discussion on prostitution under a subheading entitled venereal diseases.¹⁰⁰ P. Cassar suggested that the earliest reference to the existence of the 'French disease' dated back to the sixteenth century, when Malta was ruled by the Knights of St John. Notwithstanding their vow of chastity, knights were known to frequent courtesans. According to P. Cassar the presence of significant numbers of prostitutes and promiscuity led to the propagation of venereal diseases.¹⁰¹ P. Cassar indicated that he perceived prostitutes to be victims of the knights' decadent morality.¹⁰² Forty years later Charles Savona-Ventura, a gynaecologist, followed in P. Cassar's footsteps. Savona-Ventura, however, took a different stand point. He argued that venereal diseases and illegitimacy were a reflection of rampant prostitution; the 'fruit of sin'.¹⁰³ P. Cassar thus subscribed to the feminist school of thought in considering prostitutes to be victims of male lust, whilst Savona-Ventura evidently perceived prostitution to be an unqualified evil. These two points of view reflected binary perceptions on prostitution dating back to the Victorian era.¹⁰⁴

The first socio-historical perspective on prostitution in eighteenth-century Malta appeared in 1988. Prostitution was complementary to Frans Ciappara's study on marriage in Malta in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Ciappara mentioned husband desertion,¹⁰⁶ the advances of philanderer knights,¹⁰⁷ and late marriages¹⁰⁸ as possible instigators. He suggested that prostitution was poverty-driven.¹⁰⁹ Urban environments, population growth, the presence of numerous single men and visiting merchants, were other possible scenarios that provided

⁹⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 236. (c1709). Bandi, *Diritto Municipale di Malta*, 182, 317, 319, 331. (1784)

¹⁰⁰ P. Cassar, (1964), 224- 234.

¹⁰¹ P. Cassar, (1964), 226, 227.

¹⁰² P. Cassar, (1964), 226. 'It was inevitable that the conduct of the knights should exercise a pernicious effect on the morals of the people'. See also Ciappara, (1988), 83. 'The Knights of St John, supposedly dedicated to a life of celibacy, were a major cause of this sorrowful state of affairs.'

¹⁰³ Savona-Ventura, (2003), 26 - 30. For links between venereal disease and prostitution also see Bonello, (2002), 24, 25, C. Cassar, (2002), 175, Ciappara, (1988), 81, 82. R. Attard and R. Azzopardi, (2011), 146.

¹⁰⁴ Self, (2003), 16.

¹⁰⁵ Ciappara, (1988), 81.

¹⁰⁶ Ciappara, (1988), 81.

¹⁰⁷ Ciappara, (1988), 83.

¹⁰⁸ Ciappara, (1988), 33-43.

¹⁰⁹ Ciappara, (1988), 172.

fertile ground for prostitution.¹¹⁰ Prostitution, according to Ciappara, preserved the authority of matrimony.¹¹¹ Married persons enjoyed privileges that prostitutes did not have. For instance a married woman could exercise her right to evict a single female neighbour from a house if she suspected illicit behaviour.¹¹² Marriage was the ideal goal for all women. Ciappara argued that prostitutes were largely victims of circumstance. He suggested that prostitutes who entered respectable society were few and far between.¹¹³ He, however, had no answers for Maria *ċ-ċkejna* (the tiny one), a prostitute who ran her own commercial practice, or the prostitutes who at great personal risk visited sailors on boats, prisoners in jail (see Figure 1.1) or men in monasteries. He proposed that such irrational behaviour may have stemmed from extreme poverty.¹¹⁴ The point of commonality between all these women however was unlikely to have been poverty but rather the fact that they all assumed risks in venturing out in search of opportunities.



Figure 1.1 A rare early modern ex voto painting depicting a woman attempting to enter a prison..¹¹⁵

This ex voto painting was once in the church of Our Lady in Rabat. It is now exhibited in the Wignacourt Museum, Rabat.

Oil on canvas 46cms x 38cms.

Acknowledgement: Wignacourt Museum Rabat, Malta.

¹¹⁰ Ciappara, (1988), 172.

¹¹¹ Ciappara, (1988), 171.

¹¹² Ciappara, (1988), 171.

¹¹³ Ciappara, (1988), 81.

¹¹⁴ Ciappara, (2000), 172, 173.

¹¹⁵ V.F.G.A. stands for *Votum Fecit Gratiam Accepit* (Latin: Vow Made, Graces Accepted)

Other significant contributions to the social history of prostitution appeared in Carmel Cassar's 2000 and 2002 studies on women, society, identity and gender roles. C. Cassar mentioned male hegemony, high rates of immigration, waning kinship ties and lack of honour as potential factors that may have instigated prostitution.¹¹⁶ He showed how oppressive measures on women escalated in the post-Tridentine period. Despite largely endorsing victimhood, C. Cassar ended with a perfunctory statement saying that notwithstanding the fact that it was oppressive 'prostitution actually provided women with financial gain and autonomy often far superior to the subsistence level of existence offered by work in the textile industry or in domestic service'.¹¹⁷ Similar to Rublack, C. Cassar perceives prostitution to be economically driven. Anne Brogini's views on prostitution in early modern Malta concur with Ciappara and C. Cassar. She perceives prostitutes to have been integral to Valletta's marginal societies. She suggested that prostitutes were slaves who sold sex to survive.¹¹⁸ In 2013, David Rossi reiterated ideas on prostitutes' lives being 'weighed down by poverty' and that 'young maidens employed their physical charm to lure nobles, knights and seamen to survive in an ambience that humiliated and dishonoured them'.¹¹⁹ In 2016 Mark Camilleri suggested that 'the sexuality of women was seen as an extension of the wealth of the family'.¹²⁰ P. Cassar, Savona-Ventura, Ciappara, C. Cassar, Brogini, Rossi and Camilleri thus unanimously cast women as victims.

Current theories on prostitution in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Valletta, offer a 'blinkered' view of prostitution. Ciappara's afore-mentioned attempt to tackle the subject was interrupted with a statement saying that 'no comprehensive study of prostitution in Malta could be made, since reference to it was only casual'.¹²¹ He reiterated his statement in a later publication saying that 'instances of deviant sex', were 'too scanty to allow any form of generalisation'.¹²² The same was argued by C. Cassar, who contended that evidence on the workings of prostitution in Hospitaller Malta was 'scanty'.¹²³ Conversely Alexander Bonnici, who scoured the archives of the Roman Inquisition in Malta, argued that prostitution was 'the most common accusation brought against women in the Tribunal of the Inquisition' over a

¹¹⁶ C. Cassar, (2002), 49, 135, 138.

¹¹⁷ C. Cassar, (2002), 246.

¹¹⁸ Anne Brogini, 'Marginalités et contrôle social dans le port de Malte à l'époque modern (XVI – XVII siècles)' in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, lxi, (2004), 141-156.

¹¹⁹ See Rossi, (2013), 33. C. Cassar, (2002), 246.

¹²⁰ Camilleri, (2016), 29.

¹²¹ Ciappara, (1988), 80, 81. 'All the same, no comprehensive study of this 'oldest of professions' can be made since reference to it is only casual'.

¹²² Ciappara, (2000), 174.

¹²³ C. Cassar, (2002), 166.

period ranging from 1561 to 1798.¹²⁴ Thomas Freller concurred with Bonnici in saying that early modern travelogues provided rich and varied information on female prostitution in Hospitaller Malta.¹²⁵ Emanuel Buttigieg suggested that ‘archival evidence for the sexual exploits of the Hospitallers was not scant’.¹²⁶ The present dissertation revealed that legal archives, notarial archives, parish records, early modern diaries and contemporary narratives offer a wealth of information on female prostitution in early modern Valletta. These sources revealed important insights on the trade that may offer new perspectives on the practice and its practitioners.

Narratives on Prostitutes/ Prostitutes in Narratives

Ruth Mazo Karras and Laura J. Rosenthal suggested that narratives could be an effective source from where historians could draw socio-cultural ideas on prostitution.¹²⁷ Through her study on the role of the figure of prostitutes in English eighteenth-century narratives, Rosenthal identified a significant shift in the way prostitutes were represented. Prostitutes predominantly depicted as women consumed by carnal desires were gradually transformed into gold diggers.¹²⁸ Rosenthal showed how this coincided with Great Britain’s eighteenth-century transformation into a commercial society.¹²⁹ By placing sexuality (understood to define the private sphere) in the market place (the public sphere), prostitutes undermined the separation of the public and private spheres. Prostitutes in eighteenth-century English narratives thus represented the sacrifice of part of the self for commerce. This reflected prevailing conflicts and negotiations of personal identity in Britain’s emergent commercial society.¹³⁰ None of the aforementioned theorists on prostitution in London suggested that some prostitutes may have been fortune hunters.

In Valletta in c.1650, Frà Fabrizio Cagliola (1604-1665) who was a chaplain of the Order¹³¹ wrote a book entitled *Le Disavventure Marinaresche*.¹³² One of the characters in Cagliola’s narrative was an unnamed gentleman from Lecce, Italy. He was a wealthy, well-built and handsome young business man. All the courtesans in Valletta pursued him

¹²⁴ A. Bonnici, (1993), 331.

¹²⁵ Freller, (2009), 521-604

¹²⁶ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 130.

¹²⁷ Mazo Karras, (1996), 9. L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 1.

¹²⁸ L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 1-3.

¹²⁹ L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 1-3.

¹³⁰ L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 7.

¹³¹ The Conventual Chaplains of the Order formed the ecclesiastical ranks. They did not have to be noble, but they had to be of respectable birth. They were expected to be in the Convent (Valletta), serving at the Conventual Church, the Holy Infirmary and on board the galleys. See E. Buttigieg, (2011), 54.

¹³² The book was also referred to as *Gabriello Disavventurato*.

enthusiastically. One of the courtesans who ran after this gentleman was young, rich and beautiful. She was more flagrant than all the rest (*veniva più delle altre dalla gioventù millantata*) and was sought after by many men. Her suitors used to parade ostentatiously in front of her house (*le facesse sotto le finestre il zerbinotto*) and brought her many gifts. Her mother hated her lifestyle and constantly scolded her and warned her that these men would take advantage of her. Moreover they posed a serious threat to her health. She cautioned her about the French disease that was hardly curable; matters could be even worse if she contracted the German, Spanish or Italian diseases. The courtesan took no heed and persisted in her ways. Shortly after venereal disease started to ravish her body and the gentleman from Lecce was infected too. Despite the fact that the disease transformed him and caused him great pain, he was so infatuated by her that he continued to frequent her and shower her with luxury gifts.¹³³

Cagliola's narrative revealed how seventeenth-century society perceived prostitution to be the downfall of women and men who engaged in it.¹³⁴ The prostitute depicted societies' concerns with vanity and material pursuits, fear of venereal disease and the destruction courtesans brought upon young healthy educated foreign males. The man from Lecce was likely to have personified young knights. In this case the courtesan's sexuality that reflected the private sphere was placed in a foreign public sphere thus symbolising the sacrifice of part of the self to foreign ideas. This may reflect prevailing 'conflicts and negotiations of personal identity' in Malta's emergent seventeenth-century European cosmopolitan society.¹³⁵ The courtesan is hereby portrayed as an incorrigible daughter and a person consumed by material wants. Family upbringing, lack of discipline, overindulgent parents and ego-centrism are factors that histories of prostitution have so far largely ignored.

A sonnet written in 1759 by an unknown writer was discovered in one of Don Ignazio Saverio Mifsud's diaries. Mifsud stated that he transcribed it in protest (*per motive dizigo*).¹³⁶ This literary work revealed ulterior socio-cultural shifts:

¹³³ Fabrizio Cagliola, *Le Disavventure Marinaresche*, (Malta, Malta Letteraria, 1764), 97-100. The characters in this extract are unnamed.

¹³⁴ For a study on the cultural aspects of Maltese life that emerge through a linguistic study of Frà Fabrizio Cagliola's *Disavventure Marinaresche* see Alessandro Aresti, 'Letteratura maltese in lingua italiana. Le disavventure marinaresche di Fabrizio Cagliola,' in *Letterature & Quaderni della Facoltà di Lingue e letterature straniere dell'Università di Cagliari*, Vol. xiii, (2011), 7-21.

¹³⁵ Aresti, (2011), 7-21.

¹³⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 13 ff.134-135. (August 1759). 'da un anonimo critico fatto e sfacciatamente pubblicato il sudetto sonetto qui registrato per motivo di zigo'. Zigo like the term zigada and zigò have the same meaning they derive from the verb zigar meaning to shout. See Marisa Vidulli, *Antichi Proverbi e Detti Veneti*, (Milan, Lampi di Stampa, 2009), 92.

Whether it is zeal or passion I am not able to tell
 One by one, they were visited
 The women of the Mandaraggio, and interrogated
 With tremendous audacity, they were questioned about their husbands
 I became increasingly doubtful about what I was hearing
 Whores perfunctorily called up,
 And with friendly truisms explored
 There was a point in time, when I dared not laugh
 Zeal I would never think, because it was imprudent
 The infamous episcopate: It was not passion
 Because it [the episcopate] committed no crime
 Doubt makes solution difficult
 I will speak my mind
 The author of all this is a big billygoat.¹³⁷

When this sonnet was published,¹³⁸ the head of the ‘infamous’ episcopate of Malta (that called up whores (*bagasce*) and ‘explored them in a cursory manner’) was Bishop Bartolomeo Rull (1757-1769).¹³⁹ Rull was a sickly man who entrusted the running of the diocese in the hands of his Vicar General Azzopardi Castelletti. It is likely that the ‘billygoat’ who invited the whores to the Bishop’s palace was the Vicar General. Vicar Azzopardi Castelletti was a powerful, violent and abusive priest.¹⁴⁰ Similar to what was happening in other European countries, especially in France and Britain enlightened thinkers in eighteenth-century Valletta were clearly becoming vociferously critical about their religious leaders.¹⁴¹ The sonnet revealed that some high ranking clergymen took advantage of lower class prostitutes. The exercise was performed under the pretext of a religious inquiry aimed at gathering information on the constituents of the Mandraggio. The scapegoats of the episcopate’s infamous exercise were the *Mandaraggiane* (women residing in the Mandraggio

¹³⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 13, f.134, 135. (1759). See Appendix 1.

¹³⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 13, f.134, 135. (1759). ‘da un anonimo critico fatto e sfacciatamente pubblicato’

¹³⁹ A. Bonnici, (1992), 282.

¹⁴⁰ A. Bonnici., 282-284.

¹⁴¹ See for instance Henry Roobke, *Atheism*, (Berkshire, Nash Ford Publishing, 1974), 9. Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) and David Hume’s various writings concerning problems of religion are amongst the most influential enlightened contributions on this topic. In France, Voltaire (1694-1778) advocated freedom of religion, freedom of expression and separation of church and State. In Britain, Scottish writer David Hume’s (1711-1776) writings sought to discredit and unmask the doctrines of religious belief. For a discussion on enlightened ideas in early modern Malta see Frans Ciappara, *Enlightenment and Reform in Malta 1740-1798*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2006).

area of Valletta) who were largely low class married women and the *bagasce* of the Mandraggio who were considered to form part of the group of the abject poor. These women were likely to have been targeted because they were the more vulnerable and least likely to have a voice.

The low class married women of the Mandraggio were differentiated from the *bagasce*. This revealed the otherness of *bagasce*.¹⁴² The women who were not *bagasce* were asked intimate questions about their husbands with tremendous audacity (*tremendo ardire*) whereas the latter were intimately explored in conformity to a norm (*pro forma*). This verse may point to the fact that *bagasce* were subjected to higher forms of abuse than ordinary *Mandraggiane*. It also points to the possibility of periodical official church control. The fact that they were ‘explored’ indicated sexual objectification. The exploration was implemented through friendly talk which may lead one to understand that *bagasce* were beguiled by church authorities and/or abused. The author’s empathy towards *bagasce* re-emerges in a subsequent verse where he/she said that the exercise was no laughing matter.

The *bagasce* in this sonnet were adopted to highlight the corruptness of the episcopate and the fact that some high ranking clerics sought to abuse even the downtrodden. The author said that the foolishness of the orchestrators of this clerical exercise was plain for all to see. Alexander Bonnici suggested that the ordinary Maltese folk were not in a position to criticise their religious leaders. Harsh punishments and persecutions awaited those who raised their voice.¹⁴³ One can however at least arguably say that notwithstanding such threats some members of society questioned and berated clerical abuses. In this sonnet the figure of the prostitute may represent the forceful intrusions and impositions of clerics on private life. The prostitute was in church territory not through her own initiative but through initiatives taken by church officials. The prostitute’s sexuality was in this case placed in the religious sphere (the Bishop’s palace). This time the figure of the prostitute was used to highlight the corruption of certain clerics and to invoke empathy as well as to possibly incite public ire and protest.¹⁴⁴ The fact that some people were compassionate towards prostitutes, the fact that they were victimised by clerics, notions of ‘otherness’ and the fact that a hierarchy of prostitutes existed, to date, did not surface in studies on early modern prostitution in Malta.

¹⁴² On the ‘othering’ of the prostitute across a spectrum of historical periods and information sources from Plato, to feminism, and media portraits see Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁴³ A. Bonnici, (1993), 314.

¹⁴⁴ For perceptions on ecclesiastical attitudes towards prostitutes in eighteenth-century Paris and the reasons why they were hounded and oppressed by the police see Benabou, (1987), 121-142.

Another literary work that featured on 18 March 1772 in the *Giornale di Notizie* (log-book) of Don Giuseppe Agius, mentioned a comedy written by a certain Don Nicola Capace a Dominican friar who was a letter printer.¹⁴⁵ According to the diarist the comedy was eight pages long and was highly satirical. The protagonists of the story were unnamed but it was clear to all that the satire targeted the playwright's assistants *Frà Gio Batta Mallia* and Don Saverio. Don Nicola Capace confided this information to a *donna librara* (a woman of loose morals - possibly a prostitute).¹⁴⁶ The script was given to a certain Don Nicola Savona who without seeing or reading it inadvertently gave it to Don Saverio. Through the said woman Don Saverio confirmed that the satire in Capace's comedy was aimed at ridiculing him and his colleague. He reported the matter to the Grand Master who promptly sent his head squire (*Maestro Scudiere*) and his fiscal officer (*fiscale*) to arrest Capace and confiscate all his manuscripts. Capace was accused of libel. He was imprisoned in the underground prison cell (*guva*) at Fort Manuel.¹⁴⁷

This narrative showed internal conflict within the Dominican community in Valletta. Two people betrayed Capace; Don Nicola Savona and the loose woman. Savona's betrayal was naive and unintentional. He tried to remedy his wrongdoing by confronting Don Saverio. In contrast to the beguiled *bagasce* in the aforementioned sonnet, the loose woman is hereby depicted as a person who betrayed clerics. Terms selected and/or possibly composed by writers to refer to women were case-sensitive. A wide range of terms ranging from the least to the most derogatory were adopted to depict women who were victims, bad or diseased. These terms generally embody connotations linked to prostitution. Shannon Bell showed how male writers, commentators and decision makers producing the 'failed' prostitute body to promote the reproductive role of females and suppress other forms of sexuality. Bell argued that the process of 'othering' was perpetuated through the second wave of feminism in the 1980s.¹⁴⁸ The prostitute figure in Don Giuseppe Agius's diary represented deception and the threat women of loose morals posed to religious men. The figure of the prostitute is hereby

¹⁴⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 182, o.p. (18 March 1772). This *Giornale di Notizie* pertaining to Reverend Giuseppe Agius is composed of two volumes. Vol. I, 1054-1758, Vol. II, 1770-1775. The former consists mostly of extracts from the standard historians of the Order. The latter was used by Roderick Cavaliero in his *The Last Crusaders*, but was regarded very sceptically by Ettore Rossi in his 'Il Dominio dei Cavalieri di Malta a Tripoli e i rapporti dell'Ordine con Tripoli nei secoli seguenti,' in *Archivum Melitense*, vi, (1924), 84-85.

¹⁴⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 226-228. Storey says that the term *donna libera* belonged to the mental world of prostitutes and courtesans. It was associated with the concept of a woman being free from marital ties and free to dispose of her body as she deemed fit.

¹⁴⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 182, o.p. (18 March 1772).

¹⁴⁸ Bell, (1994), 12. For examples of second wave feminist histories of prostitution that 'other' the prostitute body see for instance Perry (1980), Walkowitz (1980), Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*, (New York, Basic Books, 1987), Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, (New York, Oxford University Press 1986).

portrayed as a person who betrayed religious persons rather than a victim of religious abuse. The dichotomy between the perception of *bagasce* as conveyed through the sonnet and that of the *donna librara* in Don Capace's story revealed that in eighteenth-century society lay perceptions differed from religious perceptions. Lay society may have perceived prostitutes to be victims of clerical abuse whereas in religious thought prostitutes were deceptive and evil. These accounts highlight the fact that contemporary perceptions on prostitutes were constellational and hybrid. It also highlights various pitfalls in current approaches to prostitution and the fact that a monolithic approach may have obscured certain aspects of early modern prostitution that still need to be explored.

Court proceedings and deeds drawn up by some early modern prostitutes in Valletta were likewise useful in reconstituting narratives using a micro-historical approach. In March 1702, Ursula Gatt who was identified as a *publica meretrice* in the parish of Porto Salvo, passed away.¹⁴⁹ She had succumbed to an illness that had afflicted her for fifteen months. Ursula was the estranged wife of Marcello Gatt who was incarcerated in the slaves' prison. For twenty-five years she had been living in a house next to the Augustinian Monastery, in Valletta. Five months before her death, Notary Gaspare Domenico Chircop drew up her nineteen-page will where she bequeathed her money, property and goods to her relatives and to the Carmelite and Augustinian Orders in Valletta.¹⁵⁰ The testatrix included a provision stating that three hundred and forty *scudi* were to be transferred to the *Monasterio Convertitarum* (the monastery of St Mary Magdalene, Valletta).¹⁵¹ An additional ten *scudi* were to be paid to the Magdalene sisters for High Mass (*Messa Cantata*) to be held on the thirtieth day after her death for the repose of her soul and the forgiveness of her sins.¹⁵²

A few weeks after her demise the Magdalene nuns filed a lawsuit against her brother Filandro Zammit whom she had named as her universal heir. The nuns claimed that the three hundred and forty *scudi* she awarded them did not reflect one fifth of her entire possessions.¹⁵³ In 1703, different witnesses were summoned by the Bishop's Court (*Gran Corte Vescovile*) to testify. According to Don Dionysius Dalli, the parish priest of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo, in the 1698 and 1699 *Status Animarum* registers Ursula Gatt was

¹⁴⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.66v. (1676-1786).

¹⁵⁰ N.A.V. R.182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop Vol. IV, f. 182v-191v. (1701-1702).

¹⁵¹ A.O.M. 6401, ff. 431-441 (1652). This monastery for penitent prostitutes was founded in 1595 by the Order of St John. See Christine Muscat, *Magdalene Nuns and Penitent Prostitutes, Valletta*, (Malta, BDL Publishing, 2013).

¹⁵² N.A.V. R.182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop 1701-1702, Vol. IV, f.190v.

¹⁵³ C. Muscat, (2013), 132. An Apostolic Brief dated 16 December 1602 stipulated that heirs of deceased prostitutes were legally bound to transfer one fifth of their property to the monastery of St Mary Magdalene. See also NLM. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. I, f. 435 (1695).

singled out as a *publica meretrice* and she did not adhere to the Paschal precept.¹⁵⁴ Other lay persons testified that she was a wealthy prostitute who possessed two houses in Valletta, jewels, furniture, fund investments and thousands of *scudi* all earned through the impudent use of her body. Another group of witnesses who were all Augustinian or Carmelite clerics argued that she was a modest, generous and pious woman who had inherited a substantial fortune from her father Silvestro Zammit. They said that Ursula was a victim of domestic violence and for twelve years prior to her death she confessed, attended mass and received the Holy Sacraments on a regular basis. She was a great benefactress of the Carmelite and the Augustinian Orders in Valletta and also donated substantial sums of money to the needy. Some clerics also said that she fervently wanted to dedicate her entire life to the service of God and the Catholic Church. She requested to join the cloistered Magdalenes but was turned down. Father Pietro Antonio Ciantri, a Carmelite friar, informed her that the only way that she could become a Magdalene nun was if her husband took vows and joined the Carmelite order.¹⁵⁵

Fifteen years after Ursula's demise, Maria Fioccare, another wealthy prostitute from Valletta was in notary Gaspare Domenico Chircop's office drawing up her last will. The will may have taken a few days to draw up as it was forty-five pages long, plus a twenty-five page inventory.¹⁵⁶ In her will the testatrix's stated that she wanted to rectify her actions with her creator by using the money she had earned through prostitution (*il mio denaro accumulato dal peccato*) for the salvation of souls. She donated her estate to the *Confraternità della Carità* and established various pious legacies. One of the legacies included a provision for young penitent prostitutes. Her last wishes stipulated that this fund should be awarded to the most beautiful, young prostitutes and should go towards paying their victuals and all their other needs. This would enable them to stay away from prostitution forever.¹⁵⁷ On 21 October 1717, Maria Fioccare passed away. She was eighty-four years old.¹⁵⁸ In April 1765, forty-

¹⁵⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.86v. (1676-1786). Io sottoscritto Parrocco di Santa Maria di Porto Salvo della Valletta fò fede come nelli rolli, che si fanno ogni anno di tutta la parrocchia ritrovò nel rollo del 1698; è in quello del 1699 come la fù Ursula Gatt non habbia adempito il precetto Pascuale della Communionne annua precetta dalla Santa Madre Chiesa e di più la ritrovò nelli detti rolli segnata fra le persone scandalose, nella lista di dette persone scandalose posta nel ultimo delli rolli in fede del vero ho fatto la presente di mia propria mano hoggi li 4 Dicembre 1703.

¹⁵⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff. 68 – 85. (1676-1786)

¹⁵⁶ N.A.V. R182 Vol. XX, ff. 110v-133v. (7 October 1717). Gaspare Domenico Chircop. .

¹⁵⁷ See Rossi, (2013), 37, 46. '... che tra le zitelle qualche volte in peccato si scegli esser le più belle di aspetto, ed esse si alimentassero a spese de suoi averi nel monasterio delle repentine della Madalena, affinche ivi religiose, e custodite dalla clausura mai più non ritornino alle passate dissolutezze del vivere. Voglio ciò fatto perche è giusto per dare a Dio sodisfazione delle mie colpe, che il mio denaro accumulato dal peccato, s'impieghi a togliere anime dal peccato...'

¹⁵⁸ A.P.S. Libro dei Morti dal 1694-1728, f.224v. (21 October 1717).

eight years after her death, four young penitent prostitutes were awarded a dowry of 700 *scudi*, 100 *scudi* for the expenses of their investiture to become nuns and 15 *scudi* per annum for their victuals. This was made possible through the Fioccarei foundation. Her legacy was used to fund penitents in the Magdalene monastery up to the very last nun. On 27 October 1846 Sister Leucadia Ortese, the last representative of the nuns of Saint Mary Magdalene of the penitents passed away in the monastery of Saint Catherine. Her dowry for her monasticism amounting to 700 *scudi* was settled through the Fioccarei foundation on 19 July 1783.¹⁵⁹ One assumes that in 1783 Ortese was thus young and beautiful and on the verge of becoming a prostitute.

Ursula and Maria's testimonies revealed the intricacies of the life of some prostitutes who lived in Valletta in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At first glance they appear to be highly paradoxical. Ursula was branded as a scandalous person yet she was praised and described as a pious philanthropist. The parish priest of Porto Salvo said that she was denied the Pascal Precept because she was a *publica meretrice* but the Carmelite and Augustinian friars insisted that she confessed and received the Holy Eucharist regularly. Similar to Ursula Gatt, Maria Fioccarei appeared to have been endowed with the ability to take careful calculated risks and to manipulate situations in her favour. She managed to amass a substantial fortune through prostitution but at a later stage in her life she too organised her money and possessions to reconcile herself with her creator and pave her way to heaven. Ursula and Maria were two of Valletta's early modern prostitutes but they do not appear to have been victims, oppressed, unruly, misfits, disorderly or lost.¹⁶⁰ What would be safe to say is that both women had the moral courage to endure the full realisation of their culpable wrongdoing, the personal strength to demonstrate compulsion to escape the guilt of their past, and the social competence to recognize the need for restorative action to rebuild ruined relations and regenerate their dignity. Earlier in their lives these same aptitudes (moral courage, personal strength and social competence) for some rational reason may have moved them along the path to prostitution.

¹⁵⁹ A.O.M. Treas. Series A, 148B, 117. (19 July 1783). See also C. Muscat, (2013), 200, 201.

¹⁶⁰ For early modern Malta see for instance Rossi, (2013), 33. Camilleri, (2016). For early modern Seville see Perry, (1980), 212. Perry refers to prostitutes as 'lost women'. For London see Griffiths, (2008), 21. Griffiths refers to prostitutes as 'misfits'. Henderson, (1999), 141. Henderson refers to them as 'disorderly women'. For Madrid see Margaret E. Boyle, *Unruly Women: Performance, Penitence and Punishment in Early Modern Spain*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2014). Boyle refers to prostitutes as 'unruly'.

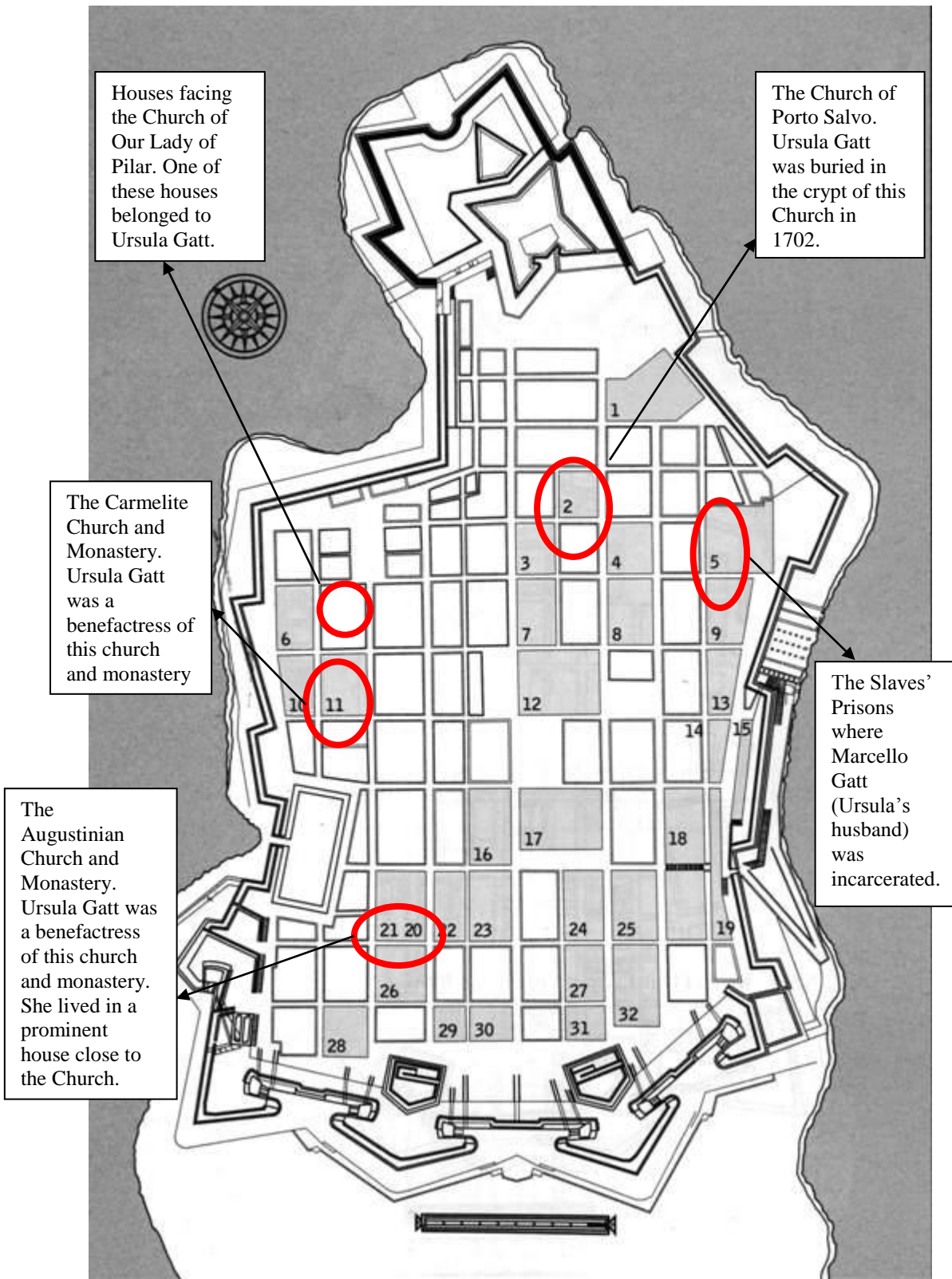


Figure 1.2: Computer reproduction of a drawing of Valletta by Giovanni Battista Vertova (1592-1647) indicating various buildings in Valletta linked to the narrative of Ursula Gatt's life preserved in manuscript sources. Acknowledgement Denis de Lucca.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Denis de Lucca, *Giovanni Battista Vertova: Diplomacy, Warfare and military engineering in early seventeenth century Malta*, (Malta, Midsea Books Ltd., 2001), 58, 59.

Conclusion

Early modern narratives as well as Ursula Gatt's and Maria Fiocari's last deeds, provide us with privileged insights on prostitutes in early modern Valletta. It would only be right and fitting to try to understand the values, ideas and beliefs embedded in these sources. Ursula Gatt and Maria Fiocari were ambitious social climbers who used the money they earned through prostitution to plan for the future. The anonymous sonnet writer revealed that people were neither impassive nor inactive about unkindly or abusive clerical attitudes towards prostitutes. Conversely Capace's account showed that some prostitutes were deceitful and posed a serious challenge to religious orders. Cagliola's narrative suggested that prostitutes were women consumed by narrow egoism. They were the product of an undisciplined society driven by the love of material pleasures and the pursuit of self-interest. These are aspects of prostitution that have not attracted the attention they deserve. In most cases, in the historiography of prostitution interest in the prostitutes themselves amounts to not much more than a token interest in their behaviour. They are many a time viewed as irrelevant for the general history of prostitution. In the process the complexity of the practice appears to have been obscured and the opportunity to broaden knowledge on early modern prostitutes may have been forfeited.

This chapter suggests that although the routes into prostitution varied greatly, with exception to coercive cases, different conditions in time and place made the practice worth pursuing and sustainable. The point of commonality is that most women who entered sex work did so because at a certain point in their lives it was meaningful and made sense. This study argues that looking at how and why it was meaningful and made sense beyond the narrow limits of monetary pursuits is worthwhile. It advocates approaching early modern prostitutes as women who controlled their destiny rather than women who were subject to a particular destiny because of macro structural variables. They were individuals with a mind, a voice, intuition, initiative and the courage to embark on a dangerous, highly risky practice. Historiography owes these women a different place in history.

Chapter 2

Sources, Myths and Realities

Introduction

In her study on prostitution in medieval England, Ruth Mazo Karras argued that a historical inquiry on how prostitutes themselves experienced their lives requires confronting sources with the experience'.¹ Her study focused on the commercial practice of prostitution and how it affected the construction of feminine sexuality. She concluded that prostitution was a choice made within a structure that did not favour women and that prostitutes were likely to be women coerced by individuals and/or economic necessity.² She nonetheless admitted that her findings revealed great diversity and adaptability.³ This chapter adopts Mazo Karras's method of research in questioning the relationship between sources and experience. The focus, however, is not limited to the commercial activity. The ambit is widened to include some of the diverse realities of the experiences of prostitution.⁴ Valletta's early modern prostitutes were not just prostitutes. They were individuals with ambitions and expectations. They were mothers, daughters, wives, spinsters, mistresses, carers, neighbours, parishioners and much more. Their lives were moulded by circumstances, driven by dreams and intricately intertwined with consanguine and affine family members, friends and various members of different communities. A holistic approach to understanding the lives of prostitutes can help in shedding light on how and why their choice was rational and meaningful to them. It will also serve to provide answers to the question on whether the mechanics of the lives of certain early modern prostitutes in Valletta reveal initiative and risk taking. These skills are integral to entrepreneurship.

The chapter explores what and how much implicit content exists in panic and behavioural scripts and early modern visitors' accounts. It seeks to reach a realistic quantitative understanding of prostitution and attempts to generate qualitative ideas on geographic origins, households, age and economic standing. It starts by examining diverse terms and descriptors connoting prostitution that were drawn out of archival sources during

¹ Mazo Karras, (1996), 146. See also fn 26.

² Mazo Karras, (1996), 65-83.

³ Mazo Karras, (1996), 65-83.

⁴ Social attitudes on prostitution and prostitutes will be analysed in Chapter Three: 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation'.

the course of this study. The wide range of labels and the ambiguity inherent to these labels shows the precarious nature of basing one's assumptions on such terms and the challenges historians face when attempting to reach a realistic quantification of numbers of prostitutes. A study of the surviving *Status Animarum* records of the parish of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo where *publiche meretrici* were singled out with a cross next to their name was instrumental in reaching a realistic approximation as well as a general idea of the experience of prostitution. The results of this analysis indicated that numbers may have been significantly less than what some early modern visitors and critics suggested. It is also possible that numbers fluctuated in synchrony with the port's vitality. An analysis of the state of souls parish censuses also revealed useful information on the provenance, age and residence of some prostitutes. In cases whereby they were sharing a household, the composition of the household was equally useful in constructing a general idea on how some prostitutes lived. The emerging realities indicated nuances and variegations. Nonetheless, one may suppose that for a significant number of early modern local and foreign women, becoming a *donna publica* in Valletta was a calculated entrepreneurial risk worth experimenting or pursuing.

Primary Archival Sources

The surviving state of souls registers of the parish of Porto Salvo and the parish of San Paolo and the *Castellania* prison records form the main source materials for analysis and interpretation in the present study. Some eighteenth-century *Status Animarum* records of the churches of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo and San Paolo Apostolo were instrumental in offering realistic approximations of overt prostitutes operating in early modern Valletta, as well as offering some qualitative details. The *Liber Status Animarum* is a register of souls compiled by the parochial clergy in conformity to the norms in the Roman Ritual codified in 1614.⁵ These parish registers along with baptism, marriage and death parish registers were required by the Papacy and from the late sixteenth-century onwards offered the parochial clergy greater control over society.⁶ A summary of the statistics were handed on to the bishop or his vicar general. The *Status Animarum* registers were primarily designed to keep an orderly list of those old enough to receive communion and those who made the obligatory annual confession and communion (normally at Easter). In reality most of these registers recorded all the population of the parish, including babies. People were listed by households, with ages,

⁵See Christopher F. Black, *Early Modern Italy, A Social History*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2001), 169.

⁶Black, (2001), 169.

names and surnames (when available). Some parish priests and their assistants were assiduous. One such priest was the Dominican Father Giacinto Maggi who was the parish priest of Porto Salvo from 1737-1759. Besides being a person of high moral standards, Father Maggi also appears to have been a meticulous transcriber who knew quite a lot about his parishioners.⁷ Maggi added information on occupation, widowhood, family relationship, status as servant or slave, illnesses, disabilities, poverty, whether the person had departed, was captured in slavery, was in prison or in hospital and he also appended prostitutes, who were barred from receiving communion, with a cross next to their names. Maggi's in-depth knowledge about his parishioners indicates that he may have enjoyed a fairly strong position to control, regulate or advise them. The details he appended offer a unique opportunity to draw qualitative insights on subordinate people including prostitutes.

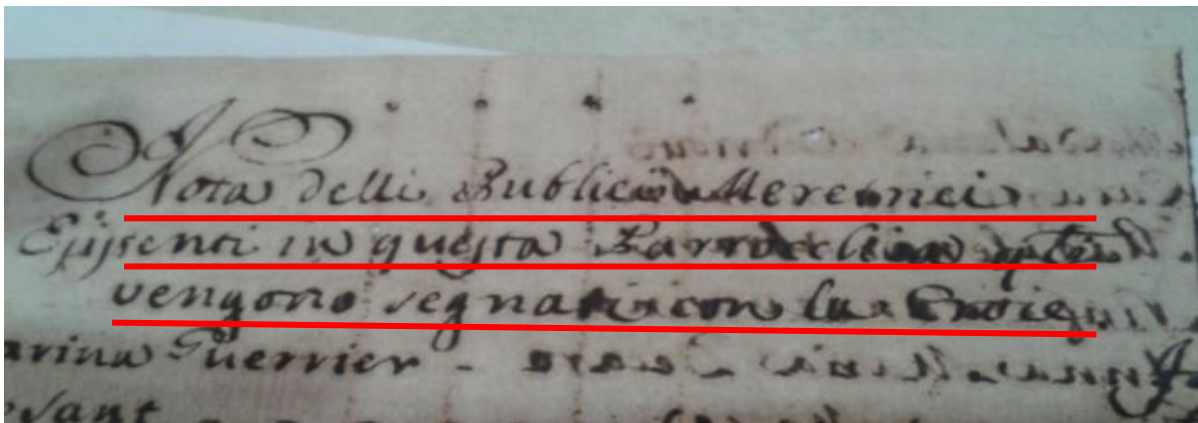


Figure 2.1: Excerpt stating that *pubbliche meretrici* present in the parish were singled out with a cross - *Status Animarum* Porto Salvo 1745.⁸

Acknowledgement: Parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta.

⁷For Maggi's high moral standards see Ciappara, (2000), 353. See fn 189. Maggi accused himself of solicitation to the Pro-Inquisitor, Don Pietro Francesco Gristi.

⁸A.P.S. *Status Animarum* 1745, f. 3. This note is likely to have been written by Father Giacinto Maggi.

Name	Age
Scalco Benedetto	40
Anzani may	40
Rosa M. Laspina	32
Maria Elena Laspina	27
Melchiorre Sabrieh Laspina	16
Francesco la Rojas	47
Caro Debono	19

Figure 2.2: Excerpt showing crosses indicating that Rosa Maria Laspina aged 32 and her sister Maria Elena Laspina aged 27 were *publiche meretrici* (red boxes) - *Status Animarum* Porto Salvo 1732.⁹

Acknowledgement: Parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta.

There are no clear indications that the parish priests of San Paolo Apostolo singled out prostitutes.¹⁰ At the end of the register some clerics included a list of contumacies and occasionally certain contumacies were appended with *scand.* short for *scandalosa*.¹¹ No clear-cut parallels can be drawn between scandalous women and prostitutes (some male contumacies were also singled out as *scandalosi*). Women described as *scandalose* may have included fornicators, procuresses, concubines, licentious women and prostitutes. The number of female contumacies appended as scandalous women was very low this is not a surprising fact. This parish belonged to the Cathedral Chapter of Notabile (Mdina), the seat of the Bishop of Malta. It was mostly patronised and funded by Bishops, Grand Masters, the Università (the local Commune), the clergy and elite parishioners, thereby representing a more genteel social profile.¹²

⁹A.P.S. *Status Animarum* 1732, 54.

¹⁰cf. Black, (2001), 103, 169. A sampling of parish registers in Early Modern Rome revealed that some clerics were reluctant to count and classify prostitutes.

¹¹ The list of contumacies included all men and women who did not adhere to the Paschal Precept.

¹²Ciarlò, (2000), 3, 4.

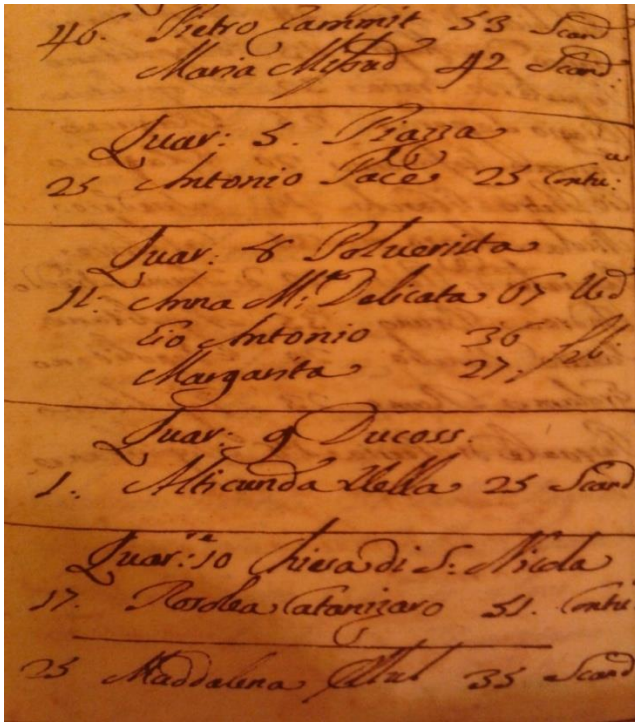


Figure 2.3: Contumacies annotated as scandalous – San Paolo Apostolo.

Excerpt from the *Status Animarum* of San Paolo Apostolo, entitled ‘*Contumaci nel anno corrente 1763*’, showing three women and one man (Pietro Zammit) with *Scand.* appended next to their Christian name and surname.

Acknowledgement Parish of San Paolo Apostolo, Valletta.

Eighteenth-century trials (*processi*) housed at the National Archives in Rabat in numerated boxes and the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* prison registers (*Libri dei Carcerati*) housed in the National Archives legal section in Mdina were likewise essential in revealing quantitative and qualitative information on some early modern prostitutes. The *Libri dei Carcerati* range 1741-1798 and are the only surviving prison registers of the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ*.¹³ On the verso leaf the prison scribe registered the date when the person was incarcerated, the detainee’s name and surname and at times also the person’s nickname.¹⁴ In certain cases only the first name or the nickname of the detainee appears. Nicknames can be revealing. For instance on 10 January 1742 Gerolama Zammit known Scupanova was incarcerated.¹⁵ This indicated that she may have been a newcomer. Maria Zammit was known

¹³ There are ten surviving *libri dei carcerati* housed in the Banca Giuratale in Mdina: 1741-1743, 1750-1754, 1754, 1760-1763, 1764-1767, 1768-1773, 1773-1781, 1781-1788, 1788-1795, 1796-1798. These prison records are not continuous. Lacunas exist for 1743-1750, 1754-1760.

¹⁴ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 325. (29 August 1788). Teresa Theuma detta ta’ Ganniret. In certain cases only the first name or the nickname of the detainee appears.

¹⁵ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f.57. (10 January 1742). Scupanova could be referring to the fact that she was a prostitute new to the trade.

as The White One (Il-Baida), indicating that she was likely to have been fair-skinned.¹⁶ The detainee's profession, age and a description of the incident that led to the arrest are in certain cases also included. Most recorded cases consisted of information on who issued the warrant of arrest (the Grand Master or the Judge) and the names of the enforcement officers who affected the arrest. For instance, an entry dated 12 December 1751 records the incarceration of a certain Francesco Parodi, a Savoyard (from the Duchy of Savoy). Parodi was incarcerated by the lieutenant of the Grand Viscount on order of the Court's Judge for having impudently tried to force a prostitute to have sex with him.¹⁷ On the recto leaf the scribe recorded the date when the person was discharged or transferred elsewhere in order to endure the punishment prescribed by the Judge or the Grand Master. In the *Libri dei Carcerati*, the Grand Master is referred to as S.A.S. (*Sua Altezza Serenissima*). On the recto, scribes generally included the rationale behind the prison release. For instance, on 20 December 1751, the aforementioned Francesco Parodi was released from prison due to a Christmas amnesty.¹⁸ At times the recto leaf also included references to other folios linked to the arrestee's previous crimes.

Up to 1785, most scribes registered the place of residence of the detainee; thereafter this was largely omitted. Certain scribes appear to have been more generous with words than others. This is particularly noticeable from 1760-1768 when entries appear to be rather dry in comparison to previous and subsequent registrations. Supplementary information included by scribes in the *Libri dei Carcerati* revealed various precious details on prostitutes, pimps and consumers of hired sex. For instance an entry registered on 7 December 1751 records the incarceration of a certain Teodora Gueva nicknamed Small Bird (Pespusa)¹⁹ who used to practise with soldiers.²⁰ On 3 October 1754 a certain Margarita Parnis, a prostitute from Valletta known as 'flat-nose' (Nasoliscio) was incarcerated.²¹ On 2 October 1780 we learn that Alonsica Farrugia was from Hal-Ghaxaq and a new prostitute in Valletta.²² Another entry

¹⁶N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1783, f. 118. (6 December 1783).

¹⁷N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 110. (12 December 1751).

¹⁸N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 110. (12 December 1751).

¹⁹ The term *pespusa* is normally used to describe a woman of small stature.

²⁰N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.110. (7 December 1751). Teodora Gueva detta Pespusa.

²¹N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 27. (3 October 1754). It is possible that Margarita Parnis was born with a flattened nose bridge or that she was suffering from saddle nose due to syphilis. Another possibility would be that she suffered the penalty of having her nose cut off. Jewish or infidel women who prostituted themselves with Christians were to be whipped, a relapse lost them their ears and nose. See *Leggi e Costituzioni*, Malta, 1724, 105.

²²N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 219. (2 October 1780). 'Alonsica Farrugia carcerata per essere venuta di fresco da Casal Axach à fare la puttana in Valletta. 4 Ottobre 1780 fù scarcerata e precettata d'andare in campagna.'

dated 9 March 1781 stated that Margartia Manuel practised with underage boys.²³ On 12 March 1781, the scribe registered the incarceration of Catherina Ciantar, a procuress who was the wife of an unnamed man nicknamed ‘without a nose’ (*senza naso*).²⁴ On 15 October 1781 we learn that Gio Paolo Dalli, who was a pimp, took prostitutes Margarita Delicata and Anna Portelli to Żejtun to practise with certain men; in return he got a sheep.²⁵ Such details are precious. They provide fragments of information on looks, character traits, inclinations, experiences and behaviour that contribute greatly towards building a conceptual framework through which the mechanics of prostitution can be examined.

This study also draws extensively on manuscript sources in the Malta National Library, Valletta. Four archival series have provided the bulk of the sources used: 1. Proclamations and Legal codes, 2. The *Libri dei Quinti del Monastero di Santa Maria Maddalena*, 3. Diaries, Memoirs and Log-books, and 4. Miscellany. Non-members of the Order were governed by a separate code of laws from the one applicable to the members of the Order. As prostitution was a feature of civilian life, proclamations and legal codes contained regulations concerning it. The collections of public proclamations were particularly useful in revealing periodic problems concerning prostitutes that called for state action. The *Libri dei Quinti* are registers pertaining to the accounts of Magdalene nuns where the death dues of prostitutes were registered. One-fifth of the possessions of prostitutes partially financed the monastery of St Mary Magdalene, a nunnery for repentant prostitutes.²⁶ These log books were instrumental not simply because they shed light on the earthly possessions amassed by prostitutes during their lifetime but more importantly because they revealed how some prostitutes fervently attempted to settle their dues before death as well as the numerous disputes that arose between the nuns and relatives of deceased prostitutes. Non conformity indicated the tendency of some prostitutes to refuse to accept a prevailing set of norms as defined by government and expressed in law. The unpublished eighteenth-century diaries of the Reverend Giuseppe Agius (brother of the more renowned scholar Canon Pier Francesco Agius de Soldanis) and Don Ignazio Saverio Mifsud were likewise useful in providing clerical male musings on prostitutes. These largely unexplored diaries were private, they were

²³N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 242. (9 March 1781). ‘...ancor figliouli.’

²⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 242. (12 March 1781). Like Margarita Parnis it is possible that Ciantar too had a flattened nose bridge or was affected by syphilis. Another possibility would be that the tip of his nose was chopped off. Free Jews or infidels caught in flagrante in the venereal act (*atto venereo*) with a Christian woman had their ears and the tip of their nose cut off and were reduced to slavery. See *Leggi e Costituzioni*, Malta, 1724, 105.

²⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 23. (15 October 1781).

²⁶ See C. Muscat, (2013), 134-138.

not meant to be read by anyone. The inclusion of stories on prostitutes as well as the transcription of a sonnet (see Appendix 1) show that prostitutes were people these clerics found to be interesting. From the Miscellany collection, four manuscripts were particularly important: A.O.M. 6384, A.O.M. 6402, A.O.M. 6405, A.O.M. 6553. These dossiers contain broad deliberations on policymaking by professionals that provided philosophical and historical underpinnings. Both the concerns and objectives that motivated these early modern professionals and the results of their deliberations depended on forms of thought. These forms of thought are not merely the site of policymaking processes but forums of discussion that offer an opportunity to study the debate process rather than the outcome. These deliberations on early modern society in Malta and critical appraisals of the administration offered valuable insights on prostitution that helped in reshaping current prevalent perspectives. Another collection of Miscellany, N.L.M. Lib. MS. 638, which forms part of the National Library of Malta's own collection of manuscripts, provided a detailed record of infringements of the law occurring mostly in Valletta and the Three Cities. It offered a detailed picture of the seamier side of life in the crowded towns around the Harbour in which sailors, soldiers and prostitutes featured prominently. This volume also shed light on the administration of justice from within. Like several other recent studies on early modern social life, this study also draws on dossiers in the notarial records. Declarations, protest notes, deeds and other conveyances pertaining to some of Valletta's early modern prostitutes were instrumental in revealing personal narratives, cultural perceptions, identity, as well as information regarding the wealth some of the protagonists of this study amassed during their lifetime. These sources offered the possibility to look beyond stereotypes as captured in narratives of prostitutes in travelogues, panic scripts and moralising campaigns.

Loose Labels

'Meretrici have increased so much that they would be alarming and unacceptable in a libertine city let alone in a Convent, and what makes matters worse is that they are so firmly established and well diffused, that all streets have been affected, they have brought scandal to the entire domain, it is nowadays impossible to distinguish between the business of brothels, bars and taverns.²⁷

²⁷A.O.M. 6405 D, f. 21. *Diverse Scritture* (c1704). 'Le meretrici si sono così moltiplicate, che consarebbero orrore in una città libertina, e puoco credula, non già solo in un Convento e quello è peggio stanno così seminate, e sparse da per tutto che rendono orore tutte le strade e scandalizzano tutto il Dominio compiti li Bordelli, con le Bettole, e Taverne oggi frameschiate'.

In the early seventeenth century, the anonymous author of this panic script epitomised prevalent concerns on the presence of *meretrici* in the city of Valletta.²⁸ Similar concerns resonated in some early modern visitors' accounts and accompanied the Order throughout its two hundred sixty-eight year rule. These concerns were processed by some modern historians who identified *meretrici* as prostitutes, quantified them in extraordinary high numbers, qualified them as *personæ non gratae* because they were out-of-place in a Convent city and summarised that in the early modern period Valletta was 'an unholy place'.²⁹ In 2002, Giovanni Bonello noted that all foreign visitors agreed that 'the islands were outstandingly a hotbed of prostitution'.³⁰ Most historians agree with this statement in proposing that prostitution in Valletta in Hospitaller times was rampant.³¹ This theory reiterates prevalent perceptions inscribed in some early modern travelogues and critical reports.³² Recent unpublished dissertations largely corroborate notions on rampancy. In his study on aspects of crime in the harbour area 1741-1746, Joseph Attard noted that there were large numbers of prostitutes in the parish of Porto Salvo.³³ Amanda Schembri concurred in saying that numerous prostitutes were present in the harbour.³⁴ Owen Bean showed that during the rule of the Order of St John, prostitution was widespread.³⁵ These sweeping generalisations demonstrated a clear lack of engagement. Few historians questioned the issue and even less appeared to be keen to investigate the mechanisms of the trade. Such expressions of attitudinal biases similar to early modern behavioural scripts show that up to present times, some modern historians persist in perpetuating myths and social prejudices. Conversely a few modern historians suggest that research evidence points consistently toward fundamental contradictions. They argue that theories purporting widespread female licentiousness in Hospitaller Malta are 'absurd' and that prostitution was not a major female occupation.³⁶

One can attempt to reach an understanding of some of the realities of early modern prostitution and explore attitudes towards some women who were socially identified as

²⁸ For a discussion on panic scripts also described as sex panic or moral crusade see B. Shepard, (2006), 427.

²⁹ Attard, Azzopardi (2011), 123-126.

³⁰ Bonello, (2002), 20.

³¹ See P. Cassar, (1977), 12, 13. Savona-Ventura, (2003), 20. Bonello, (2002), 28. Ciappara, (1988), 83. C. Cassar, (2002), 161. Attard, Azzopardi, (2011), 150. E. Attard, (2014), 28.

³² See for instance Nicolò De Nicolay, *Le Navigazioni et Viaggi nella Turchia* Libro I, (Anversa, Giuglielmo Silvio, 1576). Charles Savona-Ventura, *Caring for Calypso's Daughters*, (Malta, Malta University Press, 2013), 25. Carasi, *The Order of Malta Exposed*, Thomas Freller (trans.), (Malta, Gutenberg Press, 2010), 115.

³³ Joseph Attard, 'Aspects of Crime in the Harbour Area 1741-1746', unpublished B.A. (Hons.) History dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1995, 56.

³⁴ A. Schembri, (2011), 99, 100.

³⁵ Owen Bean, 'The Slave and the Courtesan', unpublished B.A. (Hons.) History dissertation, Department of Classics-History-Politics, The Colorado College, 2013, 41.

³⁶ Elizabeth Schermerhorn, *Malta of the Knights*, (Surrey, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1929), 86. Y. Vella, (1999), 3.

prostitutes through what Mazo Karras aptly refers to as the ‘mechanics’ of prostitution.³⁷ The mechanics of prostitution is defined as tracing their lives.³⁸ The first step towards examining the lives of prostitutes is to identify them. Early modern society recognised the existence of prostitutes, but also devised a myriad of loose labels to refer to all sorts of women engaged in non-marital sexual affairs. Distinguishing between the women who engaged in non-marital sexual services for material gain, from others who were not, is at times a challenge. The issue is further compounded because being called a prostitute or similar was frequently used in slander.³⁹ Table 2.1 shows that in early modern Malta, creativity in devising loose labels associated with prostitution was not lacking.

Mazo Karras perceives labels to be tied to meanings within a particular context. She suggests that they were aimed at identifying, controlling and shaming prostitutes.⁴⁰ Paul Griffiths argued that ‘loose labels’ facilitated legal procedures. They enabled law enforcers to fine tune the definition to conform to varying circumstances. The ever-changing social landscape of cities and the fluid nature of vice made it necessary for legislative systems to adopt ‘loose labels’ that could be shaped to fit the peculiarities of new cases, and new developments.⁴¹ Research conducted on a range of early modern archival sources in Malta showed that defining a woman’s relationship with a man outside marriage and a single woman’s status may have been pitched on prostitution. Labels appear to have placed a woman on a continuum closer or further away from the status of a prostitute. Some loose labels may have been ‘polite’, such labels were used in vertical (hierarchical) relations by priests, prison scribes or other officials. Persons of a certain social standing were inclined to adopt ‘polite’ labels that were nonetheless inevitably calibrated. A polite label like for instance *cortiggiana* (courtesan) may have been significantly less defamatory than *publica meretrice* (prostitute).⁴²

Some loose labels may have been used in dyadic relations (between individuals or networks of individuals of the same class) for instance between friends, neighbours or relatives. Different labels may have been used in different circumstances across time and

³⁷ Mazo Karras (1996), 4.

³⁸ Mazo Karras (1996), 4.

³⁹ See Anthony Camenzuli, ‘Defamatory Nicknames and Insult in Late Eighteenth-Century Malta: 1771-1798’, in *Melita Historica*, xiii (2005), 3, 325. Frans Ciappara, *Society and the Inquisition in Early Modern Malta*, (Malta, PEG 2001), 163. For ideas on the culture of sexual insult in early modern London see Gowing, (1996), 59, 60.

⁴⁰ Mazo Karras, (1996), 31.

⁴¹ Griffiths, (2008), 201. Also see Julie Lynn Taylor, ‘Prostitute, Victim, Survivor, Woman: Examining the Discursive Structures Surrounding Women in Sex Trafficking Situations’, unpublished M.A. History dissertation, Colorado State University, 2010, 43.

⁴² See Table 2.1 (Appendix 2)

space. Some loose labels used in dyadic relations may have jeopardised a woman's integrity. Others may have been harmless or may have simply been used to poke fun or provoke. Such instances have no relationship with real levels of prostitution and can be misleading. Labels like common prostitute (*puttana*),⁴³ harlot (*troia*), whore (*bagascia*), bitchy courtesan (*cagna donna cortegianna*), harmful woman (*maladonna*), rotten woman (*donna marciera*) were culturally defined and inevitably shaped by emotions; panic, fear, hate and/or violence. They may have been used sarcastically, in mockery, insults, defiance, slander or at times even in humour.⁴⁴ Loose labels like for instance *donna del mondo/ donna mondana* (worldly woman), *fraschetta* (flirt), *zitella guappa* (braggart), *femmina sfrontata* (flagrant woman), *donna libertina* (licentious woman), or *vergognosa* (shameful woman) may have been warnings. They were a system amongst other systems aimed at controlling female social behaviour.

The most common term traditionally believed to refer to prostitutes is *meretrici*.⁴⁵ Tessa Storey suggests that the word derives from the Latin root *Mer* meaning to earn, acquire and have commerce.⁴⁶ Ruth Mazo Karras argues that the term *meretrice* signified any woman who engaged in sex outside marriage. She shows how *meretrice* became a sexual identity depicting a sinful, transgressive, disreputable character that was permanently associated with social identity.⁴⁷ Carla Freccero proposes that *meretrice* was approximated with a whore rather than a prostitute. It did not signal inherent deviant identity but a social transgression.⁴⁸ Laura J. McGough on the other hand shows how *meretrici* at times included prostitutes, but the term was not limited to prostitutes. It was a 'moral category' and not a reference to an occupation or a commercial transaction.⁴⁹ According to McGough it encompassed various forms of female sexual activities outside marriage.⁵⁰ An analysis of early modern archival documentation in Malta supports McGough's theory.

Early modern public notices distinguished between *meretrici* (females involved in extra-marital sexual relationships) and *publiche meretrici* or *puttane* (common prostitutes).

⁴³ cf. Andrea Bayer et al, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, (New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 2008), 46. Bayer describes puttane as common prostitutes. They were distinguished from courtesans (high-class prostitutes) in being ordinary and cheaper.

⁴⁴ For a discussion on slander see Chapter 3, 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation', 3.4.

⁴⁵ Laura J. McGough, *Gender, Sexuality and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 28.

⁴⁶ Storey, 'Prostitution and the circulation of second-hand goods in early modern Rome', (2008), 61.

⁴⁷ Mazo Karras, (1996) and Mazo Karras (1999), 159-77.

⁴⁸ Freccero, (1999), 186-92.

⁴⁹ L.J. McGough (2011), 28.

⁵⁰ L.J. McGough (2011), 28. In 1543, the Venetian Senate classified *meretrici* as women estranged or officially separated from their husbands, who were engaged in carnal commerce (*commercio carnale*) with one or more men.

From 1643-1661 some laws targeted *meretrici* others were applicable to *puttane* or *pubbliche meretrici*. Two laws published in 1643 were applicable to *puttane*. One was entitled ‘Common prostitutes cannot wear a mantle with a whale-bone’ (*Puttane non portino il manto con radda*)⁵¹ and another carried the title of ‘Common prostitutes cannot travel in a sedan chair or in a carriage’ (*Puttane non possono andare in seggia, nè in carrozza*).⁵² In 1647 another law, this time applicable to *meretrici* was enacted. It was entitled ‘Shopkeepers and *meretrici* must keep their doors locked at night’ (*Bottegari e meretrici tengano serrate le loro porte di notte*).⁵³ In 1661, another notice controlling *meretrici* appeared under the heading ‘Married women cannot be *meretrici* or walk around the streets at night’ (*Donne maritate non possono essere meretrici, ne camminare di notte tempo*).

‘Therefore through this notification His Lordship orders that all married *meretrici* in His dominion who are caught in flagrancy with their carnal friends are punished with lashings and exiled from His entire domain, this punishment is also applicable to vagrant *meretrici* and those who walk in the streets in the night time’.⁵⁴

The scribe went on to specify that the notice was issued with the precise aim of abolishing vice and sin, and preserving holy matrimony.⁵⁵ This supplementary explanation clarified that this law attempted to control adulterous men and women not prostitutes. Two salient observations can be made. Unlike previous notices it specifically mentioned *meretrici* and not ‘*pubbliche*’ *meretrici* (or *puttane*). Moreover partners of *meretrici* are referred to as ‘carnal friends’, men who patronised prostitutes are unlikely to have been perceived to be their friends. The fact that *meretrici* was a broad term used to refer to women involved in extra-marital relationships was further evidenced through a law enacted during the reign of Grand Master Gregorio Carafa della Roccella (1680-1690) in 1681. Article VII of Carafa’s *Leggi e Constituttioni Pragmaticali* stated that any married woman who resolutely leads the life of a *publica meretrice* and markets her services will be flogged and perpetually exiled from this

⁵¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 324. (1643).

⁵² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 325.(1643).

⁵³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 236. (1647).

⁵⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 407. (21 February 1661).

⁵⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 407. (21 February 1661). ‘Per ciò per il presente bando V.S commanda, che tutte quelle donne meretrici che sono maritate, che si troveranno in flagrante con loro amici carnali siano in pena della frusta, e d’esilio da tutto suo dominio così ancora cascheranno nella suddetta pena quelle meretrici che anderanno vagando, o passeggiando di notte’.

domain.⁵⁶ The fact that this law was applicable to ‘public’ *meretrici* who marketed their services (*pubblicità*) differentiated this law from the previous one and was clearly applicable to married women who marketed their sexual services for material gain.

Meretrici also featured in a list entitled ‘Superfluous and Harmful Crafts’ (*Le Superflue e Male Arti*). The list included astrologers, poets, singers, dancers, comedians, card-sharps, pimps, illustrators, hairdressers, glove-makers, balm-producers, perfume-makers, liquor producers, rogues, beggars, game masters, tavern keepers and others.⁵⁷ In a descriptive note on *meretrici*, the anonymous author voiced his concerns regarding the increasing numbers of *meretrici* and suggested a way forward. He proposed that those *meretrici* who were common prostitutes (*puttane*) should be forced to live in a separate area.⁵⁸ His second suggestion was that *meretrici* who were *puttane* would be listed in a register that would include their name, surname and place of residence. Thirdly *meretrici* who were *puttane* would be obliged to pay a tax contribution that would go towards the upkeep of the *Case della Misericordia* (Houses of Mercy). *Meretrici puttane* (meretrici who were common prostitutes) living in large houses would be obliged to pay one *scudo* per month, those living in small to medium sized houses would pay six *tari* and those living in small rooms would be asked to contribute four *tari*.⁵⁹ These proposals were specifically designed to tax *meretrici puttane*.

In another law enacted on 1 March 1721 *meretrici* were confined to live in a specific area in the city and ordered to pay tax on their place of residence.⁶⁰ The publication of this law was justified through a statement claiming that exile and lashings failed to yield positive results. *Meretrici* were therefore being confined to a particular area in the city and obliged to pay 8 *scudi* 4 *tari* in advance on their accommodation. A law prohibiting courtesans from living in the central part of the city was in force since 1631.⁶¹ In this document *meretrici* are described as ‘incorrigible women’ (*dame che non si possono correggere dei loro trascorsi*). A search to find out which area in the city was earmarked for the residence of *meretrici* and whether this order was ever implemented, did not yield any results. Grand Master Marc

⁵⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f.101v. (1681). ‘Qualsisia donna accasata convinta di menar vita da publica meretrice, constando fa pubblicità sia frustata, e mandata in esilio perpetuamente da questo dominio.

⁵⁷ A.O.M. 6405 D, ff. 8, 8v (c1704) Diverse Scritture.

⁵⁸ A.O.M. 6405 D, ff. 8, 8v (c1704) Diverse Scritture. Sarei dunque di sentimento, che alle puttane si stabilisce un quartiere, che siano descritte in Rollo ...

⁵⁹ A.O.M. 6405 D, ff. 8, 8v (c1704) Diverse Scritture.

⁶⁰ The 1631 law regulating the residence of courtesans is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁶¹ A.O.M. 627, f.157. (1 March 1721). Re Meretrici – Luogo destinato per le dame che non si possono correggere dei loro trascorsi non bastando gli Esili e la frusta: per il qual fu ordinato alli giurati di pagare la pigione di 8 scudi 4 tari d’anticipo.

Antonio Zondadari's (1658-1722) reign only lasted two years, he passed away a year after this law was published. It is thus possible that actualisation and enforcement may have been short-lived.

In the post-Tridentine period, Bartolomeo de Medina (1527-1580), a Spanish theologian, wrote a handbook for confessors which included instructions on how they should deal with *donne publiche*. This handbook provided a sixteenth-century definition for *donna publica*. According to de Medina a *donna publica* was a woman who was not very inclined to confess (*ha poca dispositione*), she was a woman of wrong doings (*ella come donna di mal affare*), she was a public sinner who was known world-wide and she did not demonstrate public signs of amendment (*sorella, voi sete publica peccatrice, come tutto il mondo sà, e non havete mostrato publica emenda*).⁶² His emphasis on the fact that she was a 'public' sinner who was known 'world-wide' and did not show 'public' signs of amendment is significant. The distinguishing feature of early modern prostitutes was the public aspect. The addition of the word public (*publica*) altered the meaning of the term *donna* or *meretrice*. *Publiche donne* or *publiche meretrici* were public women whose misdeeds were in the public arena and were hence marketable.

In the seventeenth-century *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo, prostitutes were appended with the acronym *pub.* for *publica* next to their name.⁶³ *Donna publica* and *publica meretrice* were interchangeable labels. This is evidenced through various declarations placed at the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* (the Civil and Criminal Court of the Knights of St John). In September 1731, Paolo Vassallo was accused of practising with prostitute Catherina Habela. In court, the night captain referred to her as a *publica meretrice*.⁶⁴ Paolo Vassallo on the other hand called her a *donna publica*. Vassallo used this term in a derogative statement. He said that Catherina was a *donna publica* who was typically known to be a liar.⁶⁵ This may indicate that *publica meretrice* was a polite label for a prostitute, whereas *donna publica* was less polite and commonly used in dyadic exchanges. The surviving, accessible, eighteenth-century *Status Animarum* records of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo revealed that *publiche meretrici* were singled out with a cross next to their name.⁶⁶ At times besides the customary

⁶² Bartolomeo de Medina, *Breve Istruzione de' Confessori come si debba amministrare il Sacramento della Penitentie* Lib.II, (Venice, Bernardo Basa, 1584), 187.

⁶³ C. Cassar, (2000), 133.

⁶⁴ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, n.p. (17 September 1731). Testis Antonj Felici.

⁶⁵ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, f. 8v. (17 September 1731). Interragotione Paulo Vassallo. Non vi fù mai seguita tal cosa, e se detta Catherina lo dice, lo menta da una donna publica, che lo è.

⁶⁶ See A.P.S. Status Animarum, 1745 f.3. Nota delli Publici Meretrici Esistenti in questa Parocchia che vengono segnati con la croce. For other surviving, accessible Status Animarum registers at Porto Salvo where *publiche meretrici* were annotated with a cross see records for 1726, 1727, 1729, 1732, 1734, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738,

cross, some parish priests also included an end list of *publiche meretrici*.⁶⁷ When clerics were not one hundred percent sure whether the woman was a prostitute next to the customary cross they appended the word dubious (*dubbiosa*)⁶⁸ or suspicious (*sospetta*).⁶⁹ Likewise in the prison registers (*Libri dei Carcerati*) of the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* prostitutes were referred to as *publiche meretrici* or *publiche donne*. This merges into Freccero suggestion that it was the public nature of the prostitute's transgression, not multiple sexual partners that constituted the identity of the prostitute. The aforementioned cases amply confirm McGough's suggestion that *meretrice* were not prostitutes but females involved in sexual relationships outside marriage.⁷⁰ It is with *meretrici puttane* and *publiche meretrici* that this study is concerned and not with *meretrici*.

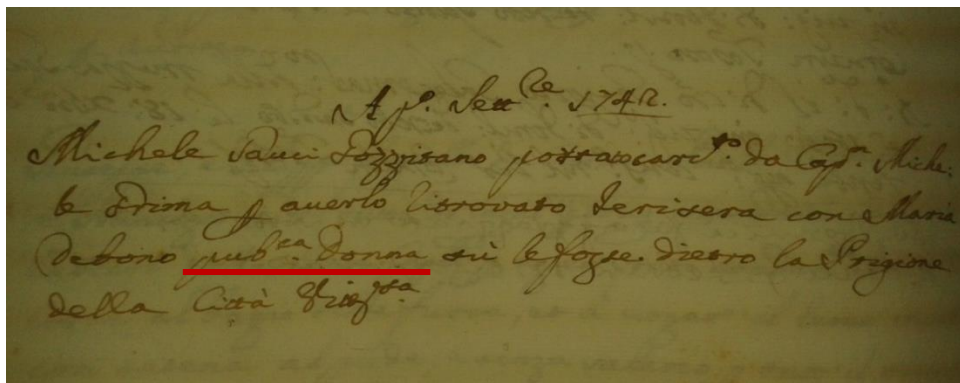


Figure 2.4: Excerpt stating that Michele Gauci, a Gozitan, was caught with Maria Debono a *publica donna* in the ditch behind the Vittoriosa prison.⁷¹
Acknowledgement: National Archives of Malta.

Creating a firm definition for prostitution appears to have been as challenging for early modern administrators, as it is today.⁷² Table 2.2 shows how different descriptors were devised to refer to prostitution.⁷³ These descriptors were mostly used in official documents or 'polite' discourse. In 1784, the De Rohan code described prostitution as a dishonest act with material gain (*dishonestà con guadagno*).⁷⁴ This definition was flawed. The absence of an

1742, 1744, 1745 1749, 1754. Status Animarum records were parish-based registers primarily designed to list those old enough to receive communion, those who made the obligatory annual confession and communion (Easter), those who contumaciously did not and those who were barred from receiving communion because they were concubinous or were unrepentant prostitutes. See Black, (2001), 169.

⁶⁷ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, ff.190, 191.

⁶⁸ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f. 87. Twenty-two year old Maria Callus who was singled out as a *publica meretrice* is described as dubious (*dubbiosa*).

⁶⁹ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f. 190. Thirty-three year old Flora Saliba singled out as a *publica meretrice* is described as suspicious (*sospetta*).

⁷⁰ Freccero, (1999), 186-92. McGough, (2011), 28.

⁷¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f 128. (1 September 1742).

⁷² Hope-Ditmore, (2006), xxvi.

⁷³ See Table 2.2 (Appendix 3).

⁷⁴ Diritto Municipale Malta (Grand Master de Rohan), 182. (1784).

explanation specifying which acts were deemed to be dishonest made this definition ambiguous. The term *guadagno* (gain) was similarly indistinct. Various acts like for instance fraud and theft were dishonest acts for gain which did not involve a sexual service. Tessa Storey argued that in Counter-Reformation Rome, the official term used for prostitution was carnal commerce (*commercio carnale*). It was used by prostitutes, clients and court officials in everyday language.⁷⁵ She suggested that *commercio* emphasised the commercial component whereas *carnale* related to the body and sexuality.⁷⁶ Research on a broad range of early modern documentation in Malta indicated that *commercio carnale* or *averla commerciata*, similar to *meretricato*, *praticcare* and *trattare* was a ‘polite’ generic term commonly used by scribes to refer to sexual affairs not prostitution.⁷⁷ The *commercio carnale* was prostitution only when the woman involved was a prostitute (*donna publica*, *publica meretrice* or *puttana*).

On 18 April 1763, Giovanni Farrugia was accused of having had *commercio carnale* with his sister-in-law and impregnating her.⁷⁸ It is unlikely that his sister-in-law received any material gain from this *commercio carnale*. She is described as his sister-in-law and not a *publica meretrice* or a *publica donna*. On 7 April 1767, Francesco Verrieri, a Venetian man was caught trying to escape from Malta after promising to marry a spinster with whom he had *commercio carnale*.⁷⁹ Men who were accused by women of impregnation (*ingravidare*) or rape (*stupro*) were incarcerated.⁸⁰ Men accused of fornication (*commercio carnale/ d’averla commerciata*),⁸¹ or of showing lack of respect towards a woman by stating that they wanted to have a sexual affair with her (*volerla conoscere carnalmente*), were likewise incarcerated.⁸² In instances whereby the victim was an unmarried woman, the accused was acquitted and released from prison on proposing marriage.⁸³ If Verrieri’s *commercio carnale* was with a prostitute he would have paid for the service and not have been obliged to propose

⁷⁵ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 18.

⁷⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 18.

⁷⁷ For ‘averla commerciata’ see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f. 134. (9 December 1762). For ‘meretricato’ see for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, ff.37, 38. (1 July 1789). For ‘praticcare’ see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.71. (14 May 1751). For ‘trattare’ see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f.87. (11 April 1783). For ‘commercio’ see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1795-1798, f.17. (7 May 1796). In all these instances such terms are clearly not referring to prostitution.

⁷⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1760-1763, f. 173. (18 April 1763).

⁷⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1764-1767, f. 197. (7 April 1767).

⁸⁰ See for instance See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.17. (11 July 1750). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f. 134. (9 December 1762).

⁸¹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f. 134. (9 December 1762).

⁸² See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 4. (30 April 1750).

⁸³ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f.20. (18 September 1781). On 18 September 1781 Andreana Teuma accused Francesco Renò of rape. On 22 December 1781 the two were married in the Castellania and Renò was released from prison.

marriage or try to escape. On 11 October 1785, Alessandro Sciberras requested the incarceration of his wife Rosaria Sciberras who he ‘nearly’ caught in the act of committing adultery (*quasi colta in flagrante*). Rosaria was placed in the *Ospizio* (an institution for destitute women and women in need of correction). She was released a month later in anticipation of her husband’s disposition (*attesa la cessione di detto suo marito*).⁸⁴ Vincenzo Portelli, Rosaria’s alleged lover (*presunto amasio*), was incarcerated on the same day for a suspected intimate sexual affair (*stretto commercio*) with Rosaria.⁸⁵ He was released three days later with a warning not to practise (*di non praticare*) with Rosaria under the pain of arbitrary punishments.⁸⁶ Rosaria was on the verge of adultery but that did not make her a prostitute. In all these instances the *commercio* or *commercio carnale* was a sexual affair that did not involve any form of material exchange. Conversely in February 1781, Catherina Fenech a *publica meretrice* was incarcerated for entering the civil prisons and having *commercio carnale* with a prisoner.⁸⁷ In this case, Catherina, unlike the aforementioned women was specified as a *publica meretrice* and it is therefore assumed that the *commercio carnale* involved some form of material gain.

A descriptor that appears to have provided a reasonably firm early modern definition for prostitution was identified in the archives of the Order of St John. It formed part of a document listing proposals for an action plan to confront the threat of plague entitled ‘Political Orders for the Protection of Healthy Persons’ (*Ordini Politici per la Preservatione de Sani*). One of the measures stated that there was nothing that contributed to the dilation of the plague more than the *publico commercio delle meretrici* (the ‘public’ commerce of *meretrici*) and therefore it had to be instantly banned. Those caught practising would be heavily punished.⁸⁸ This endorses the suggestion that when the sexual affair (*commercio*) which belonged to the private sphere, was placed in the public sphere (*publico*) or in other words the market place, it was for material gain.⁸⁹ *Publico commercio delle meretrici* may thus have provided a fairly comprehensive definition for prostitution.

⁸⁴N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1781-1788, f. 208. (11 October 1785).

⁸⁵N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1781-1788, f. 208. (11 October 1785).

⁸⁶N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1781-1788, f. 208. (11 October 1785).

⁸⁷N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1773-1781, f. 238. (3 February 1781).

⁸⁸A.O.M 6402, A, f. 284. (c1670). *Diverse Scritture*.

⁸⁹ See L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 7.

Confronting Early Modern Travel Narratives

Mentions of prostitutes in certain early modern visitors' accounts have contributed toward the extension of the myth that Valletta was some kind of 'gomorrha parva'.⁹⁰ Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century visitors' descriptions of host countries were intimate geographic, historic, scientific and at times also socio-cultural narratives, authored by males to inform and entertain a specific group of largely male readers.⁹¹ Particular accounts were purposely inflated to impress or astound readers and attract attention.⁹² Some tried to outshine contemporary visitors' through contradiction or by highlighting falsehoods.⁹³ Visitors' accounts were inevitably subjective. Individual traits, time, place, circumstances and the duration of their visit shaped their perception of the host country.⁹⁴ The journey to Malta was rarely comfortable, smooth or untroubled. Long distances, illness, quarantine, high travelling costs, bulky luggage, bandits, pirates, conflict with fellow-travellers, inadequate lodging and exhaustion were some of the constraints that shaped visitors' travelling experiences.⁹⁵ Visitors' accounts offered a male perspective and inevitably embodied the individual's personality, internal conflict, cultural diversity, ethnocentricity, experiences and biases. Language and cultural barriers obliged most visitors to be highly reliant on other published sources, travel dictionaries and informants.⁹⁶ These channels of information were likewise largely male oriented and at times offered biased and/or inaccurate perspectives.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, hostels and taverns where visitors stayed and dined were known to be favourite hang-outs for prostitutes.⁹⁷ In c.1794, a house in *Strada de Forni* (Old Bakery Street in Valletta) was rented by the Magdalene nuns to a certain

⁹⁰ Claire Eliane Engel, *Knights of Malta*, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), 66, 67. In 1715 Count Anne Claude de Caylus (1692-1765) labelled Malta a *Gomorrha parva*. Gomorrha was an ancient city of Palestine near Sodom that according to the Bible was destroyed by fire because of vice. For Modern historians who persist in perpetuating this idea see P. Cassar, (1977), 12, 13. Ciappara, (1988), 83. Bonello, (2002), 20, 28. C. Cassar, (2002), 161. Savona Ventura, (2003), 20. R. Attard, R. Azzopardi, (2011), 101, 109, 149, 150, 168. E. Attard, (2014), 28. Savona Ventura, (2013), 25.

⁹¹ Thomas Freller, *A Classical Traveller in Eighteenth-Century Malta: Johann Hermann von Riedesel*, (Malta, Mondial Publishers, 1997), 10-12.

⁹² Antoni Mączak, *Viaggi e Viaggiatori nell'Europa Moderna*, (Roma-Bari, Editori Laterza, 1994), 353-357.

⁹³ See for instance Patrick Brydone, *Voyage en Sicile et à Malthe*, Vol I, (Amsterdam, Paris, Pissot, 1775), xiii-xvi. Brydone claimed to have written his travelogue on Sicily and Malta to dispel false information published in Riedesel's travelogue. See also Charles Sigisbert Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, (London, J. Debrett, 1800), 27-41. Sonnini described Brydone as an 'ill-humoured Englishman' who loved making 'merry at the expense of women'. He said that Brydone's book was a 'vehicle of errors'.

⁹⁴ Chloë Houston, 'Introduction' in *New World Reflected*, (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 1.

⁹⁵ Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'A Man with a Mission' in *Military Orders: On Land and by Sea*, Vol.IV, Judith Mary Upton-Ward (ed.), (Hampshire, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 265. cf. Mączak, 137, 375.

⁹⁶ Mączak, xiii.

⁹⁷ Mazo Karras, (1996), 72. See also Lotte C. Van de Pol, 'The whore, the bawd, and the artist: The reality and imagery of seventeenth-century Dutch prostitution', in *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, ii, 1-2. (2010).

Signor Francesco Berri, a mirror maker (*maestro di specchi*). Berri placed a request with the bursar (*economo*) of the Magdalene monastery Father Saverio Rosselli to allow him to refurbish the house for public use, to practise his art. Instead of transforming the house into a workshop Berri turned it into a restaurant (*osteria*) and an inn (*locanda*). He rented rooms to English men, Jews, Sicilians and Turks at 3 *scudi*, 2.6 *scudi* or 2 *scudi* per day. The bursar calculated that Berri was making a profit of around 2 *scudi* per day on the house. Over the three year rental period he pocketed approximately 2,160 *scudi* when the annual rent he was paying to the monastery was only 270 *scudi*. The bursar said that he was also informed that prostitutes visited the house.⁹⁸ This story indicated that some early modern prostitutes in Valletta may have patronised foreign visitors staying in inns. Some male visitors also frequented brothels.⁹⁹ Brothels in Valletta maintained a largely medieval character in being residences (that could also be single rooms) belonging to individuals who arranged and hosted meetings for clients with prostitutes in their abodes.¹⁰⁰ Contact with innkeepers and staff, in-house guests, tavern keepers, procuresses, pimps and prostitutes may have offered visitors lop-sided insights on the host culture. This may have been transmitted in their narratives. This strand of writing was also popular because it increased their literary appeal and their conversational quality.¹⁰¹

In practice most visitors were in the harbour for a limited period of time. This prevented them from any meaningful interaction with society and acquiring in-depth knowledge of the local culture.¹⁰² Visitors' accounts maintained a high degree of superficiality. They were powerful male stories for male readers that largely rested upon assumptions. The de-contextualisation of statements on licentious women and prostitutes taken from such accounts overlook the historical roots which are essential for a full understanding of sex work and are thus highly compromising.

⁹⁸ A.O.M. Treas. Series A, 151B, Loose Leaf, n.p. (c.1794). For an overview on inns and taverns in Valletta see Giovanni Bonello, '500 Years of Inns and Taverns in Malta' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. VI, (Malta, Patrimonju Publishing, 2005), 183-193.

⁹⁹ Bonello, (2002), 38. See also Duncan Salkeld, 'Alien Desires: Travellers and Sexuality in Early Modern London', in *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe*, Thomas Betteridge (ed.), (Aldershot, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 49.

¹⁰⁰ C. Cassar, (2002), 167.

¹⁰¹ Sara Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England*, (Leiden, New York, Köln, E.J.Brill, 1994), 201. See also Maćzak, 357.

¹⁰² cf. James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, *Conformity and Conflict*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1994), 4-7.

The first statement on rampant prostitution in Hospitaller Malta was contributed by Nicolò de Nicolay (1517-1583), a French geographer.¹⁰³ Nicolay was with a high-profile French delegation led by the French Ambassador to the Ottoman Court, Gabriel D'Aramon. The delegation reached Malta from Pantelleria on 1 August 1551.¹⁰⁴ Their arrival on the island happened just five days after Dragut, the commander of the Ottoman fleet, plundered Gozo and carried off a significant number of its inhabitants.¹⁰⁵ The Aragonese Grand Master Jean D'Homedes asked D'Aramon to go to Tripoli in haste, to try to divert Dragut's plans to capture the Order's fort. On 23 August 1551 this French expedition returned to Malta to a very cold reception. Their mission had failed. The Spanish faction in the Order of St John accused D'Aramon of treason.¹⁰⁶ Despite his limited time on the island and the tense, political crisis at hand, surprisingly, Nicolay managed to record titillating observations on the island and its courtesans.¹⁰⁷ In all probability, some information may have been sourced through informants.

Nicolay said that a significant number of multi-national commanders, knights and merchants resided in Birgu.¹⁰⁸ There were also large numbers of Greek, Italian, Spanish, Moorish and Maltese courtesans in the city.¹⁰⁹ He went on to say that in summer, because of the extreme heat, the Maltese women wore a long-white shirt fastened under their breasts and over this shirt they wore a long white cape of fine wool. The Moors called this cape *barnuco*.¹¹⁰ He complimented his description of Maltese female attire with a drawing entitled *Donna dell' Isoladi Malta*.¹¹¹ Some historians suggested that this woman represented a sixteenth-century Maltese prostitute and that this dress was the distinguishing attire of local

¹⁰³ C. Cassar, (2002), 161, 162. Thomas Freller, (2009), 541. Schembri, (2011), 98-101. E. Attard, (2014), 28. David Brafman, 'Facing East: The Western View of Islam in Nicolò de Nicolay's 'Travels in Turkey', in *Getty Research Journal*, i (2009), 153. Nicolay was one of the envoys of a French diplomatic delegation that was on its way to Constantinople. He was a royal geographer and allegedly also a spy for the French monarchy.

¹⁰⁴ De Nicolay, (1576), 31. Aramon's voyage to the Sublime Porte had a dual purpose; to reinforce French diplomatic presence in Constantinople and to try to secure Suleiman I's military alliance against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

¹⁰⁵ Stanley Fiorini, 'The 1551 Siege of Gozo and the Repopulation of the Island', in *Focus on Gozo*, Joseph Farrugia and Lino Briguglio, (Malta, Formatek Ltd, 1996), 74.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew P. Vella, 'The Order of Malta and the Defence of Tripoli 1530-1551' in *Melita Historica* vi (1975), 378. On 14 August, the Knights' fort in Tripoli had capitulated without the consent of the Grand Master and his Council.

¹⁰⁷ De Nicolay, (1576), 35-38.

¹⁰⁸ Birgu was the first maritime town to be created in the Grand Harbour. In 1530 the Knights of Saint John established the seat of their convent in this town.

¹⁰⁹ De Nicolay, (1576), 35. (...ma sopra tutto vi è gran copia di Corteggiane si Greche, Italiane, Spagnuole, More come Maltesi, lequali Maltesi, dico le volgari, altro habito non portano d'estate, per il caldo estremo che ui fa, che una longa camicia di tela Bianca legata di sotto le mamelle, & sopra à questo un mantello longo di lana fina Bianca chiamato da mori Barnuco...)

¹¹⁰ De Nicolay, (1576), 35.

¹¹¹ Woman of the island of Malta.

prostitutes,¹¹² but various factors indicated that this dress was not the distinguishing attire of courtesans.

The fact that Nicolay drew a picture of a Maltese woman was not a novelty. His book included twenty-three images of females from the different countries he visited.¹¹³ In the fourth volume of his *Navigazioni et Viaggi nella Turchia* (1576) he drew a Turkish courtesan in the Ottoman city of Adrianople (present-day Edirne) which he labelled *Corteggiana Turca*.¹¹⁴ If the *Donna dell'isola di Malta* was a courtesan, presumably Nicolay would have had no qualms in giving the illustration a proper heading. Following his stopover in Malta he went to Tripoli where he visited the slave market, archaeological ruins and the Knights' fort. This account was also complimented with a picture of a woman labelled *Donna Moresca di Tripoli in Barbaria*.¹¹⁵ This time the woman was holding a child in her arms. One notices a remarkable stylistic similarity between the Maltese *donna* and the illustration of the Moorish woman. The contours of their body and the manner how the fabric clung to it can be perceived as highly sensual. In her study on body image and sex roles in art, Ludmilla Jordanova argues that subjectivity, social and cultural traits and social integration are integral to body images. She showed that assumptions about sex roles are also embedded in such images.¹¹⁶ The sensual stylistic features of the *Donna dell'Isola di Malta*, similar to the Moorish mother and child and other female illustrations Nicolay included in his *Navigazioni*, ultimately reflected the artists' personal and cultural background and the way he perceived the female gender. The labels of his portraiture were, however, captured in a visible physicality and thus offer permanence. History needs to respect and preserve the label that the artist pinned.

¹¹² C. Cassar, (2002), 162. Freller, (2009), 541. Freller says it is a sketch of a public woman (i.e. a prostitute). E. Attard, (2014), 28.

¹¹³ See De Nicolay, (1576), 64, 83, 84, 85, 113, 115, 116, 117, 128, 131, 132, 137, 138, 139, 238, 257, 286, 287, 288, 295, 296, 317, 328.

¹¹⁴ De Nicolay, (1576), 288.

¹¹⁵ For text see De Nicolay, (1576), 39-63. For the illustration of the *Donna Moresca di Tripoli in Barbaria* see De Nicolay, (1576), 64.

¹¹⁶ Ludmilla J. Jordanova, *Sexual Visions*, (Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin, 1989), 43-65.



Fig. 2.5: *Donna dell' Isola di Malta* c.1580.¹¹⁷

Artist: Nicolò de Nicolay.

Drawing 270 x 174 mm

Fig. 2.6: *Donna Moresca di Tripoli in Barbaria* c.1580.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ De Nicolay, (1576), 35.

¹¹⁸ De Nicolay, (1576), 64.

Early modern visitors' accounts on prostitution were at times thinly veiled criticisms.¹¹⁹ In 1613, William Lithgow (1582-1645), a 'tough and opinionated Scots Protestant, with a fervent anti-Catholic aversion',¹²⁰ said that he found the knights to be 'mightily decayed'.¹²¹ He described the local women as being 'much inclined to licentiousness'.¹²² In 1716 an anonymous Venetian account revealed that frequenting licentious women in houses (*a luoco e fuoco*) was a common thing.¹²³ In 1767 Johann Hermann von Riedesel (1782-1842) said that there was not an honest woman or girl to be met in the whole town, except those of the old nobility.¹²⁴ In 1770 Scottish writer Patrick Brydone (1741-1819) claimed that numerous knights, priests and confessors blatantly kept mistresses in breach of their vow of chastity.¹²⁵ In 1777 Charles Sigisbert Sonini de Manoncourt (1751-1812) said that Valletta was a dangerous place where priestesses of Venus flocked.¹²⁶ Criticisms reached a climax in 1790 with Carasi's description of the Order as an institution that 'seduced and tempted girls by its loose morals'.¹²⁷ He said that every Maltese lady in Valletta was a 'Messalina',¹²⁸ 'two-thirds of the Maltese women received money from the business of gallantry',¹²⁹ and 'at least two-thirds of the six hundred patients in the *Sacra Infermeria* were suffering from venereal diseases because they frequented prostitutes'.¹³⁰ Four years later, in 1794, Abbé Jacques Delille (1738-1813) likewise said that Valletta was the 'harem' of the Knights of St John.¹³¹

These narratives reached a wide audience and up to present times they appear to be the most frequently cited sources for prostitution in Hospitaller Malta. Visitors did not offer a univocal point of view on prostitution. Many were silent on the matter, whilst others denied claims on rampant prostitution.¹³² The latter have rarely surfaced in histories of prostitution. On 13 April 1781, Carl August Ehrensvärd (1745-1800), an eighteenth-century Swedish

¹¹⁹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 65. Also see McGough, (2011), 59.

¹²⁰ Edmund Bosworth, *An Intrepid Scot*, (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006), 5.

¹²¹ Lithgow, (1770), 309.

¹²² Lithgow, (1770), 310.

¹²³ Quoted in Victor Mallia-Milanes, *Descrittione de Malta Anno 1716*, (Malta, Bugelli, Publications, 1988), 95.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Freller, (1997), 34.

¹²⁵ Patrick Brydone, *Travels in Sicily and Malta*, (Aberdeen, George Clark and Son, 1848), 123. The squadron was dispatched by the Order, to assist the French monarchy who had launched an expedition against the Bey of Tunis for not returning slaves captured from Corsica.

¹²⁶ Sonnini, (1800), 40.

¹²⁷ Carasi, (2010), 8, 10, 161.

¹²⁸ Carasi, (2010), 115. Valeria Messalina (c20AD-48AD) was the third wife of Roman Emperor Claudius, she was known for her notorious licentious behaviour.

¹²⁹ Carasi, (2010), 115.

¹³⁰ Carasi, (2010), 149.

¹³¹ Freller, (2009), 550.

¹³² Salkeld, 41.

traveller, a naval officer and an architect, said that visitors' reports on high numbers of prostitutes in Valletta were untrue. He said that Valletta was a boring city with narrow minded people, aging sailors and a large number of 'jawning' knights killing time hanging around coffee shops, duelling, quarrelling and playing 'hazard'.¹³³ In 1818, (therefore a few years after the Order had left Malta), Felice Antonio de Christophoro d'Avalos said that there were indeed on the island of Malta, as elsewhere, pretty girls who were victims of seduction or need, who abused of the charms that nature endowed them with, nonetheless female morality was very high. In a small country like Malta, religion and reputation had a very strong grip on society and compelled people to act decently, and maintain a high degree of restraint.¹³⁴ According to D'Avalos, females in Malta were highly virtuous.¹³⁵ He said that the Abbé de Vertot, Juvara de Turcarum, *Comendatore* Abela and Count Ciantar, and Père Paciaudi agreed with him and dismissed the idea that prostitution in Valletta was rife.¹³⁶

Freller suggests that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including information on prostitution in diaries was a reflection of the progressive freedom of expression ushered in by the Enlightenment.¹³⁷ Sara Warneke, on the other hand, argues that information on prostitutes was included to warn other travellers of the dangers of indulging in licentious behaviour. She suggests that scandal-mongering, at times, also offered travel writers financial and social leverage¹³⁸ Antoni Mączak argues that information on prostitutes in travelogues was part of the sensational interplay between truth and falsehood that was integral to travelogues and travel diaries. This interplay enhanced visitors' accounts and at times made them more appealing than history books.¹³⁹ Mączak's theory is supported by Melissa Hope Ditmore who suggests that sex and money were and still are universally understood.¹⁴⁰ The Marquise de Pompadour certainly knew this. She periodically gathered stories about prostitutes from the police records and used them to spice up Louis XV's tedious moments.¹⁴¹

¹³³ Lorenz von Numers, *Havets Karavaner*, (Stockholm, P.A. Norstet & Söners Förlag, 1985), 11. Jawning is arm wrestling with insults done in good fun. Hazard was a game played with two dice that was very popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries and was often played for money.

¹³⁴ D'Avalos, (1818), 36, 37. La religion et l'opinion publique qui ont tant de force dans un petit pays, les obligent à montrer une décence, une reserve qui contrastent singulièrement avec leur genre de vie.

¹³⁵ By previous visitors D'Avalos was mainly referring to what was written about prostitutes in Malta in Johann Hermann von Riedesel's 1767 letters to his friend Winckelmann.

¹³⁶ D'Avalos, (1818), 172.

¹³⁷ Freller, (2009), 521, 532.

¹³⁸ Warneke, (1994), 201, 202.

¹³⁹ Mączak, (1994), ix.

¹⁴⁰ Hope Ditmore, (2006), xxvii.

¹⁴¹ Pamela Cheek, 'Prostitutes of 'Political Institution' in *Eighteenth Century Studies*, xxviii, 2 (Winter, 1994-1995), 193.

Prostitution: some Quantitative Insights

The list of contumacies compiled in the 1763 *Status Animarum* register of the parish of San Paolo Apostolo was particularly revelatory. Out of 77 contumacies, 50 were females; 31 female contumacies (sixty-two percent) were annotated as scandalous women.¹⁴² In consideration of the fact that as previously stated not all scandalous female contumacies were prostitutes, it is possible that the number of prostitutes in the parish of San Paolo Apostolo in 1763 amounted to less than thirty-one. There were approximately 8,000 people living in the parish of San Paolo at the time. If these statistics are anything to go by, the number of prostitutes living in parish of San Paolo was definitely much lower than Porto Salvo. Some (not all) of the 1726-1762 (with lacunas) *Status Animarum* registers of Porto Salvo appended *publiche meretrici* with a cross. This made it possible to quantify prostitutes in the parish from 1726-1762 (See Table 2.3). The number of inhabitants in the parish of Porto Salvo was about seventy-two percent higher than the Parish of San Paolo. In 1726 there were 9,446 parishioners in Porto Salvo and 5,482 in San Paolo, in 1736 there were 10,392 in Porto Salvo and 6,244 in San Paolo.¹⁴³ The poorer areas in Valletta like for instance the Mandraggio and the Due Balle fell under the responsibility of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo.¹⁴⁴ From 1726–1762 the parish counted more or less 10,000 souls of which around 100 women were *publiche meretrici* (1%).¹⁴⁵ This estimate is not definitive. Covert prostitutes do not feature. Nonetheless one can surmise that in eighteenth-century Valletta, out of a total population of around 16,000-18,000 souls, around 130 women were socially identified as *publiche meretrici*.

No solid statistics for numbers of prostitutes in early modern European cities exist. Lotte Van de Pol showed that in Amsterdam, from 1650-1800 there were around 800-1000 prostitutes out of a population of 200,000 (0.5%).¹⁴⁶ She suggested that in 1758, the number of prostitutes in London, in relation to the size of its population, was similar to contemporary

¹⁴² A.S.P. Status Animarum 1763, ff. 33, 34.

¹⁴³ See Appendix Table II in Fiorini, (1983).

¹⁴⁴ Giannantonio Scaglione, 'Spazio abitato ed economie urbane nel quartiere/mercato della 'Piazza de Viveri' de la Valletta nella seconda metà del settecento' in *Storia Urbana*, cxlviii, (2015), 5-36.

¹⁴⁵ Other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Status Animarum records of Porto Salvo in the Archives of the Archbishop of Malta in Floriana mentioned in Fiorini, (1983), 327-338, were not available. This quantitative study is thus based on all Status Animarum registers kept in the office of the Parish Priest of Porto Salvo (St Dominic's Church), Valletta and all Status Animarum registers of Porto Salvo in the Archives of the Inquisition in Mdina. The only Status Animarum register in A.I.M. where *publiche meretrici* were marked with a cross was the 1762 register. The 1745 Status Animarum in Porto Salvo is very fragile and illegible. It was however possible to transcribe the end list of *publiche meretrici*. End lists do not always correspond exactly with the main listing. For instance in A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, twenty-six year old Giulia Bellia is indicated as a *publica meretrice* on the end list but not in the main register.

¹⁴⁶ Van de Pol, (2011), 19.

Amsterdam.¹⁴⁷ In Paris, in the second half of the eighteenth-century Erica-Marie Benabou estimated that there were approximately 10,000-15,000 prostitutes out of a population of 600,000 inhabitants (2.5%).¹⁴⁸ In the early seventeenth-century, the city of Rome had a population of 91,000 inhabitants divided into 68 parishes and 22,000 households. During this period of time Tessa Storey surmises that there were around 1,200 prostitutes in the city (1.31%).¹⁴⁹ This indicated that the ratio of prostitutes in relation to the population in early modern Valletta was significantly less than other cities. Numbers of prostitutes in Valletta were low and decisively less than what panic scripts and certain early modern travellers stipulated.

Table 2.3: *Publiche Meretrici* marked with a cross in the *Status Animarum* registers of the parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta 1726-1762.

Year	No. of Souls	Publiche Meretrici	%	Recurring Names
1726	9446	104	1.01	50
1727	9384	107	1.14	60
1729	9200	94	1.02	44
1732	9420	79	0.84	51
1734	9171	80	0.87	54
1737	10,043	100	0.99	59
1738	10,316	104	1.00	62
1742	10,364	91	0.87	44
1744	10,416	107	1.02	51
1745	10,342	106	1.02	58
1749	10,398	101	0.97	44
1754	10,316	104	1.00	34
1762 ¹⁵⁰	c9512	114	1.19	24

Prostitution like other forms of trading was an itinerant business pitched on the ports' military and commercial activities.¹⁵¹ In the seventeenth century apart from the ships of the navy of the Order, over a period of roughly twelve months around fifteen foreign ships flying the flags of various European princes, would visit the harbour. Most of these ships would be returning back to base following military missions in Ottoman waters or in the Maghreb

¹⁴⁷ Van de Pol, (2011), 19.

¹⁴⁸ Benabou, (1987), 326-329.

¹⁴⁹ Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', (2008), 61. Peter van Kessel, Elisja Schulte van Kessel, *Rome, Amsterdam: two growing cities in seventeenth-century Europe*, (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 2, 3.

¹⁵⁰ A.I.M. C.E.M. 28/29 Status Animarum Porto Salvo 1762. This register where publiche meretrici are also singled out with a cross is in the Archives of the Inquisition in Mdina.

¹⁵¹ Cátia Antunes, *Early Modern Ports, 1500–1750*, retrieved on 25 July 2014 from <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/courts-and-cities/catia-antunes-early-modern-ports-1500-1750>

region. The duration of their stay never exceeded two weeks.¹⁵² These vessels may have provided regular intermittent potential customers for prostitutes. Commercial activities in Valletta's harbour were nonetheless limited. London, Venice and other port and garrison towns created a market for casual sex.¹⁵³ Valletta's harbour was never a centre for intercontinental transactions like Venice, Seville, Lisbon or Cadiz, or an intercontinental power like Antwerp, Amsterdam or London.¹⁵⁴

According to Victor Mallia-Milanes the harbour offered excellent trading facilities but it was disadvantaged because of its location off the traditional navigation routes to the Échelles, Hospitaller prejudices that constrained Malta's trade structures and the conservatism of insular Maltese merchants.¹⁵⁵ Michel Fontenay agreed in saying that the Valletta harbour's success was minimal. He suggested that it largely depended on the Order's links to French aristocracies and the French monarchy.¹⁵⁶ Owen Bean argued that in the seventeenth century maritime trading in the harbour was largely linked to corsairing.¹⁵⁷ At one of its highest points, from 1660-1675 Maltese corsairing numbered around twenty boats. These boats were rarely in the harbour but they injected the harbour with a thriving economic activity mainly based on the trading of looted goods.¹⁵⁸ The port functioned as an international port of call for commercial vessels on the way to the Levant. Food outlets where one could buy linen, coffee or eastern fabrics at low prices prospered and multiplied. Merchants, especially French merchants from Provence, frequented the port on a regular basis.¹⁵⁹ The increased presence of French and Dutch military ships in the Mediterranean, at the outset of the Triple Alliance (1668), translated into increased business for traders in

¹⁵² Michel Fontenay, 'Le développement urbain du port de Malte du XVI au XVIII siècle', in *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, Vol. 71, (1994),101.

¹⁵³ Dabhoiwala, (2012), 112.

¹⁵⁴ Mallia-Milanes, (2008), 264. See also Salvino Busutill, 'Malta's Economy in the Nineteenth Century', in *Melita Historica*, iii, (1965), 44-65. Malta's harbour truly became a global player in the nineteenth-century, during the British period, when steam ships used the port as a coaling station. With the opening of the Suez Canal from 1869 onwards the Malta port became the chief bunkering station in the Mediterranean, an obligatory stop for all ships sailing to India.

¹⁵⁵ Mallia-Milanes, (2008), 264. Fontenay, (1994), 103. The Échelles were the ports and cities of the Ottoman Empire located in the Middle East or North Africa, where Suleiman the magnificent had given up some of his powers, including legal powers, to French traders. Under normal circumstances ships on the way to the Échelles sailed from the north, through the straits of Messina. Malta was situated on the direct crossing between Gibraltar and the Levant, in principle this should have attracted English and Dutch shipping, but these navigators traditionally favoured Livorno. Livorno was the port of the de Médici, perceived to be an avant-garde harbour.

¹⁵⁶ Fontenay, (1994), 103. C'est pourquoi Malte n'a eu finalement de succès qu'auprès de la navigation provençale et pour des raisons qui tenaient plus aux liens privilégiés unissant l'Ordre à l'aristocratie française et à la monarchie des lys qu'aux avantages intrinsèques de son port. This excludes the time when, because of the French Revolution Malta's port hosted significant numbers of vessels from Ragusa and the Greek navy

¹⁵⁷ Bean, (2013), 40.

¹⁵⁸ On the corsairing trade see Liam Gauci, *In the Name of the Prince: Maltese Corsairs 1760-1798*, (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2016), Chapter IV 'Tools of the Trade'.

¹⁵⁹ Fontenay, (1994),101.

Valletta's port.¹⁶⁰ In 1667, in the parish of Porto Salvo, a significantly high number of prostitutes were registered in the *Status Animarum* census. Out of 6,157 parishioners 165 were singled out as *donne publiche* (2.68%).¹⁶¹ Eight percent of the adult female population that numbered 2,074 were prostitutes. It is possible that numerous prostitutes indicated the port's booming commercial vitality during this period of time.

In 1676 the plague brought change. Commercial vessels returning from the *Échelles* were obliged to stay in quarantine in the Marsamxett harbour.¹⁶² Sailors were retained in the *Lazaretto* (a quarantine station), and people sought refuge in the country. This had a negative impact on all business in Valletta including prostitution.¹⁶³ During the recovery period, trading shifted from Malta's harbour to various coastal ports around the Mediterranean. Maltese merchants would purchase, sell and exchange goods at ports along the coast. This type of trading, known as brigantine trading or tramping, was born out of the same socio-economic and spatial milieu which sustained corsairing.¹⁶⁴ In 1697, the *Consolato di Mare* was established by the Order of St John. This provided a legal framework to support new developments in maritime trading.¹⁶⁵ A significant number of brigantine traders established retail outlets on the Iberian Peninsula. Some would purchase goods from Mediterranean ports like Naples, Leghorn, Genoa and Marseilles and sell goods door to door, in streets and squares in Spain and Portugal.¹⁶⁶

In the mid-1760s, resistance by established native Spanish retailers resulted in the abolishment of brigantine trading in Spain. Some traders returned to the Valletta harbour. New complex forms of maritime trading developed.¹⁶⁷ Carmel Vassallo suggested that through the course of the eighteenth century the harbour survived through its ability to diversify its trading partners.¹⁶⁸ He showed how trading during this period was mainly based

¹⁶⁰ John A.Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV 1667-1714*, (Oxon & New York, Routledge, 2013), 106-108. The United Provinces, England, and Sweden concluded the Triple Alliance at the end of January 1668. They demanded that Spain acceded to demands of Louis XIV for certain towns. If Louis increased his demands or continued his conquests, the Allies would fight to re-establish the borders of 1659.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in C .Cassar, (2000), 133. *Status Animarum* registers in the archives of the Archbishop of Malta, were not available for consultation during this study.

¹⁶² Fontenay, (1994), 102, 103.

¹⁶³ Fontenay, (1994), 102.

¹⁶⁴ C. Vassallo, (1997), 293. See also Carmel Vassallo, 'The Brigantine Trade in XVIII Century Malta' in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 1993), 107-122. The brigantine trade involved the purchase, sale and exchange of goods at ports along the coast.

¹⁶⁵ C. Vassallo, (1997), 4.

¹⁶⁶ C. Vassallo, (1997), 3.

¹⁶⁷ C. Vassallo, (1997), 294, 295.

¹⁶⁸ C. Vassallo (1997), 2, 3. Trading partners included Venice, the Maghreb, Smirne, Gallipoli, Acre and other Eastern Mediterranean ports besides Sicily and Calabria from where grain was imported and Marseille from where military supplies were sourced.

on capital in the form of coins (*specie*) rather than goods.¹⁶⁹ Local merchants played the middlemen between Northern European producers, and Southern European consumers.¹⁷⁰ These new developments resulted in increasing numbers of outgoing ships and decreasing numbers of incoming ships. Lesser numbers of seamen meant less work for prostitutes. This may have been reflected in the fact that notwithstanding increasing numbers of inhabitants, the number of prostitutes in the parish of Porto Salvo from 1726-1762 was significantly less than in 1667.

Trading was however not the founding principle on which the Valletta port was established. The ports' main orientation was on the Order's naval ventures against Islam, corsairing and the issuing of patents and privileges to vessels that flew the Order's flag.¹⁷¹ By the end of the seventeenth century the Ottoman threat subsided and the Order of St John was forced to change its military schemes and also the rationale behind its warring activities.¹⁷² Its mission was recast. Corsairing activities shifted towards the Western Mediterranean and its military expeditions were transformed into policing activities largely focusing on the protection of European merchant shipping from Barbary corsairs.¹⁷³ Fontenay showed that in the eighteenth century the Valletta harbour mainly attracted ships from Provence, France.¹⁷⁴ In 1770, seventy-five percent of the ships anchored at Marsamxett harbour flew the French flag.¹⁷⁵ Through French shipping the Order maintained its connections with French nobles and with the French crown. Nonetheless, Fontenay argues that international navigation in Valletta's port in the eighteenth century was provincial.¹⁷⁶ Its provinciality in the second half of the eighteenth-century was largely also reflected in the fact that the number of prostitutes in Porto Salvo 1726-1762 was 60% lower than in 1667. Not unlike what was happening in other harbour towns, the numbers and the lives of prostitutes in Valletta were determined by the harbours' economic development and shifting numbers of sailors, soldiers and merchants.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ C. Vassallo, (1997), 92, 294.

¹⁷⁰ C. Vassallo, (1997), 294.

¹⁷¹ Fontenay, (1994), 100, 101. On sustained corsairing activities that lasted up to the end of the eighteenth-century see Gauci, (2016).

¹⁷² See Aleks Farrugia, 'An Order in Decline? An Alternative Perspective' in *Proceedings of History Week 2011*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2013), 79-94.

¹⁷³ A. Farrugia, (2013), 89.

¹⁷⁴ Fontenay, (1994), 101.

¹⁷⁵ Fontenay, (1994), 101.

¹⁷⁶ Fontenay, (1994), 101.

¹⁷⁷ Dabhoiwala, (2012), 112.

Prostitution: Some Qualitative Insights

Some prostitutes living in the parish of Porto Salvo from 1726-1762 may have reached Valletta's main harbour through brigantine channels with brigantine traders. Christian names and surnames of *pubbliche meretrici* in the *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo appear to have been predominantly Italian.¹⁷⁸ The most numerous seem to be of Sicilian origin.¹⁷⁹ Surnames such as Aboranti, Andriotti, Barbieri, Belluni, Benedetti, Bernini, Buttafoco, Cavigniani, Capella, Caponetto, d'Alessandro, d'Amico, d'Arena, di Giovanni, di Ladro, di Piava, Fardella, Folgiamorta, Felici, Ferrara, Giordani, Grobaldi, Lomberto, Marco, Medici, Monreal, Palermo, Pierri, Rancati, Russo, Sacchetti, Scili, Simiani, Tagliaferri, Traina and many others indicated strong links with Sicily and other ports on mainland Italy. In the eighteenth century the majority of vessels both large and small were engaged in ferrying mail, people and cargo to and from nearby Sicily.¹⁸⁰ It is possible that some of these prostitutes may also have reached Valletta with these boats.

In the prison records Diana Guasto is described as a Sicilian *donna publica*. In 1766 she was living in Valletta and in trouble with the law.¹⁸¹ In 1780, Maria Spanò another Sicilian *donna publica* living in Valletta ended up behind bars.¹⁸² On 15 May 1794, the Grand Viscount¹⁸³ prohibited the captain of a boat from disembarking Felicia Diamanti a Sicilian woman.¹⁸⁴ The fact that the craft was unnamed may indicate that it was a fairly small craft which did not warrant a name.¹⁸⁵ A law enacted in the De Vilhena code in 1724 stipulated that women travelling from Sicily to Malta required a special permit issued by the Order of St John. Five years unpaid rowing on a galley awaited any captain or boat owner who contravened this law. Crew members who failed to report the matter within six hours from arrival faced two years unpaid rowing. Honest women would be sent back and prostitutes would be flogged and perpetually exiled.¹⁸⁶ The fact that this law specifically targeted women coming from Sicily indicated that significant numbers of prostitutes were coming through this channel. High numbers of *pubbliche meretrici* with Italian surnames in

¹⁷⁸ For a study on Maltese surnames see Mario Cassar, *The Surnames of the Maltese Islands: an Etymological Dictionary*, (Malta, P.E.G. Ltd., 2001).

¹⁷⁹ For a study of Sicilian surnames see Gerolamo Caracausi, *Dizionario Onomastico della Sicilia: Repertorio storico-etimologico di nomi di famiglia e di luogo*, Vol I (A-L) & Vol. II, (M-Z), (Palermo, L'Epos, 1994).

¹⁸⁰ Vassallo, (1993), 109. See also Alfred Bonnici, 'The Postal System of the Order of St John', unpublished M.A. Hospitaller Studies dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011.

¹⁸¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1764-1767, f.148. (15 July 1766).

¹⁸² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.204. (22 May 1780)

¹⁸³ A high ranking law officer. For details on the role of the Grand Viscount see Chapter 5 'Lawbreakers, Deviants and Troublemakers'.

¹⁸⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, loose leaf, n.p.

¹⁸⁵ c.f. Vassallo, (1993), 109.

¹⁸⁶ *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (Malta, Stamparia di Sua Altezza Serenissima, 1724), 80. Clause XXXVII.

Porto Salvo 1726-1762 revealed that this law may have been difficult to enforce and/or that some prostitutes managed to slip through the net.

A few *publiche meretrici* may have come from more distant areas like for instance the Iberian Peninsula where some brigantine traders had strong connections.¹⁸⁷ Spanish surnames of *publiche meretrici* like for instance Azzupardi,¹⁸⁸ Carnero, Costa, De Caro, di Martinez, Alonso, Carmenita, Feilla, Fighiera, Garcia, Inguanez, Madà, Montilla, Petrofila, Ribela, Rius, Spagnolo, Vilar, and Vidal and Portuguese surnames like Culeriò, De Silva, Pilau, Portoghese and Rumei, seem to support the fact that there may have been sustained travel links with Spain and Portugal during this period of time. Anna Auran, Catherina Boison, Maria Buset, Apolonia DeXembert, Martina Picard, Margarita Renard and Anna Vais, on the other hand may have reached the Valletta harbour through land and sea links between France and the Valletta harbour.¹⁸⁹ Sporadic surnames like Bajjada, Buasi, Bugeia, may indicate that some may have come from the south. These women may have exploited links with ports in North Africa.¹⁹⁰ Singular *publiche meretrici* like for instance Elena Cipriot,¹⁹¹ Annella Greca¹⁹² on the other hand point to eastern connections. Most of these surnames had no permanence; they no longer form part of the list of surnames of Malta. Although as Phinney and Rotheram point out, surnames are often an inaccurate indicator of ethnic identity, one can at least arguably say that notwithstanding the relatively low number of prostitutes, the rich variety of surnames of *publiche meretrici* in Porto Salvo in the eighteenth century indicates that cultural diversity was not lacking.¹⁹³

A few cursory observations emerged through a comparative study. The *Status Animarum* records for consecutive years 1726/1727, 1737/1738, 1744/1755 demonstrated that on average only around forty percent of the names of prostitutes recurred in subsequent years.¹⁹⁴ The same pattern was reflected in other years.¹⁹⁵ A prostitute was not necessarily a

¹⁸⁷Vassallo, (1997), 3.

¹⁸⁸Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Origin of 'Maltese Surnames' in *Melita Historica*, xii, 4 (1999), 333-344. Wettinger says that the separate existence of Accio and Pardo as surnames in the twelfth century counsels caution in reaching the conclusion that Azzupardi is a Spanish surname.

¹⁸⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f.41. Polonia DeXembert. A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 47v. Maria Buset. A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, f.39. Catherina Boison age. A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, 69. Martina Picard. A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f. 27. Anna Vais. A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f.46. Anna Auran. AIM. C.E.M. 28/29 Status Animarum Porto Salvo 1762, f.49v. Margherita Renard.

¹⁹⁰ For surnames of Arabo-Berber origin see Godfrey Wettinger, 'Arabo-Berber Influences in Malta: onomastic evidence' in *Proceedings of the First Congress on Mediterranean Studies of Arabo-Berber Influence*, Micheline Galley, David R Marshall (ed.), (Alger, Société Nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 1973), 486.

¹⁹¹A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 46v.

¹⁹²A.P.S. Status Animarum 1749, f.80.

¹⁹³ Jean S. Phinney, Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus, *Children's Ethnic Socialization*, (Newbury Park, Sage Publications, 1987), 11.

¹⁹⁴ See Table 2.3. Recurring Names.

prostitute for life. Some repented and joined the Magdalene nuns. For instance Rosa Maria Fantun who was registered as a *publica meretrici* in the Porto Salvo *Status Animarum* from 1727 to 1729, professed and became a Magdalene nun on 24 October 1741.¹⁹⁶ Likewise, Vittoria Seichel who was singled out in the 1745 census became a Magdalene nun. She passed away on 26 June 1756 and was interred in the monastery's crypt.¹⁹⁷ Some may have been evicted.¹⁹⁸ Other prostitutes like forty-three year old Maria Martines got married (*si maritò*).¹⁹⁹ Thereafter she was no longer indicated as a *publica meretrice*. Forty year old Teresa Candoloro and her twenty-four year old daughter Caterina decided to change their lives and stopped pursuing prostitution (*furono mutate*).²⁰⁰ Some retired. In 1738 after over twelve years of prostitution Apollonia DeXembert retired at the age of fifty-five.²⁰¹ 1737, was the last year when Rosa D'Amico was singled out as a *publica meretrice*. She was fifty-eight years old and had been in the business for at least eleven years.²⁰² From 1726-1762, ten women were *publiche meretrici* for 10-15 years.²⁰³ Six were intermittently present in the parish for 15-20 years.²⁰⁴ When clerics were informed about a parishioner's move to another locality, they noted this information down next to the person's name. For instance in 1738, twenty-five year old Paola Sant was described as being in Gozo.²⁰⁵ In 1742, twenty-six year old Teresa Cassar had a short note next to her name saying that she had moved to the parish of San Paolo.²⁰⁶ In 1754, thirty-two year old Anna Benvino had moved to Bormla,²⁰⁷ whilst twenty-six year old Veneranda Marrone moved to Floriana.²⁰⁸ In the same year twenty-four

¹⁹⁵ The number of recurring names for 1762 is low because only the ones who were established in the parish since 1754 (eight years) could be counted.

¹⁹⁶ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727 f. 59v, 1729 f. 129. Christine Muscat, *Magdalene Nuns and Penitent Prostitutes*, (Malta, BDL Publishing, 2013), 224.

¹⁹⁷ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1745, f. 41.

¹⁹⁸ See Yosanne Vella, 'Earthly Madonnas? Women Troublemakers in 18th Century Malta', in *Storja*, (1998), 38, 39.

¹⁹⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f. 185.

²⁰⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727, f. 61v.

²⁰¹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f. 77.

²⁰² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, f. 62.

²⁰³ Boison Catherina 1732-1745 (13 years), Stellini Maria 1737-1749 (12 years), Apollonia Dexamburt 1726-1738 (12 years), Boison Aloissia 1732-1744 (12 years), Muscat Margarita 1742-1754 (12 years), Cassar Teresa 1742-1754 (12 years), Busutill Maria 1737-1749 (12 years), Di Giovanni Margarita 1734-1745 (11 years), Andaloro Margarita 1738-1749 (11 years), Andriotti Maria 1732-1742 (10 years).

²⁰⁴ Vellanova Maria 1726-1745 (19 years), Zerafa Gratia 1726-1744 (18 years), Camilleri Angela 1737-1754 (17 years), Habeier Maria 1726-1742 (16 years), D'Arena Rosa 1726-1742 (16 years), Farrugia Giovanna 1729-1745 (16 years).

²⁰⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f. 41. It is possible that she was deviant and was exiled to Gozo.

²⁰⁶ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f. 191.

²⁰⁷ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1754, f. 51v.

²⁰⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1754, f. 42.

year old Giovanna Cauchi was appended with a note saying that she was in Gozo.²⁰⁹ Some *pubbliche meretrici* may have been disorderly and may have been banished from Valletta. Such cases are however sporadic and exceptional. The majority appear to have moved to an unknown destination. It is likely that some of these women may have been itinerant migrant workers who moved house according to the opportunities that arose.

Research emerging from recent studies on prostitution in early modern European cities suggests that significant numbers of prostitutes were migrants. In Amsterdam the majority were German.²¹⁰ In London Tony Henderson suggests that over sixty percent were migrants and that a relatively high number came from Ireland.²¹¹ In seventeenth-century Rome, Tessa Storey noted that prostitutes were often outsiders. She suggested that around thirty-seven percent were Roman the rest came from the Papal States, or from other, mostly northern Italian states.²¹² This scenario appears to have been also true for eighteenth-century Valletta where a significant number of prostitutes were likely to have been migrants mostly from nearby Sicily.

Patricia Fumerton attributed social or geographical mobility in London to economic insecurity and institutional confusions surrounding taxonomisation.²¹³ She suggested that people who moved to London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries experienced alienation and anonymity and this encouraged wandering.²¹⁴ Laura Gowing argued that bi-permeable rooms in early modern London signified that there were no boundaries.²¹⁵ Paul Griffiths concurred in saying that privacy in London was a near impossibility.²¹⁶ Tight living conditions and lack of privacy encouraged people to move to more private options. By 1798 the population in Malta had reached c.100,000 inhabitants and 37% percent of the population lived in Valletta and the harbour cities.²¹⁷ Some houses in Valletta were shared between several families.²¹⁸ Yosanne Vella noted that in eighteenth-century Valletta, especially in the

²⁰⁹A.P.S. Status Animarum 1754, f. 42v. It is possible that like Paola Sant she was deviant and was exiled to Gozo.

²¹⁰ Van de Pol, (2011), 146.

²¹¹Henderson, (1999), 19, 20.

²¹²Storey, *Carnal commerce* (2008), 125.

²¹³ Patricia Fumerton, 'London's Vagrant Economy: Making Space for 'Low' Subjectivity' in *Material London ca. 1600*, Lena Cowen Orlin (ed.), (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 215.

²¹⁴Fumerton, (2000), 215.

²¹⁵ Laura Gowing, 'The Freedom of the Streets: Women and Social Space. 1560-1640', in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (eds.), (Manchester, Manchester UP, 2000), 130-151.

²¹⁶Paul Griffiths, 'Overlapping Circles: Imagining Criminal Communities in London, 1545-1645', in *communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, Alexandra Shepard, Phil Withington (eds.), (Manchester, Manchester UP, 2000), 115-133.

²¹⁷ Fiorini, (2003), 297-310. Mallia-Milanes, (2003), 1-42. See also Fig. 2.6.

²¹⁸ C. Cassar, (2000), 248, 249.

Mandraggio quarters the ‘overcrowding of families in one building helped to create a tense atmosphere’.²¹⁹ Overcrowding, tension, lack of boundaries and lack of privacy may have been some circumstances that may have instigated residential movements.²²⁰ Living and working as a prostitute in such conditions was certainly a challenge. Certain clients did not want to be seen entering or exiting from a prostitute’s house.²²¹

During an interrogation that took place in the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ*, on 19 October 1701, Catherina Mifsud a *publica donna* who was at the time living in the Mandraggio, said that she was standing at the door checking if there were any people in the street, because her client did not want to be seen coming out of her house.²²² It is possible that moving house frequently was one of the strategies prostitutes adopted in order to maintain repeat clients. It could on the other hand also indicate economic improvement. Within a span of six years Catherina Mifsud (who was not from Valletta) moved house three times. Her movements indicated an upward trend. She initially moved into the old Abattoir area. This area was located under the Marsamxett Gate and was occupied by poor citizens.²²³ Catherina then moved into the upper part of the Mandraggio and consequently into a less crowded and better area near the Auberge d’Aragon.²²⁴ Alternatively, in view of the fact that most prostitutes were relatively young, migrating to Valletta the city of the knights may have been perceived as an opportunity or a thrill.²²⁵ This adventure may not have worked according to plan. Some may have returned home or moved elsewhere.

²¹⁹ Yosanne Vella, ‘Earthly Madonnas? Women Troublemakers in 18th Century Malta’, in *Storja*, (1998), 37.

²²⁰ For the history of the urban planning of Valletta see Quentin Hughes, *The Building of Malta 1530-1798*, (London, Tiranti, 1956). Quentin Hughes, *Fortress: Architecture and Military History*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1969). Quentin Hughes, ‘Give me time and I will give you life’, in *Town Planning Review* xlix, 1, (1978), 61-74. Brian W. Blouet, ‘Town Planning in Malta 1530-1798’, in *Town Planning Review* xxxv, 3 (1964), 183-194. Brian Blouet, *The Story of Malta*, 3rd ed., (Malta, Progress Press Publication Co. Ltd., 1987), 69-135. See also dissertations on Valletta’s demography: J. Testa, H. Zammit, ‘The Parish of Porto Salvo, 1600-1613. A Demographic Study’, unpublished B.A. History dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1973. H.E. Zammit, ‘Some aspects of demographic and social history in the second half of the 17th century with special reference to the parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta’, unpublished B.A. (Hons.) dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1981. Alistair Paul Borg, ‘Migration and Mobility in Early Modern Malta: The Harbour-City of Valletta as a Case Study 1557-1650’, unpublished M.A. History dissertation, Department of History, The University of Malta, 2003.

²²¹ Van de Pol, (2011), 90.

²²² N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

²²³ For a comprehensive analysis on the social and economic historical background of this area see Section III Character Appraisal in Malcolm Borg, Samantha Fabry, *Valletta Action Plan*, (2009), retrieved on 19 June 2015 from www.cityofvalletta.org/common/file_provider.aspx. See also Victor Mallia-Milanes, (1988), 41.

²²⁴ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

²²⁵ On migration and the role of the migrant see. C. Cassar, (2000), 118-120.



Fig. 2.8: View of the Marsamxett Gate – Old Abattoir area c.1939.

Catherina Mifsud lived here in the late seventeenth- century before moving to a room in a house in the Mandraggio and subsequently to a street close to the Auberge d’Aragon.

620mm x 348mm

Acknowledgement: Times of Malta, Richard Ellis & Co.

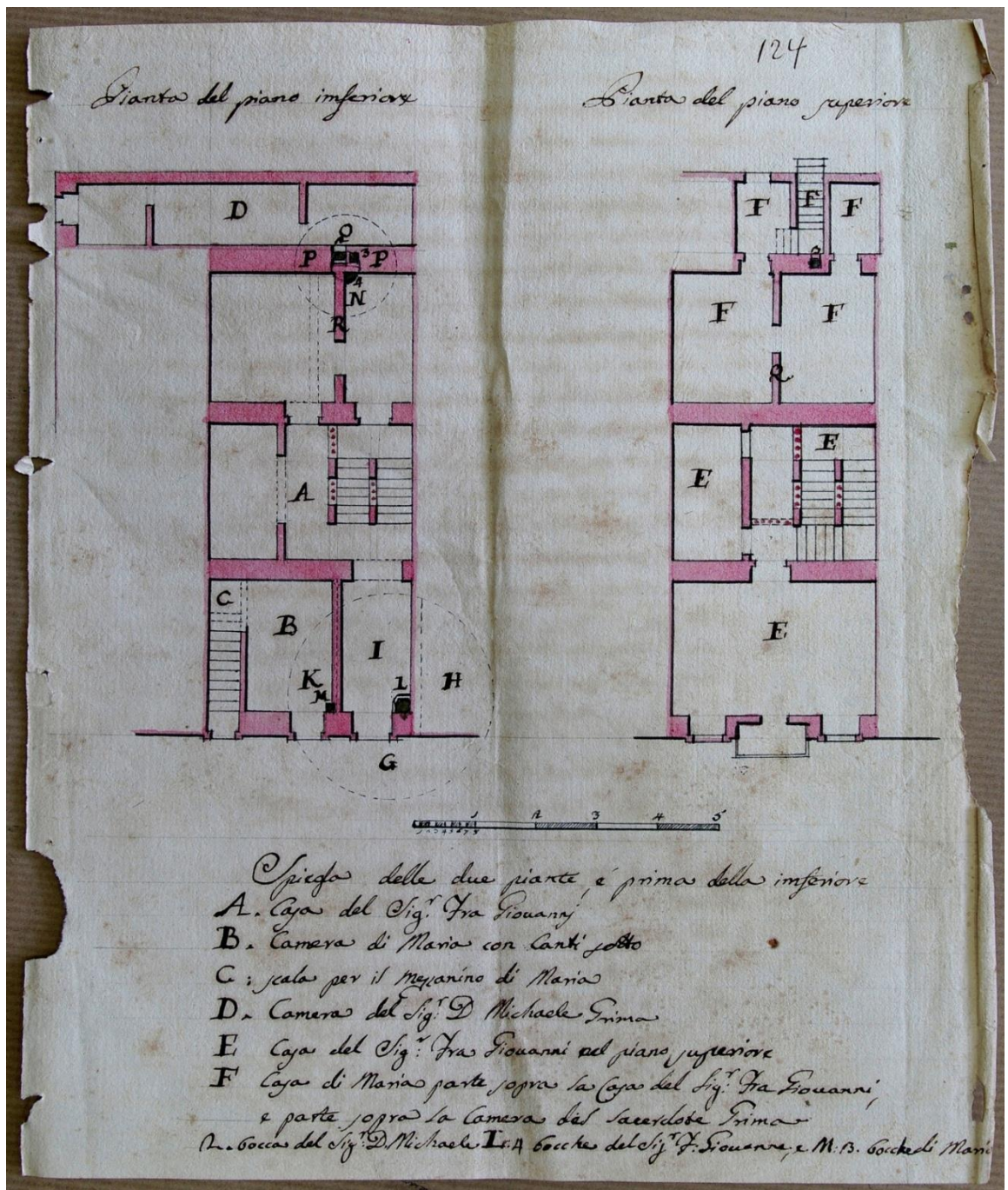


Fig. 2.7: Plan of a small house divided between four people.²²⁶

This plan shows that rooms in such houses had bi-permeable walls and may have lacked privacy.

Acknowledgement: National Archives of Malta, Rabat.

²²⁶N.A.M. Box 379 c.1732, f 124 Loose Leaf

Most *publiche meretrici* in the Parish of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo from 1726 to 1762 were older than eighteen but younger than fifty-one. The youngest was fifteen years old.²²⁷ The oldest prostitute was Antonia Calleia who was seventy-two years old. In 1729 Antonia was living alone in premises close to Fort St Elmo.²²⁸ Fifteen year olds and seventy year old prostitutes were rare singular cases. In the 1726 parish census, five *publiche meretrici* were between eighteen to twenty years old, fifty-one were in the twenty-one to thirty age bracket, thirty were between thirty-one and forty years old, ten were forty-one to fifty years old and two were over fifty-one years old. Six women, possibly the non co-operative ones, did not reveal their age. This pattern was more or less reflected in subsequent years.

The highest number of *publiche meretrici*, were in their twenties, followed by the thirty to forty age group. Similar trends were observed by Tony Henderson in his studies on prostitutes in bawdy houses in Hedge Lane, London in 1758.²²⁹ Prostitutes in Porto Salvo appear to have been slightly older than the ones in Hedge Lane. In London, Henderson observed that the majority of prostitutes were eighteen to twenty years old.²³⁰ The absolute highest number of women entered prostitution at the age of eighteen but the youngest point of entry was twelve years.²³¹ In Rome, Tessa Storey noted that they were generally between sixteen to twenty-five years old.²³² Lotte Van de Pol on the other hand revealed that prostitutes arrested in early modern Amsterdam in the second half of the seventeenth century were on average twenty-three years old. In the first half of the eighteenth century the average age was twenty-four years and six months.²³³ She suggested that on average the point of entry was twenty-one years, and that with the passage of time, the age of street walkers rose significantly.²³⁴ In Valletta 1726-1762, the majority were twenty-two to twenty-four years old. The youngest entry age in Valletta Porto Salvo appears to have been fifteen years.²³⁵

Household compositions varied greatly. A significant number of prostitutes lived on their own. In 1732, thirty-nine of seventy-nine prostitutes (49%) were living on their own. In 1742 fifty-five prostitutes out of ninety-one (60%) lived alone. Some *publiche meretrici* were

²²⁷ See A.P.S Status Animarum 1737, f.34v. Raffaella Lombardo age 15.

²²⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f. 54. It is possible that she was a procuress.

²²⁹ Henderson, (1999), 22, 23. See Fig. 2.2.

²³⁰ Henderson, (1999), 23. See Fig. 2.3.

²³¹ Henderson, (1999), 23. See Fig. 2.3.

²³² Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 17.

²³³ Van De Pol, (2011), 142.

²³⁴ Van De Pol, (2011), 142.

²³⁵ See A.P.S Status Animarum 1737, f.34v. Raffaella Lombardo age 15.

single mothers.²³⁶ In 1726, twenty out of one hundred and three *publiche meretrici* were single mothers. In 1727, fourteen out of one hundred and seven *publiche meretrici* were single mothers. In 1742, nineteen out of ninety-two *publiche meretrici* were registered as single mothers. Between 15-20% of all registered *publiche meretrici* were single mothers. The majority had one child living with them and some had two. A significant number of prostitutes living alone and single mothers with one child lived in rooms along the Marsamxett shoreline.²³⁷ Few *publiche meretrici* appear to have had more than two children living with them. Cases like for instance thirty-two year old Claudia D'Amico who had four children aged sixteen to two living with her were exceptional.²³⁸ Some prostitutes who were living on their own were specified as separated women. In 1738, eleven of one hundred and four prostitutes were separated. This does not necessarily mean that separated women were victims. In the 1742 census, *pubblica meretrice* Angela Camilleri was described as a separated woman with a one year old daughter who did not want her husband (*e non vuole il suo marito*).²³⁹ A few others were married but their husbands had departed (*partito*). For instance in 1744, ten prostitutes were married to men who had departed.²⁴⁰ A few sporadic cases indicated that in certain instances husbands were in prison (*in prigione*),²⁴¹ slavery (*in schiavitù*),²⁴² in hospital (*in ospedale*),²⁴³ passed away (*morto*),²⁴⁴ or for some reason moved to the parish of San Paolo.²⁴⁵ Some were widows.²⁴⁶ Some prostitutes were married and lived with their husband. In 1729 seven prostitutes were married and living with their husbands. In 1742, five prostitutes were married and living with their husband.

Cases whereby prostitutes shared accommodation with other prostitutes existed, but it was not very common. For instance in 1729 there were three cases of prostitutes sharing accommodation. One was a mother-daughter arrangement.²⁴⁷ Cases whereby prostitutes

²³⁶ See for instance A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726: Rosa Minardi f.22v, Teresa Fardella f.29v, Claudia Tagliaferri, Anna Maria Felici f.37v, Modesta Carmenita f.40, Claudia d'Amico f.43, Elena Cipriot f.46v, Maria Camilleri f.50v, Maria Fabri and Vittoria Bellanova f.53.

²³⁷ See Chapter Six 'A Geography of Prostitution'.

²³⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f. 59.

²³⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f.190.

²⁴⁰ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1744, ff. 26v, 33v, 35v, 39,, 41v, 42v, 45v, 55v, 61v, 62.

²⁴¹ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, f. 68v. Publica meretrice Madalena Agius wife of Greogorio who is described as being in the prison in Birgu.

²⁴² See for instance A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f.66.

²⁴³ See for instance A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f.153.

²⁴⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1754, f.37v. 17 year old publica meretrice Maria Abela's husband forty year old Giuseppe passed away.

²⁴⁵ See for instance A.P.S. Status Animarum 1742, f. 174.

²⁴⁶ On widowhood see Isabella C. Grima, 'Suppliche per l'Elemosina Frumentaria: A set of 18th century petitions submitted by Maltese widows', in *Journal of Maltese History* Vol. III, 1 (2012).

²⁴⁷ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, ff. 66, 103 (mother/ daughter), 108.

shared accommodation with kin and non-kin members are not uncommon. For instance in 1732, nineteen year old Margarita Ferraci and her younger sister eighteen year old Maria who were both singled out as *publiche meretrici*, were living in the same house as their parents seventy-two year old Marc'Antonio and forty seven year old Geronima.²⁴⁸ In the same year sisters Maria Elena and Rosa Laspetia were living in a house with their eighteen-year old brother Melchiore Gabriele Laspetia and two other men who were not described as relatives.²⁴⁹

A number of prostitutes shared a house with a man who is not described as a husband or a relative. In the 1726 *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo, twenty-nine year old *publica meretrice* Natalitia was living with a certain Vincenzo Polidonita who was twenty-four years old.²⁵⁰ Up to 1729, the couple were still living together.²⁵¹ In the same year thirty-two year old Madalena Borga was likewise living with thirty-nine year old Domenico Calleia.²⁵² Other instances showed that some prostitutes lived with a married or separated couple. In 1726, twenty-six year old Caterina Oppa was sharing a house with forty-six year old Teresa Farrugia who was also a prostitute and her husband Fantino.²⁵³ In the same year forty-six year old Maria Buset was living in a house with a separated couple.²⁵⁴ In 1727 Grattiulla Mamo, a twenty-five year old *publica meretrice* was living with Pio Maria Borg aged twenty-two, his wife Rosa Borg also aged twenty-two, and their seven year old son Manuele. Pio Maria and Rosa were separated.²⁵⁵ Defining the position of *publiche meretrici* within such households is not a straight forward matter. Some prostitutes may have formed part of extended family households, others may have been lodgers.²⁵⁶ Such cases were however, sporadic and uncommon.

The *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo revealed that a few *publiche meretrici* owned slaves, employed servants and/or fostered foundlings. Some rich prostitutes had more than one slave. On 31 July 1616, Flaminia and Catherina Valenti were hearing mass in the chapel of Our Lady of Filermo inside the Church of St John, accompanied by their three

²⁴⁸ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f. 66.

²⁴⁹ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f. 54.

²⁵⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 30v.

²⁵¹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f.57.A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727, f. 48.

²⁵² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 35v.

²⁵³ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 40v. None of the three are indicated as having communicated in Holy week.

²⁵⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 47v. Maria Buset and Bartolomeo Curmi did not communicate in Holy week and Bartolomeo is indicated as a contumace. Rosa Curmi and Madalena (no surname given) communicated.

²⁵⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727, f27v.

²⁵⁶ For an example of a family providing lodging for a prostitute see C. Cassar, (2002), 45.

slaves.²⁵⁷ Prostitutes who were not as wealthy as the Valenti sisters had one slave. In 1726 twenty-eight year old Maria Cavigniani and her sister eighteen year old Grazia Cavigniani, both *publiche meretrici* were living in the parish of Porto Salvo with their brother thirty-one year old Angelo Cavigniani and Anna a four year old girl. There was also an unnamed male slave living in their house.²⁵⁸ In 1734, Giovanna Fornari was living with three women, a man and a two year old boy in a house. There was also a twenty-two year old female slave living with them.²⁵⁹ In 1737, fifteen-year old Raffaella Lombardo and her seventeen-year old sister Colomba, both prostitutes, were living in a house in the Due Balle quarters of the city, with another twelve people and a thirty year old slave called Catherina.²⁶⁰ In 1738 twenty-two year old Gabriela Debono who was described as separated, had a twenty-four year old male slave who she called Michel'Angelo.²⁶¹ Unlike early modern Sicily where slave ownership went on a decline, in eighteenth-century Malta the practise was widespread.²⁶² Godfrey Wettinger suggested that in the eighteenth century a couple of hundreds of slaves were privately-owned and kept for use as servants and not for ransom profits.²⁶³ In 1779, Inquisitor Antonio Felice Zondadari (1777-1785) said that Malta was full of slaves. Slaves were not only in the service of the Order and the highest families, but even lower-income persons owned slaves.²⁶⁴ In c.1704 in a series of deliberations on luxury (*lusso*), an unnamed author said that it was highly disorderly to see all the poor wanting to live comfortably.²⁶⁵ He claimed that money was being invested in useless items like house decorations, vases and gold and silver cutlery. Low class men, women and children were decked out in fine fabrics, with lace cloaks and other precious ornaments. They travelled in horse driven carriages and other far from decent modes of transport.²⁶⁶ He suggested the enactment of a law prohibiting families from having more than one slave. Those owning more should be made to pay tax on every extra slave they

²⁵⁷ N.A.M. Registrum Acto Criminalium 1615-1616, n.p. (31 July 1616). ‘...nella suddetta cappella in compagnia di Flaminia Valenti sua sorella et tre loro schiavi...’

²⁵⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f.9.

²⁵⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1734, f.33v.

²⁶⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, f.34v.

²⁶¹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.70.

²⁶² Godfrey Wettinger, *Slavery in the Islands of Malta and Gozo ca. 1000-1812*, (Malta, PEG Publications, 2002), 377.

²⁶³ Wettinger, (2002), 377.

²⁶⁴ Quoted by Wettinger, (2002), 376.

²⁶⁵ A.O.M. 6405 D, f.32.(c.1704). *Diverse Scritture*. ‘È un gran disordine in Malta vedere tutto il povero mondo voler mettersi in seno’.

²⁶⁶ A.O.M. 6405 D, f.32.(c.1704). *Diverse Scritture*. ‘Tutte le case con giogali et utensili d’oro, et argento, danaro morto et inutile di huomini et donne, e figli di bassa lega vestiti di drappi fini, e con manti di merletto et altri adobbi presiosi con calesci et altre portate oltre decenti’.

kept. This tax would be transferred to the House of Mercy and the abject poor.²⁶⁷ In this manner more slaves could be employed in public service.²⁶⁸ In his study on childhood and adolescence in early modern Malta, Emanuel Buttigieg showed that the cost of slaves varied according to creed, age and health.²⁶⁹ Some prostitutes had servants. In 1726, two *pubbliche meretrici*, Rosa and Elena Fortuna had a fourteen-year old servant boy called Melchiore.²⁷⁰ In 1732 thirty-seven year old Generosa Cremona whose husband was in slavery was living in a house with her twelve-year old son Gerolamo and Vittoria a nine-year old servant.²⁷¹ In 1737 twenty-year old Anna Madà a *pubblica meretrice* and her mother Rosa had a nine-year old servant called Teodora living with them.²⁷² The work of such servants was similar to slaves.²⁷³ These cases show that some prostitutes had enough money to afford a slave or a servant.

Others fostered children (*dell'ospedale*). In 1726, thirty-two year old prostitute Maria Borg and her husband Antonio had a nine year old boy and a girl called Rosa who is described as a *bambina dell'ospedale* living at home with them. In the same year, thirty-six year old Elena Cipriota had two sons, twelve-year old Aloisio and eleven-year old Marino and a fostered son called Tomaso (*dell'ospedale*).²⁷⁴ In 1738, Ursolica Madiona who had a twelve-year old son called Gaspare was fostering a six-year old girl called Ursolica.²⁷⁵ In 1754, Margarita Saliba was living in a house in the Due Balle area with her parents and a four year old fostered child called Gaetano.²⁷⁶ On the first Sunday of the month, foster-mothers would present themselves at the Infirmary with the fostered child for examination. Foster mothers received one *scudo* a month for fostering a child. Every two months the Infirmary *Prodomi* would visit the foster-mothers' houses to check for any irregularities.²⁷⁷ Prostitutes were not deemed to be unsuitable for fostering children and the Infirmary considered the houses that they lived in adequate for raising children.

²⁶⁷A.O.M. 6405 D, f.32.(c.1704). Diverse Scritture. 'Potrà essere publicato un Bando proibittivo di non poter avere al servizio di ciascuna famiglia, schiavo, e schiava più d'una e chi nè avrà più debba tener giuramento ò pagare un tanto all'anno equivalente da applicarsi in sollievo della Casa di Misericordia, e povere vergognose...'

²⁶⁸ A.O.M. 6405 D, f.32.(c.1704). Diverse Scritture.

²⁶⁹ Emanuel Buttigieg, 'Growing Up in Hospitaller Malta (1530-1798): Sources and Methodologies for the History of Childhood and Adolescence' in *Bridging the gaps: sources methodology and approaches to religion in History*, Joaquim Carvalho (ed.), (Pisa, Plus Pisa University Press, 2008), 136.

²⁷⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 21.

²⁷¹ See A.P.S. Status Animarum 1732, f. 105.

²⁷² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1737, f.3v.

²⁷³ See Wettinger, (2002), 488.

²⁷⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1726, f. 46v.

²⁷⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.84v.

²⁷⁶ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1754, f.53.

²⁷⁷ Attilio Critien, 'The Foundlings Under the Order and After', in *Scientia* xv, 1, (1949), 3, 4.

Certain parish priests who compiled the *Status Animarum* registers of Porto Salvo were meticulous. They did not only record age, household compositions and whether the person communicated in Easter or not but also took note of other details. They took note of when a person was in bed (*a letto*),²⁷⁸ in slavery (*in schiavitù*),²⁷⁹ in prison (*in prigione*), when daughters joined monasteries (*in monastero*),²⁸⁰ or when a person was impertinent (*impertinente*).²⁸¹ In 1744, the parish priest appended a note next to Andrea and Maria Delicata and their sons five year old Michel' Angelo and four year old Giuseppe, saying that they were poor (*povere*).²⁸² The Delicata lived near Fort St Elmo where some *pubbliche meretrici* lived. It is possible that the fact this family and other persons and families described as *povere* were singled out as poor meant that they lived in abject poverty. Between 1726-1762 none of the *pubbliche meretrici* were appended with the word *povera*. This may indicate that none were miserably, humiliatingly poor. Their economic standing was likely to have been similar to other neighbours living in their area.

The state of souls registers of Porto Salvo also offered some information on the character of some prostitutes. It is likely that some prostitutes did not want to co-operate with clerics compiling this census and refused to divulge any personal information. This emerges through the fact that at times only the Christian name of the prostitute appears. In these instances ages are left blank too. It is possible that some information on uncooperative prostitutes was gathered from neighbours. The fact that neighbours only knew their name and did not know their age or family name indicates that some prostitutes maintained a degree of aloofness and privacy. Some may have been hostile towards clerics compiling this list. In 1762 Fiorenza Grigonaci was described as impertinent.²⁸³ In the same year the cleric scribbled *La Guerriera* (the warrior) next to thirty-one year old *pubblica meretrice* Rosa Sant's name.²⁸⁴

Conclusion

This chapter revealed that visitors' accounts, moral crusades and terminology can be highly elusive. Exaggerated estimations on the number of prostitutes is an old phenomenon that offers a largely 'romanticised' perspective. A study of the terminology used to refer to

²⁷⁸A.P.S. Status Animarum 1762, f.3.

²⁷⁹A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f.66.

²⁸⁰A.P.S. Status Animarum 1744, f.33v.

²⁸¹A.P.S. Status Animarum 1762, f.57v.

²⁸²A.P.S. Status Animarum 1744, f. 15.

²⁸³A.I.M. C.E.M. 28/29 Status Animarum Porto Salvo f.(1762), 57v.

²⁸⁴A.I.M. C.E.M. 28/29 Status Animarum Porto Salvo f.(1762), f. 44.

prostitutes revealed that those strictly referring to women providing non-marital sexual services for material gain were restricted. It is possible that only labels and descriptors that included the term public (*publica*) and/or *puttana* referred to prostitution. Others are likely to have been loose labels referring to women engaged in non-marital sexual affairs that did not involve any form of remuneration. Reaching realistic histories of early modern prostitutes necessitates a disciplinary approach. This study advocates strict adherence to data pertaining to terms that include the prefix 'public' like for instance *publiche meretrici* or *publiche donne* and terms that are translated as prostitute like *puttane* and *bagasce*.

Some eighteenth-century *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo where *publiche meretrici* were annotated with a cross were instrumental in reaching a rough estimate on actual numbers in the parish. Ports have traditionally been perceived to be breeding grounds for prostitution.²⁸⁵ Some historians argue that this perception is often overemphasized by modern observers.²⁸⁶ This chapter has shown that similar to other forms of enterprise, prostitution may have been largely dictated by the port's vitality. Lesser ships and lesser direct trading in Valletta's port in the eighteenth century, translated into less work for prostitutes and consequently numbers may have decreased and risk-taking may have been taken to a higher level for instance practising with corsairs in the Lazzaretto.

In her study of prostitutes in Rome, Tessa Storey noted that most prostitutes had given up or passed away by the age of thirty-five.²⁸⁷ In consideration of the fact that most prostitutes were itinerant migrant workers it is possible that they may have moved to other places. Significant numbers of prostitutes in Valletta appear to have been in their early twenties and were possibly mostly Sicilian women who reached Malta with brigantine traders or on other small vessels that regularly crossed over to Valletta from Sicily. Approximately half the *publiche meretrici* in Porto Salvo lived alone in independent accommodation. Most seem to have been present in the parish for only one year. This study suggests that precisely because of the high risk nature of the trade, some prostitutes may not have reached their targets. Some as Storey suggested may have moved out of the business, others possibly went back to their home towns or moved elsewhere. The business could on the other hand render enough money for a prostitute like Catherina Mifsud to move to better housing arrangements. Short term residence in a particular parish may also have been a strategy some prostitutes

²⁸⁵ Henry Trotter, *Sugar Girls & Seamen*, (Johannesburg, Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd., 2008), 7.

²⁸⁶ See for instance Antunes, (2014).

²⁸⁷ A.O.M. 6405D, ff.8, 8v. (c.1704). *Diverse Scrittture*.

employed to maintain boundaries and privacy and reduce tension with neighbours. Risk taking, monetary pursuits and opportunism demonstrated significant entrepreneurial trends.

Notwithstanding the fact that most historians persist in arguing that significant numbers of early modern prostitutes were poor, no *publica meretrice* in the *Status Animarum* registers 1726-1762 is described as being poor. One can presume that as the early eighteenth-century author of the aforementioned deliberations said, there were prostitutes who lived in large houses (*case grandi*), those who lived in medium-sized or small houses (*case mediocre ò piccolo*) and others who lived in small rooms (*cammerette*).²⁸⁸ A prostitute could obviously move from one type of accommodation to another. Entrepreneurs like Catherina Mifsud, Ursola Gatt and Maria Fioccarì may have moved from a small room into a small house and consequently into a large house. The potential was there.

²⁸⁸Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 71.

Chapter 3

Attitudes, Action and Negotiation

‘I am a public woman and that is how I battle through life’.¹

Introduction

Adapting to church control in the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century may have been a challenge. Nonetheless some prostitutes appear to have used some of their money to carve a niche for themselves inside churches. The ability to nurture expectations by using cultural knowledge to transform social and religious propensities demonstrated the determination and the entrepreneurial orientation of some of Valletta’s early modern prostitutes. Notions of honour provided an idealistic grid where one could place the good, the bad and the ugly. Prostitutes are traditionally believed to have fitted into the ugly or at best the bad. Concepts of honour, however, did not always coincide with personal or community expectations, and the records of the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* show that a significant number of inhabitants in early modern Valletta refused to fit into ‘moralised moulds’.² Notwithstanding the fact that sex work was in conflict with, and opposition to, ideal female behaviour and honourable relationships, some women in early modern Valletta, covertly or overtly engaged in the business. Their accomplishments largely depended on their ability to juggle their work in the private sphere and eligibility in the public sphere. As female entrepreneurs these women were motivated by opportunities and challenges but creating a favourable public image and social acceptance were equally important to continuity and success.³ While risk taking behaviours may have translated into more business, this would not have been possible without the community’s acceptance. Projecting a positive image in the community was crucial to a *donna publica*’s enterprise. It enabled a woman to pursue her business whilst maintaining her presence in the community.

This chapter starts by examining a testimony placed by a *donna publica* in the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ*. This court deposition offered a general understanding on cultural attitudes

¹ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, f. 18. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier. Sono una donna publica e così campo.

² Emanuel Buttigieg, ‘Family life and neighbourliness in Malta (c.1640-1760): Some preliminary observations based on evidence from the Magna Curia Castellaniæ’, in *Arkivju* Issue I (2010), 52.

³ Esra Memili et.al., ‘The Importance of Looking toward the Future and Building on the Past: Entrepreneurial Risk Taking and Image in Family Firms’ in *Entrepreneurship and Family Business*, Alex Stewart, G. T. Lumpkin, Jerome A. Katz (eds.), (Bingley, Emerald Publishing, 2010), 4, 5.

towards prostitution. The key concept that emerged was the notion of prostitution being similar to sweat trades in providing a means to endure life's hardships. . This is aptly described through the Italian term '*campare*', a term which was widely used to describe the way subordinate people endured life's challenges by engaging in arduous jobs, such as prostitution. It was considered to be an intolerable aberration by some clerics, but clerics who considered it to be forgivable existed too. During the course of this study This study suggests that prostitution was a normal feature of social life in Valletta. Prostitutes were not perceived to be undesirable because similar to other subordinates they were taking appropriate action as the situation demanded. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of categories and control. Notions of honour and other control practices are believed to have maintained a strong grip on women. What emerges however is a complex picture of variegating and apparently competing considerations that seem to be starkly at odds with each other.

The seeds of this chapter were sown from reading Alexandra Shepard's optimistic appraisal of women's opportunities to undertake commercial activity and Tessa Storey's work on the economics of Roman prostitutes in Counter-Reformation Rome.⁴ These works draw attention to female entrepreneurship, but their main focus is on trading opportunities available to early modern women rather than on the capabilities of the women themselves. Trading opportunities changed over time. Moreover the ability to exploit trading opportunities were not sufficient for a prostitute to maintain her work and succeed. Continuity and growth also depended on personal skills, intuition, the ability to combat social stigma and maintain a good relationship with the community and the church. Notwithstanding significant constraints placed on female economic agency and moral propensities some prostitutes became significant contributors to churches and charities in Valletta. Records of confraternities, charities, welfare institutions, and moral and panic scripts offer a negative social portrayal of the enterprise. These sources, however, offer a partial picture of the trade. There were undoubtedly many prostitutes who never needed charity or asked for welfare and others who actually helped churches and charities in achieving their goals and were positively perceived. The latter's ability to embellish churches and help persons in need may have changed the way some clerics and society perceived and

⁴ Alexandra Shepard, 'Crediting Women in Early Modern English Economy', in *HistoryWorkshop Journal Advance Access*, (2015), retrieved on 31 May 2016 from <http://hwj.oxfordjournals.org> . Tessa Storey, *Carnal Commerce*,(2008).

related to them. These women demonstrated the aptitude to work around stigmatisation and discrimination and turn social norms in their favour.

The aim of this chapter is to draw out some insights on the aptitudes and capabilities of prostitutes, their self-perceptions as well as social perceptions. It seeks to infer folk categories about prostitutes from the observation of behaviour by reading history from below. Folk categories were not universal, restricted, static or context-bound. They were invented, particularistic codes relevant to a group of people that in time developed, evolved and changed.⁵ They did not necessarily tally with 'clear definitions and sharp boundaries' derived from religious or administrative texts.⁶ The experienced world conceptualised by prostitutes and the way people conceptualised them may have variegated and may have also been imprecise.⁷ Ambiguities may have been exploited, debated and refined by prostitutes in the never-ending processes of creating newly conceptualised goals.⁸ Folk categories can be useful analytical categories that may contribute towards steering history away from imposing modern categories on the early modern world. This study seeks to engage in ethnographic enterprise and discover folk categories by paying attention to folk accretions in discourse in trials and court interrogations where prostitutes were involved. Legal proceedings can be useful analytical vehicles of cultural communication, the final deeds of some prostitutes, on the other hand can offer an idea of the extent to which they managed to turn perceptions in their favour. Through these sources this chapter attempts to learn about social imaging that is a fundamental criteria of entrepreneurship.

Testimonies and the Insider's Point of View

Frans Ciappara showed how some early modern prostitutes did not see themselves as downtrodden women. They felt that they were masters of their own body and their lives, and they believed that they were in the grace of God.⁹ In her study on prostitution in medieval England, Ruth Mazo Karras concurred in saying that even though the law of state and church treated prostitution as a crime and a sin, individual prostitutes may not have felt degraded but

⁵ Charles Goodwin, 'The Blackness of Black: Color Categories as Situated Practice', in *Discourse, Tools and Reasoning: Essays on Situated Cognition*, Laura B. Resnick et al. (eds.) (Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, Springer, 1997), 128.

⁶ Benson Saler, *Conceptualizing Religion: Immanent Anthropologists, Transcendent Natives, & Unbounded Categories*, (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2000), 21.

⁷ On shifting and uncertain conceptualisations of the self and of others see Carlo Ginzburg, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I Know about it', John & Anne C. Tedeschi (Trans.), in *Critical Inquiry*, xx, 1 (1993), 10-35.

⁸ Saler, (2000). 39, 219-238, 264.

⁹ Ciappara, (2000), 154.

may simply have felt that they were earning a living as best they could. She however argued that prostitution was not viewed like any other female trade. Working as a prostitute carried moral and ideological ramifications that did not encumber other forms of female labour.¹⁰ This chapter argues that different communities had their own peculiar way of perceiving prostitutes and each prostitute had her own reasons for working, her own priorities and responses and her ideas about prostitution and her place in it. Moreover the Catholic Church offered various paths to rectify moral and ideological culpability through confession and charitable acts. Most prostitutes appear to have pursued this actively. The knowledge they used to generate behaviour was culture bound. Cultural knowledge enabled them to negotiate the social order and their identities. In anthropology, ethnographers seek to learn insider ideas values and beliefs by looking for an informant to teach them culture and answer their questions, and by observing social behaviour.¹¹ Historians are denied the privilege of resting on the cooperation of informants but one can still seek the truth behind appearances by putting archival sources under an anthropological lens.

Histories of gender pay particular attention to the way women and men portray themselves, or are portrayed by others.¹² Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen suggested that trials are crucial in revealing perceptions of the self and of others. They showed how reading a good trial was like ‘throwing back heavy shutters to open a window on the past’.¹³ Trials can offer historians the opportunity to hear and analyse some lost voices of the many early modern people who could not or did not write.¹⁴ One such ‘voice’ was submitted in the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* by Catherina Mifsud, a *donna publica* on 19 October 1701. Catherina’s testimony was one of twelve declarations collected by the court in response to Gaspare Mascolier’s appeal. Mascolier supplicated the court to recognize his innocence in Aloysetta Borg’s claims that he had raped her and impregnated her. Catherina’s verbatim is

¹⁰ Mazo Karras, (1996), 84.

¹¹ James P. Spradley, ‘Culture and Ethnography’ in *Conformity and Conflict*, James P. Spradley and David W. Mc Curdy (eds.), (New York, Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994), 15.

¹² Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994). Gowing, (1996). See also essays by Elizabeth S. Cohen, ‘No Longer Virgins: Self presentation by young women of late Renaissance Rome’, in *Refiguring Women, Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (eds.), (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991), 169-192. Elizabeth S. Cohen, ‘Courtesans and whores: words and behaviour in the streets of Early Modern Rome’ in *Women Studies* xix (1991), 201-201, Elizabeth S. Cohen, ‘Honor and Gender in the streets of Early Modern Rome’, in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* xxii (1992), 597-625.

¹³ T.V. Cohen, E.S. Cohen, (1993), 5.

¹⁴ T. V. Cohen, E. S. Cohen, (1993), 4, 5.

well worth reproducing (the questions asked by the interrogator do not feature in the source).¹⁵

Testimony placed under oath on 19 October 1701 by Catherina Mifsud:

A1: I was reprimanded and summoned by Angelo Dalli assistant Viscount around eight days ago.

A2: It is not true. (*quod non*)

A.3: I am a *Donna Publica*, and that is how I battle through life (*così campo*).

A.4: It is not true. (*quod non*)

A.5: It is not true. (*quod non*)

A.6: I prostrated myself at the feet of the confessor to fulfil the Pascal Precept, but I was not permitted to receive the Holy Eucharist.

A.7: For the last six years I have lived in this city of Valletta and in accordance to established principles I took up residence in the Old Abattoir quarters, and after two years I rented a small room (*stantiola*) from Rosa wife of Eugenio Borg for 6 *tari* per month, [the room] is located under the said house which is situated on the high end overlooking the Mandraggio, I did not stay there for more than fifteen days, I then went to live in the street near the Venerable Auberge of Aragon where I lived for seven months, and from there I went to live in another street under the said Auberge where I am living at the moment.

A.8: I know Aloysetta Borg since I had the opportunity to see her in service at the house of the said Rosa when I lived in the said small room. I went into her house twice, as for the rest I do not know how old she is.

A.9: I know Gaspare by sight as a passing acquaintance but I do not know that for three years he was living in the house of Signor Risbe, nor thereafter where he was living, moreover I consider him to be a foreigner.

A.10: I know nothing (*nescire*)

A.11: I know nothing (*nescire*)

A.12: I cannot contribute further information to this interrogation, I don't know anything else. I only lived close to the said Rosa, where Aloysetta served, for a short period of time. Nonetheless on one of the days when I was living in the aforementioned small room, one evening in between the two Ave Marias,¹⁶ since I had to let a man, who didn't want anyone to see him, out of my room, I was obliged to stand at my door to see when best to let him out.

¹⁵ See transcription of the full text as it appears in the archives in Appendix 4.

¹⁶ The Ave Maria bell rung three times at 06:00hrs, 12:00hrs, and at 18:00hrs. It is likely that since Catherina said that it happened in the evening it was sometime between 18:00hrs-06:00hrs.

When I was at the door, for the aforementioned purpose, I happened to see the said Aloysetta standing at the corner of her mistress's house where she lived, she was talking to a man who by the look on his face appeared to suddenly become angry (*stracambiato*)¹⁷ however I was unable to recognize him, once they ended their brief conversation, the said man walked off down the street that runs along the bastions, and the said Aloysetta retired to her house.¹⁸

Catherina's testimony reveals some early modern Maltese ideas on the way she viewed herself, her work and her place in society. As a society Valletta shared many of the traits of other early modern European cities. It was a city of migrants with most people originating from elsewhere. Social space was defined and preserved by family, wealth, power, occupation, gender, personal inclination and capacity.¹⁹ Valletta's society was stratified, people were affiliated to groups. Rosa was a *Padrona*, Aloysetta was a *serva*, Gaspare was a *forestiere*, Risbe was a *Signore* (a *signore* was more than a gentleman).²⁰ It is in these associations that the early modern constituents of society sought shelter. Catherina was associated with the group of *donne pubbliche*. Carmel Cassar and Estela V. Welldon suggest that there was rivalry and little solidarity among prostitutes.²¹ Catherina's declarations may indicate otherwise.

Similar to other witnesses she claimed that she hardly knew Aloysetta and Gaspare. Yet she was the only witness who refrained from saying that Aloysetta openly flirted with men in the streets and behaved like a prostitute. She was also the only witness to have made a statement that could potentially aid Aloysetta's cause. By saying that she saw Aloysetta talking to a man who suddenly appeared to become very angry, Catherina instilled doubt in Gaspare's innocence. This was possibly her way of helping Aloysetta who was somewhat being affiliated to her group of *donne pubbliche*. In conformity to 'established principles' (*sù li principi*), that is, her low social standing and inclinations, Catherina took up residence in the Old Abattoir quarters of the city (a poor area). The city of Valletta, however, offered her opportunities and permitted movement. Within a span of six years Catherina (who was not

¹⁷ Cinzia di Mauro, *Nugae: Dizionario dei termini Catanesi usati nel romanzo*, E-Book, Capitolo CMF III, 33. *Stracambiato*: di espressione del viso diventata improvvisamente ed evidentemente adirata.

¹⁸ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier, Catherina Mifsud Testimonium.

¹⁹ On the implication of social organisation in history and politics, and spatial organisation of society being integral to the production of the social see Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994), 4. See also T. V. Cohen, E.S. Cohen, (1993), 20.

²⁰ See C. Cassar, (2000), 247. For a discussion on the wide significance of the term gentleman and the fact that *signore* was more than just a gentleman see William Chambers and Robert Chambers, 'The Gentleman' in *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, cciv, (1835), 377, 378. See also T. V. Cohen, E. S. Cohen, (1993), 22.

²¹ C. Cassar, (2002), 171. Estela V. Welldon, *Mother, Madonna, Whore. The idealization and Denigration of Motherhood*, (London & New York, Guilford, 1992), 157.

from Valletta) moved house four times. Her movements indicated an upward trend out of the abattoir area to the upper part of the Mandraggio and consequently to the Auberge d' Aragon area.

In neighbourhoods, men and especially women (who were often 'vigilant at their windows and strident in their comments') were 'the eyes and voice of public morality'.²² Declarations gathered by the *Castallaniæ* on the attributes of Aloysetta demonstrated that a similar scenario may have prevailed in early modern Valletta. It is, however, possible that male testimonies were more sought after than female testimonies. The assistant viscounts Angelo Dalli and Balthassar Vella, summoned twelve persons from the neighbourhood where Aloysetta Borg and Gaspare Mascolier lived; four were males (a donat,²³ a soldier, a tailor and the servant of a knight), two females (a domestic servant and Catherina Mifsud a *donna publica*), one was an unnamed shopkeeper and six were unnamed and their occupation was not specified. Notwithstanding the fact that Catherina Mifsud was a *donna publica* the *Castallaniæ* appears to have valued her testimony on the same level as all the other witnesses. She was expected to know the rules of contemporary public morality on the same level as other male and female wage dependent persons: the domestic worker, the servant of a knight, the tailor, the donat, the soldier and the shopkeeper.²⁴

Yosanne Vella suggested that women's work in the eighteenth century included farming, spinning, weaving, washing clothes, milling, running a shop or wine taverns or inns, dressmaking and some also earned money through acting.²⁵ Charles Savona-Ventura noted that some women worked as wet-nurses, midwives, nurses and hospital servants, steam-bath attendants (*stufarole*), attendants who looked after patients undergoing mercurial unction (*spalmanti* or *spalmiatore*), general attendants at the female hospital and child-carers (*ospitaliere*).²⁶ Paul Cassar added that some women were employed as welfare officers known as *pitanziere* or almsgivers.²⁷ These women distributed bread in the homes of the poor and infirm women in Valletta and the three cities.²⁸ Others worked in the *Conservatorio del*

²² C. Cassar, (2002), 175. See also Perry, (1990), 48. T. V. Cohen, E. S. Cohen, (1993), 21.

²³ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c. 1070-1309*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 109. In early modern times donats of devotion in the Hospitaller Order were persons who were affiliated to the Order for services rendered. They received a minor Cross of six points. They were not required to take monastic vows.

²⁴ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 15-22v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

²⁵ Y. Vella, (1999), 4-8. Perry, (1990), 16. Women's work in sixteenth-century Seville included spinning, weaving, sewing, embroidering, cooking, nursing the ill, selling food and domestic chores.

²⁶ Savona-Ventura, (2003), 27-33. See also Paul Cassar, 'The Medical and Social Services Under the Knights', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993), Victor-Mallia-Milanes (ed.), 475-482.

²⁷ P. Cassar, (1993), 476

²⁸ P. Cassar, (1993), 476-482.

Gran Maestro in Floriana and other private institutions for the reception of young women.²⁹ Carmel Cassar suggested that a significant number of poor women were multi-occupational and generally conducted work close to home.³⁰ This enabled them to work and run their household at the same time. Some worked as domestic servants but also offered laundry services, sewing and provided food and lodging in their houses. Others were pedlars selling haberdashery goods, or sold bowls of tripe, pies and cooked meals.³¹ It is possible that some multi-occupational wage dependent women were also earning some money from prostitution.

Catherina's categorical statement saying that she was a *donna publica* and that is how 'she battled through life' (*così campo*) does not conjure an image of shame or indicate that she thought she was doing something wrong.³² In her study on early modern depositions in the dioceses of Canterbury, Chester, Salisbury, Chichester, Ely, London, and York, Alexandra Shepard noted that most witnesses claimed that they 'lived by their labour'.³³ In Valletta this was transmitted through the expression '*così campo*'. The verb *campare* has a very particular meaning.³⁴ It derives from the military practice of setting up a campsite, in a battlefield.³⁵ The campsite was obviously perceived to be safe and away from danger. The meaning of *campare* encapsulates notions of the world being a battlefield and life being a constant struggle in which one has to survive by bearing hardship, playing safe and not tempting fate. This expression was not only used in court depositions but also in a number of notarial contracts to 'describe' the way that a person *puo campare bene* by calling him *benestante* well-off. A well-off person was settled in a good place (*campare bene*) and thus did not need to work.³⁶ This theory can be underpinned on a popular Italian saying *infin che campo e vivo in questo mondo* 'as long as I battle and live in this world'.³⁷

It is worth noting that in the same interrogation, on 15 October 1701, when asked about his occupation, Joseph Pandalona gave an identical reply. He said that he was a donat

²⁹ P. Cassar, (1993), 481.

³⁰ C. Cassar, (2002), 152-159.

³¹ C. Cassar, (2002), 152-159.

³² N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

³³ Shepard, (2015), 6, 7. Shepard noted that in all biographical preambles that headed witnesses' dispositions in church courts, Alexandra Shepard noted that in all jurisdictions except Salisbury, higher proportions of women than men claimed that they lived by their labour.

³⁴ See long definition of the term *campare* in Nicolò Tommaseo, Bernardo Bellini, *Nuovo dizionario della lingua Italiana* Vol 1 Part II, (Torino, Società l'Unione Tipografico, 1865), 1154.

³⁵ See definition of *campare* in *Dizionario Etimologico Online* www.etimo.it.

³⁶ The author is grateful to Marquis Nicolas Depiro for this information.

³⁷ See Lizio-Bruno, *Canti Popolari delle Isole Eolie e di altri luoghi di Sicilia*, (Messina, Ignazio D'Amico e Figli, 1871), 180.

of the venerable Langue of Germany and that is how he battled through life.³⁸ In a declaration submitted in the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* on 10 July 1741 Catherina Desira explained how for eleven years she had been living in hell (*in inferno*). Her husband brought a bad woman to their house and lodged her in their bed. Every time she opened her mouth he beat her up and threw her out of the house. He infected her with venereal diseases (*mille mali – morbi gallici*) and she had to be hospitalised. In the night time he used to stand under her window along with other men of ill-repute and sing vulgar songs. Her husband had since been incarcerated. The reason why she prostrated herself at the feet of the Grand Master was because her husband who was worse than a barbarian (*peggio di un barbaro*), refused to give her the daily allowance to help her bear the burden of her two children (*per il peso di due figlioli*). She had no means to feed them. She therefore implored the Grand Master to take her two children so that she could carry on her battle through life in the service of God, without worrying about them (*purche campì quieta*). She said she was vilified (*vilipesa*), infirm and ill-treated, she was hopeful that her pleas would be heard and that she would receive the grace she was asking for.³⁹ *Campare* appears to have been a common term used in court depositions by subordinate persons. It conveyed their perseverance in life's continuous struggle.

Shepard noted how witnesses belonging to subordinate groups with extremely limited means adopted both social and moral markers to calibrate their social position.⁴⁰ Most were careful to declare that they were poor but not to the extent that they needed to beg or relied on alms or charity. The latter were not perceived to qualify as witnesses.⁴¹ A similar scenario may have prevailed in early modern Valletta where *donne pubbliche* like Catherina Mifsud who were wage dependent were deemed suitable to be called up to witness. Paradoxically Catherina knew that her occupation was socially comprised. She was sensitive to the fact that her client did not want people to know that he patronised prostitutes. In early modern Amsterdam, men who frequented prostitutes were perceived to be dishonourable.⁴² Laura Gowing, however, argues that in London the degree of moral culpability of males who engaged in illicit sex was never on the same level or higher than female culpability.⁴³ Although at face value Catherina's client's behaviour indicated that visiting a prostitute may

³⁸ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, f. 16v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier. ...sono Donato della Venerabile Lingua d'Alemagna e così campo.

³⁹ N.A.M. Processi Box 409, Bundle. n.p. (10 July 1741). Petitionem Catherina Desira.

⁴⁰ Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 118.

⁴¹ Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, (2015) 119.

⁴² Van de Pol, (2011), 49.

⁴³ Gowing, (1996), 2.

have been shameful for men, this was not always the case. Joseph Pandolona (the aforementioned donat) appeared to have no qualms in saying that he got to know Aloysetta Borg through Clarice and Marena who were *donne publiche* that he frequented. He said that he met her at their house on eight to ten different occasions.⁴⁴ Differences exist between the way how Catherina's client, her confessor and Catherina herself perceived prostitution. It may have been a potential threat to the honour of her male customer. It was an unforgiveable sin for the confessor: Catherina tried to abide with religious norms, she prostrated herself in front of him yet she was denied the Pascal Precept (A.6). Nonetheless she categorically said that her occupation was her way of battling on. She resolved the client's issue, she did not resolve issues with the confessor but it did not seem to be such a huge thing, she appears to have favoured clients over the confessor and went on with her life's battle.

Categorisation and Control

A significant number of prostitutes may have kept sex work firmly hidden and secluded in their private sphere whilst maintaining orderly social behaviour in the public arena. Such women may have been difficult to categorise. This confusion emerges in various trials. Establishing the personal identity of early modern prostitutes through testimonies placed by witnesses in court was not a straight forward matter. Different witnesses offered different descriptions. For instance on 8 August 1740, twelve witnesses were called up by the *Castallaniæ* to establish whether Benedetta Scarpato was an honourable woman or otherwise. Six witnesses said that she was a God-fearing woman and was reputed to be both honest and honourable. Two witnesses said that she was a good woman but she was known to behave in a liberal manner. Three said that she was a *donna publica* and that her Neapolitan husband had left her because she was a notorious prostitute. One person said he did not know her.⁴⁵ Twenty-one days later, on 29 August 1740, six witnesses were called up to testify on the attributes of Diana Cavalier. Four witnesses claimed that she was a *puttana* and two stated that she was an honest and honourable woman and that her behaviour never scandalised anyone or was the cause of any form of lament.⁴⁶

At times declarations placed by witnesses in Court appeared to have been biased. In 1701 the twelve witnesses who were summoned by the *Castallaniæ* to place their testimonies

⁴⁴ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, f. 16v. ... 'e l'hò conosciuta con occasione che l'hò vista e parlata in casa d'una Clarice e Marena Donne publiche dove io mi sono trovato...'

⁴⁵ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 405 Processi Criminali, Bundle n.p. (8 August 1740) Benedicta Scarpato e Magdalena Condorato da Senglea.

⁴⁶ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 404 Processi, Loose Leaf. n.p. (29 August 1740). Diana Cavalier de Senglea.

on the attributes of the aforementioned Gaspare Mascolier and Aloysetta Borg appeared to have largely favoured Mascolier. Ten witnesses stated that Gaspare was a good, respectful man of sound moral principles and that Aloysetta was a flirtatious, dissolute woman who chatted with men in the streets and frequented *publiche meretrici*.⁴⁷ Carolus Linard the servant of a knight who also owned a shop in the Mandraggio stated that he knew Aloysetta since he was a boy. He said that her behaviour was unlike that of other *zitelle* (unmarried young women). She walked down the streets and talked to everyone in a liberal manner, however he confessed that he never witnessed anything that could prejudice her honesty.⁴⁸ One testimony, the *donna publica*'s (Catherina Mifsud's), as has previously been stated, was neutral.⁴⁹ Declarations placed by witnesses on the attributes of individuals inevitably used a cultural ideal as a yardstick. Their testimonies were based on their personal judgement on how far or how close the individual's behaviour was from the ideal. Catherina Mifsud's declaration on the other hand offered the insider's viewpoint. As a *donna publica* she was likely to feel that she was not in a position to be judgemental. Her testimony did not aspire to manifest ideals on honour or religious ethics. It offered a snap shot of actuality. Her testimony may thus bring one closer to reality.

Through a cursory examination of various trials pertaining to the *Magna Curia Castellaniae*, this study revealed that witnesses frequently used church attendance, participation in the sacraments, the fulfilment of the Pascal precept and the disposition to help, support and rescue spinsters who were tempted to become prostitutes, as evidence of a person's honest behaviour. In trials involving prostitutes, emphasis was often made on the sacrament of penance with special references to duration and frequency. Absolution led to the reception of the most important of the seven sacraments, the Holy Eucharist.⁵⁰ Clerical testimonies on the religious attributes of prostitutes were at times, in total discord and were as confusing as declarations placed in court by lay people. In the 1698 and 1699 Porto Salvo *Status Animarum* records, Ursula Gatt was listed as a *publica meretrice* who had not

⁴⁷ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278 Processi ff.11-22v. (13 October 1701). See transcription of interrogation in Appendix 4.

⁴⁸ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278 Processi, ff. 22-22 v. (31 October 1701). 'Hò conosciuto all'interrogata per giovane che sempre andava per le strade di quà, e di là in servitio di sua padrona, e dal modo, che andava per le strade non concepivo che procedeva al modo dell'altre zitelle, perche parlava con tutti liberamente, mà in realtà io non marcai di sua persona cosa, che la potesse pregiudicare nel suo honesto?.'

⁴⁹ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278 Processi, ff. 18-18 v. (31 October 1701).

⁵⁰ Andre J. Queen, *Credo: The Beliefs and Practices of the Old Catholic Church*, (New York, iUniverse Inc., 2005), 230. The Holy Eucharist is the most important of the seven sacraments because, in this the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ is received. Innumerable, precious graces come through the reception of Holy Communion.

confessed or received the Pascal precept.⁵¹ However in court depositions placed during litigation over her death dues, Father Pietro Antonio Ciantar said that she was a highly charitable woman who subsidised the marriage of various spinsters (*sussidio de maritaggi di zitelle*) and confessed regularly.⁵² Augustinian Father Fortunato Gauci said that he heard her confessions on a regular basis. Father Tomaso Garzia said that for a very long time up to her last days, her confessions had been heard by Father Bacilliere.⁵³ Carmelitan Father Timotheo Xara said that Ursula Gatt was not a vain woman, she was always charitable, she engaged in pious acts and that the late Father Angelo Saliba heard her very modest confessions (*ogni modestia*).⁵⁴ The Reverend Prior of the Carmelitan Order Father Joannes Baptist Ruggier confirmed that Father Saliba used to hear her confessions.⁵⁵ Augustinian Father Cosimo Mifsud on the other hand said that Father Tomaso Garzia used to hear her confessions. He also said that Ursula had encouraged several spinsters to fast, confess and receive Holy Communion in the Church of Pietà, and in the *della Tuccia* Church. The church known as Chiesa dell'Assunzione di Tuccia (Church of the Assumption of Tuccia) was located in Hal-Qormi around six kilometres from Valletta.⁵⁶ According to Father Mifsud, Ursula Gatt received the Holy Eucharist twice or three times in the Pietà church as well as in the Ta' Duna church in Rabat.⁵⁷ The Pietà church (See Figure 3.1) is located approximately three kilometres from Valletta, it is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.⁵⁸ A Latin inscription above the door (See Figure 3.2) says 'And though you were turned away from, and hated, and had no helper, I will make you a pride for ever, a joy from generation to generation. (Isaiah 60:15).⁵⁹ This prophecy of Isaiah refers to the Israelites in Old Testament times. Nonetheless some believe it is applicable to all people in all times, in particular forsaken women.⁶⁰ Inside the Ta'Duna church in Rabat, approximately seventeen kilometres from Valletta (see Figure 3.3), above the titular painting, is an inscription invoking the Holy Virgin Mary (See Figure 3.4). This is taken from the writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Father and Doctor of the

⁵¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 86v. (9 December 1703).

⁵² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f.84. (1702).

⁵³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 82v. (1702).

⁵⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, ff.82v, 83. (1702). '...non essere vana, e stata sempre elemosiniera, e faceva diverse opera pie ...'

⁵⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, ff.84v, (1702).

⁵⁶ See Appendix II 'Churches which regained their immunity, Malta' in Frans Ciappara, 'Non Gode L'Immunità Ecclesiastica' in *Melita Historica*, ix, 2 (1985), 129.

⁵⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 83. (22 May 1702)

⁵⁸ The church was built in 1592-1593. From 1617-1652 it was run by Augustinians who lived in an adjacent friary. In 1721 the church was chosen as a subsidiary parish church of the parish of St Paul in Valletta. In 1740 the Floriana church took over and the church lost its status.

⁵⁹ Anon, *The Bible in Basic English*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1956), 547. See Kady McCrady, *Forsaken to Fulfilled*, (Bloomington, Westbow, 2014).

⁶⁰ See Kady McCrady, *Forsaken to Fulfilled*, (Bloomington, Westbow, 2014).

Roman Catholic.⁶¹ It says, ‘God has placed in Mary the plenitude of every good, in order to have us understand that if there is any trace of hope in us, any trace of grace, any trace of salvation, it flows from her’.⁶² Despite all efforts, these inscriptions are difficult to date. Both churches were rebuilt in the eighteenth century. It is however possible that the inscription on the facade of the Pietà church was taken from the old church and the inscription in the Ta’Duna church replicates an inscription in the former church. One can at least arguably say that both churches were likely to have had a female orientation and may have catered for forsaken women. The fact that Ursula and the spinsters she was helping travelled to these churches outside Valletta to receive the Holy Eucharist indicates that these were churches where prostitutes and women on the verge of prostitution may have been allowed to receive Holy Communion.



Figure 3.1: The Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Pietà
Acknowledgement: Noel Ciantar

⁶¹ Alexander Bonnici, *Il-Knisja ta' Santa Maria ta' Doni, Rabat*, retrieved on 12 September 2016 from http://www.kappellimaltin.com/html/s_m_ta_doni.html. See also <http://www.ciantar.org/kappellimaltin/Il-Kappelli/il-kappelli.html>

⁶² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hom. In nativitat. B.V.M.*, n. 6, PL 183, 441.



Figure 3.2: The Inscription above the door of the Pietà Church.
Acknowledgement: Noel Ciantar



Figure 3.3 : The Ta' Duna Church, Rabat.
Acknowledgement: Noel Ciantar



Figure 3.4: Altar painting with inscription above it in the Ta' Duna Church, Rabat.
Acknowledgement: Noel Ciantar.

In April 1771, a confessor informed the Bishop that a few days before an unnamed prostitute was murdered, he heard her confession that lasted four days and he had absolved all her sins.⁶³ It is likely that this is an overstatement. It indicates that the prostitute was very persistent in forcing the priest to hear her confession. She may have visited four times on four consecutive days and was eventually absolved precisely because she insisted for so long and was very sorry for her sins. Ursula Gatt appears to have had multiple confessors and also seems to have confessed very frequently, she was also highly involved in helping needy unmarried women. The duration of the unnamed murdered prostitute's confession was on the other hand exceptionally long. It is possible that in matters concerning faith, some prostitutes were highly persistent. They did not give up. If a particular priest refused to hear their confession they found another one. If a church excluded them they knocked on another door. Extraordinary frequent or lengthy confessions and pious acts may have provided the necessary leverage for prostitutes to be allowed to partake in the Holy Sacraments.

Some *Status Animarum* registers of Porto Salvo were instrumental in divulging information on the confessions and communions of *publiche meretrici*. When a cleric heard the confession of a *publica meretrice* he noted this down by writing 'conf.' next to her name. In cases whereby the woman confessed and communicated during Pascaltide this was acknowledged with the acronym 'com.' In 1727 out of a 107 *publiche meretrici*, forty-three communicated, fourteen confessed and fifty did not confess or communicate.⁶⁴ In 1737 there were 100 *publiche meretrici* in the parish, 38 confessed, 34 communicated and 28 did not confess or communicate.⁶⁵ Similarly in 1742 forty out of 91 prostitutes confessed. The emerging pattern indicates a growing tendency for clerics in Porto Salvo 1726-1762 to be more tolerant towards *publiche meretrici* and hear their confessions. This supports Faramerz Dabhoiwala's theory on a new openness about sex that transformed culture in the eighteenth century.⁶⁶ Dabhoiwala argues that through the course of the eighteenth century, sexual policing that was once monopolised by male clerics and the state started to change. A variety of new media explicitly and implicitly denied that sex outside marriage was wrong or dangerous and this gave rise to a 'wholly new universe of communication'.⁶⁷ Similar trends were observed by Frans Ciappara in his study on the eighteenth-century parish of Qrendi. Ciappara suggested that in eighteenth-century Malta, churchmen were 'up against a

⁶³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, ff. 110, 111. (7 April 1771). (...e durò quattro giorni la sua confessione e ricevuta l'assoluzione...).

⁶⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum Porto Salvo ff. 2-60. (1727).

⁶⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum Porto Salvo ff. 3-75v. (1737).

⁶⁶ Dabhoiwala, (2012), 71.

⁶⁷ Dabhoiwala, (2012), 71-72.

formidable obstacle'.⁶⁸ He showed how certain people believed that sexual commerce was not a sin because 'God authored the sex drive'.⁶⁹

It is at times difficult to establish whether a testimony reflects actuality or sought to fawn court judges by attesting to honour ethics. On 16 January 1737, Michel'Angelo Sammut, a rope maker and a galley sailor from Vittoriosa turned up at the court prisons in Valletta admitting that five years earlier he murdered his wife Battistina and injured her sister Margarita Namura. He declared that he had been in ecclesiastical sanctuary for five years. During his trial Sammut told the court magistrates that his wife insulted his honour (*oltraggiato il mio onore*).⁷⁰ Before embarking on his last corsairing journey to the Morea,⁷¹ he gave her fourteen *tari* and told her that if she needed maintenance money she could sell his leather waistcoat and breeches and her gold ring. When he returned, he questioned his wife on how she had sustained herself; she retorted that she lived on carobs and pittance bread.⁷²

Suspecting that his wife was up to something, he rummaged through the drawer and found a pair of gold earrings, two sets of gold buttons, a silver belt buckle and a woollen burgundy-coloured jacket. Following a bitter exchange with his wife, he went to Valletta where he earned 7 *tari* for retrieving two buckets and a barrel from a well. At eleven o'clock at night, a man he recognized to be the captain of a galley squadron, knocked on their bedroom window. Michel'Angelo chased the man but fearing he was armed he returned home. In the meantime Battistina fled and took refuge in the *Casa delle Ritirate* in Floriana. The following day her sister persuaded her to return home. She was knitting socks with Margarita on her doorstep when Michel'Angelo arrived. A quarrel ensued she called him a homosexual (*bardassa*)⁷³ and told him not to look for her ever again. Michel'Angelo attacked her and stabbed her to death. In their court depositions submitted on 19 January 1737, the Sammut's neighbours Anna d'Andrea and Tomaso Pace claimed that they knew Battistina to be an exemplary wife, a good and honourable woman who regularly received the Holy Sacraments.⁷⁴

In his deposition, Michel'Angelo depicted his wife as a bold, deceitful prostitute. The neighbours on the other hand conjured up the image of a saint. These declarations on

⁶⁸Ciappara, (2014), 132.

⁶⁹ Ciappara,(2014), 132.

⁷⁰ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, f.18. (16 January 1737), Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel'Angelo Sammut.

⁷¹ The Peloponnese peninsula in southern Greece.

⁷² The deposition does not indicate the duration of his journey at sea.

⁷³ A *bardassa* is a passive homosexual.

⁷⁴ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, ff.15-22v. (29 July 1732-16 January 1737), Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel'Angelo Sammut.

Battistina's life have all the makings of a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde story. Michel'Angelo's testimony echoed cultural ideas used to generate and interpret the behaviour of a prostitute. This may have been fashioned in conformity to cultural norms pertaining to the defence of male honour. By portraying his wife as a covert prostitute Michel'Angelo sought to seek clemency for the crime he had committed. D'Andrea and Pace, on the other hand, disclosed idealistic social and religious ethical behaviour. Battistina was likely to have been an occasional covert prostitute who pursued prostitution to improve her standard of living. In consideration of the fact that in 1732, Rosa D'Arena,⁷⁵ a laundress, earned 16 *tari* per month, the 14 *tari* allowance Michel'Angelo gave his wife for an indefinite period was highly insufficient.⁷⁶ Michel'Angelo was not very generous with his wife. He earned 7 *tari* for half a day's work yet he only gave her an allowance of 14 *tari* for the whole duration of his time away from home.

Battistina practised occasionally in the night time when the neighbours were asleep.⁷⁷ During the day time she attended mass and knitted socks on the doorstep with her sister. It is possible that she was earning some money through knitting in the public sphere in the day time, supplemented by prostitution in the private sphere in the night time. Her initiatives produced some surplus money that she invested in a few valuables. The valuables she possessed may have formed part of her retribution for sex work. In her study on prostitutes and the exchange of second-hand goods in Rome, Tessa Storey showed how some prostitutes were paid in gifts and how owning jewellery and garments above their station was common.⁷⁸ She argues that accumulating luxury items formed part of their strategy to build a small trading activity and save for an uncertain future.⁷⁹ Battistina was a covert prostitute and the few items she possibly earned from prostitution were hidden. It is likely that these items were for personal use.

Battistina may have been skilful at multitasking while her husband was away. She was pursuing honourable work and keeping up religious appearances in the public sphere whilst engaging in sexual services for material gain in the night time (in the private sphere).

⁷⁵ Rosa D'Arena is singled out as a *publica meretrice* in the Porto Salvo Status Animarum records 1726, 1727, 1729, 1734, 1737, 1742,

⁷⁶ See N.A.M. Processi Box 378, NA 92/04, Bundle n.p. (22 November 1732). Rosa D'Arena case. 'Io ho lavato la robba del suo Padrone per il corso di tre mesi alla ragione di tari sedici al mese'.

⁷⁷ For a study on night-time, its denizens and the nightly goings-on of low ranking urban folk see Noel Buttigieg, 'People of an Urban Night Culture', in *Arkivju* Vol. I, Issue 1 (2010), 59-72. For an in depth study on the different ways in which early modern Europeans understood, experienced and transformed the night see Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷⁸ Tessa Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', (2008), 65.

⁷⁹ Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern', (2008), 65-67.

Sara F. Matthews-Grieco shows how cuckoldry and impotence were ‘acute concerns’ in Renaissance and early modern European societies.⁸⁰ In his study on marriage in Malta in the late-eighteenth century, Frans Ciappara supports Matthews-Grieco’s theory. He suggests that being called a cuckold was deeply offensive to Maltese men.⁸¹ In 1794 Cristoforo Messina was stabbed to death for calling Gaetano Pollacco a cuckold.⁸² Battistina’s murder could however also have been a rage-type murder. This crime raises many questions. One wonders how close or how far Michel’Angelo and the neighbours’ declarations were from Battistina’s real life experience and whether uxoricide for honour in early modern Valletta was culturally justified.

Notions of Honour and Identity

Lotte van de Pol created a list of ‘common factors’ of honour found in all societies. The list included the fact that it was more critical to women than to men, it was tied to female chastity and sexual fidelity, it was a public matter and it was the most common form of female slander. Van de Pol explains that honour in all societies was visibly expressed through certain types of clothing and positioning in ceremonies.⁸³ Current notions of honour in studies about early modern Malta proposed by historians reiterate Van de Pol’s views. Through his studies on women in Malta in the post-Tridentine period and notions of honour in the Mediterranean, Carmel Cassar demonstrates that honour was directed towards maintaining women’s integrity; he also suggests that it played an important role in preserving a respectable economic level.⁸⁴ Prostitutes, according to C. Cassar represented the highest form of dishonour.⁸⁵ Through investigations on aspects of crime in the harbour from 1741-1746 Joseph Attard notes that despite urbanisation, honour was integral to social life. He argues that it provided nuanced power to the lower members of society who were not involved in political decision making processes and was manifested in ways that closely resembled codes of honour in Italy and other Mediterranean countries.⁸⁶ Anthony Camenzuli reveals that the most common form of slandering women was by calling her a *puttana*. He argues that this

⁸⁰ Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, ‘Introduction’, in *Cuckoldry, Impotence and Adultery in Europe (15th-17th century)*, Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (ed.), (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 2.

⁸¹ Ciappara, (1988), 80.

⁸² Ciappara, (1988), 80.

⁸³ Van de Pol, (2011), 46.

⁸⁴ C. Cassar, (2002), 34. See also Carmel Cassar, ‘Honour and Shame in the Mediterranean’, in *Encyclopaedia of the Mediterranean, Contemporary Studies*, Vol. IV, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2003).

⁸⁵ C. Cassar, (2002), 41.

⁸⁶ J. Attard, (1995), 68. For insights on codes of honour in early modern Italy see Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 9-18. Also see E. S. Cohen, (1992), 597-625

indicated the important role women played in preserving family honour by being loyal to their husband and children.⁸⁷ Frans Ciappara shows that honour controlled female life and that being labelled a prostitute was highly undesirable.⁸⁸ Emanuel Buttigieg on the other hand explains how the knights' black habit made of designed fabrics and adorned with trimmings represented the apex of elite honourable status.⁸⁹ Conversely, in the public sphere, prostitutes wore visible colourful clothes and shoes underneath black hooded cloaks that distinguished them from other women.⁹⁰ E. Buttigieg argues that in the public arena knights expressed male honour through duels and brawls. The 'warrior dimension' awarded Hospitallers male honour.⁹¹ This is underpinned by Carl August Ehrensvärd's first hand description of knights' jawning, duelling and quarrelling.⁹²

In the *Castallaniæ processi criminali* brawls involving women feature prominently. A significant number of these brawls appear to have included insults that prejudiced female honour. Various types of insults were used to slander females. These insults were not always sexual. For instance on 14 February 1731, Anna Olivier and Speranza Formosa had a fight over a chair in the Parish Church of Senglea. The fight continued outside the church, Speranza called Anna a foul-mouthed and frustrated person (*bocca puzzolente, e frustrata*). Anna replied by calling her a chatterbox (*cacchiarona*).⁹³ On 7 July 1731, Clara Borg from Valletta was called a bothersome woman (*donna molesta*) and an annoying person (*fastidiosa*).⁹⁴ In other instances women were insulted by being called a prostitute or a whore. This was as injurious for spinsters as it was for married women. On 14 March 1740, Giuseppe simply known as ta'Mentia uttered foul language (*cattive parole*) at Grazia Demicoli's daughter and insulted her by calling her a prostitute (*puttana*). She reciprocated with a barrage of rude words (*cattive parole*).⁹⁵ At times verbal insults included a mix of sexual and non-sexual insults. In 1730, Giovanni Ziricot called Teresa d'Antonio (a married woman) a *bagascia* (whore), *futtuta* (a person who gets laid), *gifa* (a coward) and a *bugiarda* (liar).⁹⁶

⁸⁷ Anthony Camenzuli, 'Defamatory Nicknames and Insult in Late Eighteenth-Century Malta: 1771-1798', in *Melita Historica*, xiii (2005), 3, 325. For ideas on the culture of sexual insult in early modern London see Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, (1996), 59, 60.

⁸⁸ Ciappara, (2001), 163.

⁸⁹ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 136, 137.

⁹⁰ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 147, 148.

⁹¹ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 160.

⁹² Von Numers, (1985), 11. Jawning is arm wrestling with insults done in good fun.

⁹³ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (14 February 1731). Contram Anna Olivier.

⁹⁴ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 NA 92/4 Loose Leaf n.p. (7 July 1731). Processo Clara Borg.

⁹⁵ N.A.M. Processi Box 405. NA 92/04 Loose leaf f.1. Giuseppe ta'Mentia.

⁹⁶ N.A.M. Processi Box 370 NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (2 August 1730). De Adulterio Contram Maria Michallef.

Slandering insults were rarely singular, they were often reciprocated and generally included dramatisation like pulling off an opponent's headscarf (*levando il fazzoletto dal capo*),⁹⁷ or removing an opponent's hooded mantle (*levando dalla sua testa la faldetta*).⁹⁸ French women were also known to tear headdresses off those they accused of being prostitutes.⁹⁹ Slapping a person (*diede un Gran Schiaffo*),¹⁰⁰ or hitting a person in the head with a shoe (*con la pianella sua le diede un colpo in testa*),¹⁰¹ or hitting a person's cheek with an open hand (*una guanciata*),¹⁰² were other forms of dramatisation that at times accompanied slander in brawls involving women. Attacks to the face and head were considered to be more serious, than attacks on other parts of the body. This was even more critical when attacks left permanent visible scars to the face and head.¹⁰³ The *Libri dei Carcerati* provided several instances whereby persons, including prostitutes, who wounded someone's face or head, were incarcerated and were made to pay for medical treatment.¹⁰⁴ For instance in May 1772, Teresa Farrugia a *publicameretrice* wounded an unnamed person's head. She paid for the treatment of the wound that healed and was released from prison.¹⁰⁵ Utterances and dramas in brawls always took place in public in front of witnesses.¹⁰⁶ Witnesses describing the scene normally ended by saying that the persons involved in the fight were pulled apart by third parties and went their separate ways. This drama appears to have been very similar to brawls that took place in various early modern Italian towns.¹⁰⁷ These confrontations appear to have been volatile but short-lived.

Van de Pol argues that calling a woman a whore (*bagascia*) was not synonymous with calling a woman a prostitute (*puttana*). Prostitutes were those who accepted payment in exchange for sex. The term whore, on the other hand, referred to women who led 'dishonourable, disreputable, godless, disorderly or iniquitous' lives regardless of whether they were earning money from it or not.¹⁰⁸ Through her study on early modern depositions in the London Consistory Court records, Laura Gowing supports Van de Pol's theory in saying

⁹⁷ N.A.M. Processi Box 370, NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (2 August 1730) Testimony Anna Maria Seichel. ... et avvicinandosi esso Giovanni aferrò per il collo d'esta Teresa dentro la sua casa, con una mano, e coll'altra diede un gran schiaffo, levandole dal capo il fazzoletto, et avvicinatami io l'ho separate...

⁹⁸ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (14 February 1731). Contram Anna Olivier.

⁹⁹ Rublack, (1999), 150.

¹⁰⁰ N.A.M. Processi Box 370, NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (2 August 1730) Testimony Anna Maria Seichel.

¹⁰¹ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (14 February 1731). Contram Anna Olivier.

¹⁰² N.A.M. Processi Box 375 NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (14 February 1731). Contram Anna Olivier.

¹⁰³ T. V. Cohen, E. S. Cohen, (1993), 25.

¹⁰⁴ On frequent legal recourse for the retribution of physical assault see also E. Buttigieg, (2010), 48, 49.

¹⁰⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773 f.181. (21 May 1772).

¹⁰⁶ See for instance N.A.M. Processi Box 370, NA 92/04 Bundle n.p. (2 August 1730) Testimony Anna Maria Seichel.

¹⁰⁷ For a summary of ritualised violence in early modern towns in Italy, see Burke, (1987), 11, 12,

¹⁰⁸ Van de Pol, (2011), 4, 5.

that calling a woman a whore rarely meant that the person was a real prostitute. Sexual verbal insults were part of a broader language of abuse that largely pertained to church courts.¹⁰⁹ Laura Rosenthal's findings suggest change over time. She argues that in sixteenth-century English literature one finds little distinction between prostitute and whore. In the seventeenth-century the term whore tended to be used to refer to women consumed by money and sexual desires. In the eighteenth century prostitutes were associated with sacrifice to the demands of the market.¹¹⁰ The present study argues that verbal sexual insults, in low-class family groups and neighbourhoods, may not have been as damaging to one's honour as one is made to believe. Early modern *Castellaniæ* court proceedings indicate that, in Malta, the two most common terms used in slander and insults involving females were *puttana* and *bagascia*. In certain low-class areas in Valletta like for instance the Mandraggio and the Due Balle, during disagreements even the most trivial ones, women called a female antagonist a prostitute. This may have been habitual and meaningless. Sexual verbal insults in certain low-class groups were commonplace and were an integral part of the community's everyday exchanges that were at times fiery. Such insults were not taken literally or seriously. Being called a whore was expected to happen. On 10 March 1772, Rosa Moreno had a fight with a certain Graziulla. Rosa told Graziulla that everybody was talking about her. Graziulla answered by saying 'what do they have to say about me, that I am a whore (*bagascia*) and that I get laid (*futtuta*)?'¹¹¹ For Graziulla being called a *bagascia* and/or *futtuta* appears to have been unimportant and/or irrelevant. The character of people who resorted to the frequent use of sexual insults may have been quite similar to the constituents of Thomas Belmonte's Fontana del Re in twentieth-century Naples. Belmonte aptly described the community as:

In an economic sense, they live at the edge of the world. Their social behaviour reflects the precariousness of their position. They call and cling to one another to keep from falling off, but just as often they push and trample one another down in their frenzy to survive.¹¹²

Name-calling incidences between persons belonging to the same social group normally ended up in court when a person was seeking to claim damages, expenses and/or

¹⁰⁹ Gowing, (1996), 59, 60.

¹¹⁰ L. J. Rosenthal, (2006), 1-3.

¹¹¹ N.A.M. Processi Box 505 NA 92/04 Loose Leaf n.p. (10 March 1772) Graziulla contrastava con detta Rosa quale disse à detta Graziulla, 'ogn'uno stà dicendo di voi – rispose Graziulla 'che cosa devono dire sù di me bagascia, futtuta?

¹¹² Thomas Belmonte, *The Broken Fountain*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1979), 140.

interests. For instance the aforementioned daughter of Grazia Demicoli took Giuseppe ta'Mentia and his wife Evangelista to Court because she was seven months pregnant and expected to be reimbursed for all damages, expenses and interests that she had suffered when Giuseppe hurled sexual insults at her and Evangelista physically assaulted her.¹¹³ Arrests and incarcerations linked to slander were also likely to happen when the verbal abuse involved a person or persons from a different social class. In August 1750, Grazia Falzon a *donna publica* was incarcerated for one day and asked to retract calling Francesco Hagius a procurer.¹¹⁴ In August 1769, Rosa Villiani, a *publica meretrice*, was incarcerated for two days and banned from the street where she was living for fighting and slandering honourable persons.¹¹⁵ It is possible that in court litigation these incidences would be dramatised and inflated.

Actual prostitutes may have faced a different reality, especially when as in Battistina's case the woman was married. According to Tessa Storey, situations did turn dangerous when married women defied male control by initiating a secret love affair, or engaged in covert prostitution.¹¹⁶ Female sexual initiatives outside marriage jeopardised male honour.¹¹⁷ Certain instances indicate that some husbands may have been perceived to be vindicated in murdering their wife if there was sufficient evidence that she was a prostitute. In his interrogation on the attributes of Ursula Gatt (who was alleged to be a *publica meretrice*), Father Pietro Antonio Ciantar said that her husband used to beat her up and attempted to kill her.¹¹⁸ The aforementioned Michel'Angelo said that he murdered his wife Battistina because she had insulted (*oltraggiato*) his honour.¹¹⁹ Notions of uxoricide for honour, culturally perceived to be legitimate re-emerged in depositions placed at the *Castallaniæ* by a certain Claudio Zuas. In 1740, Zuas was interrogated on the attributes of a certain Benedetta Scarpato who was suspected of being a prostitute. Zuas said that for the last nine to ten years Benedetta was known to be a *donna libera*. He said that one of his friends knew her husband Giuseppe very well. Giuseppe told Zuas's friend that he wanted to kill his wife because of her evil ways (*per li suoi andamenti cattivi*).¹²⁰ A few days later Zuas was walking along the wharf with a friend and met Scarpato. Zuas's friend scolded him for not

¹¹³ N.A.M. Processi Box 405. NA 92/04 Loose leaf f.1. Giuseppe ta'Mentia.

¹¹⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 21. (4 August 1750).

¹¹⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768 – 1773. f. 71. (31 August 1769).

¹¹⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 161.

¹¹⁷ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 161.

¹¹⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 84v. (1703). '... cercava di ammazzarla...'

¹¹⁹ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel'Angelo Sammut, f. 18. (29 July 1732 – 16 January 1737).

¹²⁰ N.A.M. Processi. Box 405, n.p. (8 August 1740).

sticking to his word and killing his wife to uphold his honour. Giuseppe answered that he was a foreigner and he had no intention of spending the rest of his days rotting away in a church. He thus decided to abandon his wife and leave the island for good.¹²¹ The fact that the Sammut went into ecclesiastical sanctuary after killing his wife and Scarpato opted to leave the country rather than kill his wife, revealed that uxoricide carried serious consequences. It however also indicates reluctance in involving the *Castellanica* in such matters. It is also possible that similar to Counter-Reformation Rome ordinary folk were many a time unaware of their legal rights.¹²²

Conversely there were other husbands who, as Frans Ciappara demonstrates, showed little concern for their wives' honour.¹²³ Some even collaborated in their wives' provision of sexual services for material gain. On 30 May 1701, Anna Hagius from Senglea declared that she owned a mill under the house of Rosa, wife of Marcello Attard who was a sailor. She routinely passed through Rosa's house to access her mill. She stated that she knew on first hand basis that Rosa Attard was a prostitute and that she was practising with a lewd man who was exempt from the local jurisdiction. Anna said that Marcello was fully aware of his wife's doings. Moreover, he often went to look for the said man and accompanied him to their house. On various occasions she saw the three eating and drinking at the same table. The lewd man often slept overnight at the Attard's house and when this happened, Marcello slept in another room. Marcello told Anna that in return the man gave them victuals. The previous day Anna saw Marcello return home with a cloth full of pork and beef. She estimated that Marcello had around four to five *rotoli*¹²⁴ of meat (approximately 3.5 kilograms). Rosa Baldacchino also testified in the same case. Her testimony concurred with Anna Hagius's court deposition.¹²⁵

In 1730, witnesses stated that Giovanni Maria Michallef, a tobacco miller (*molinaro di tabacco*) from Floriana was known to be practising with Anna wife of Bernardo known as *la Serena*. They were known to lock themselves up in a room located in Anna and Bernardo's tavern near the Slave Prisons in Valletta.¹²⁶ In October 1775, Domenica wife of Giuseppe Cilia and Maria wife of Paolo Zammit, *pubbliche meretrici*, were caught practising with Alberto Brincat and Saverio Galea in Teresa Zammit's house in Valletta in the night time. All

¹²¹ N.A.M. Processi, Box 405, n.p. (8 August 1740). Testi Claudius Zuas de Sengela.

¹²² Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 76.

¹²³ cf. Ciappara, (2001), 163.

¹²⁴ 1 rotolo is equal to 0.890997 kilogram.

¹²⁵ N.A.M. 92/04 Box 278, Bundle n.p. (30 May 1701) Contram Marcello Hagius. '...che trà la sudetta Rosa, e quell'esente passasse commercio scandaloso col consenso di Marcello di lei marito ...'

¹²⁶ N.A.M, 92/04 Box 370, Bundle n.p. (21 January 1730). Contram Giovanni Maria Michallef.

five were incarcerated. In the prison records they are described as incarcerated for infringing a new law prohibiting non-residents to stay overnight in Valletta.¹²⁷ They were not prosecuted for adultery or for being married women who prostituted themselves. Grand Master Gregorio Carafa's (1680-1690) 1681 *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* re-enacted in Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena's (1722-1736) 1724 *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, stipulated that married women who worked as prostitutes would be flogged and permanently exiled from the domain.¹²⁸ In this way the state legally supported the honour of married men and offered an alternative to murder. It is, however, possible that action was only taken on demand. Domenica and Maria's husbands were neutral and did not protest. This may indicate that they were aware and/or consented to their doings rather than that they were not informed about their wives' affairs. A similar scenario existed in eighteenth-century Paris; if a husband did not protest about his wife's unchaste behaviour the state did not take action.¹²⁹

At face value, cases concerning wife procurement may indicate lack of male honour. The *Castellania* demonstrated zero tolerance towards such men. In 1791, Giuseppe Bardon was incarcerated for three days and exiled from the entire domain for procuring the services of his wife.¹³⁰ Storey argues that wife procurement demonstrated total husband control over wives. She nonetheless suggests that in certain instances prostitutes were also known to use marriage as a cover-up for sex work.¹³¹ A similar scenario may have occurred in early modern Valletta where, according to Carmel Cassar, a single woman could raise more suspicions and attract more surveillance than a married woman.¹³² Marriage guaranteed the honour of a woman and the houses from which they came. As long as a woman was married it was assumed that her sexuality was legally controlled.¹³³ One would thus assume that some prostitutes may have pursued marriage to keep out of the public eye.

In a study on the social and religious history of the parish of Qrendi, Frans Ciappara shows how in historiography, the importance of the single status of women has been

¹²⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.64. (3 October 1775). '... perche non essendo abitanti qui in Valletta, furono colti à pernottare qui in Valletta contravenendo così al bando ultimamente pubblicato'.

¹²⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v. (1681) *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* Article VII. Quallsia donna accasata convinta di menar vita da publica meretrice, constando fa pubblicità sia frustata, e mandata in esilio perpetuamente da questo dominio. *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (Malta, Stamparia di Sua Altezza Serenisima, 1724), Article VII, 105.

¹²⁹ Benabou, (1987), 55.

¹³⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 107. (8 June 1791). Bardon managed to go into ecclesiastical refuge.

¹³¹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 147.

¹³² C. Cassar, (2002), 135.

¹³³ C. Cassar, (2000), 132, 133.

underestimated.¹³⁴ Single women were not necessarily perceived to be dishonourable. There were ways and means how a single woman could maintain both her status and her honour. This was true for all strata of society including lower class groups. Insights on how a single honourable woman should or should not behave emerged in Maria Zammit's declarations placed in the *Castellania* on 13 October 1701. Maria said that she was of a marriageable age but was living on her own (*figlia in capillis*). She said that she was a *zitella* and that she always behaved accordingly. She went on to say that unlike Aloysetta Borg who was known to chat with men in the streets, she never had the opportunity or was the type of woman to have conversations with bachelors like Giovanni Mascolier. She supported herself through the proceedings of her female work and was supported by her parents. Maria said that she had never seen Aloysetta behave in a restrained manner as honesty and the status of *zitelle* required. Aloysetta used to stay out till midnight smiling and joking with men and she succeeded in doing so quite easily because her mistress used to leave the door open. All the people in the Mandraggio knew that Aloysetta was a shameful woman. As a *zitella* she was very scandalised by Aloysetta's behaviour. Joseph Pandalona confirmed Maria Zammit's statements. He said that he saw Aloysetta sing dishonest songs and talk in a liberal way that was not permissible to *zitelle*.¹³⁵

Unlike early modern Württemberg where domestic servants and other women living off their own earnings were categorically perceived to be dissolute,¹³⁶ in early modern Valletta the honour of unmarried working single females including those suspected of being prostitutes was largely based on rates of control (relatives or master/mistress) and the individual's social behaviour. *Zitelle* like Maria Zammit who was watched-over by her parents and behaved appropriately were respected. Single *donne publiche* who were not under any form of control but kept a low profile and behaved discretely (like the aforementioned Catherina Mifsud) likewise do not appear to have attracted any special form of social surveillance. Ideas on single women being suspicious or perceived to be prostitutes pertained to Catholic dogma and largely emerged in the Counter Reformation period.¹³⁷ Evidence emerging through the course of this research revealed that some clerics in Valletta may have persisted in transmitting these ideas well into the eighteenth century.

¹³⁴ Ciappara, (2014), 108-114. For a discussion on how within the limits imposed by the law and society, women in the eighteenth-century still found niches through which they could act see Mifsud Bonnici, (2015).

¹³⁵ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, Testimony Maria Zammit ff. 14-16, (13 October 1701). Testimony Joseph Pandolana ff. 16-17v. (15 October 1701).

¹³⁶ Rublack, (1999), 139.

¹³⁷ C. Cassar, (2002), 1-5. See also cf. Perry, (1990), 17.

Clerical Attitudes

In the second half of the sixteenth century both Lutheranism and Tridentine Catholicism placed marriage and family life on a pedestal; it became the only legitimate union through which sexuality could be expressed.¹³⁸ Prostitutes in Protestant communities were criminalised and demonised.¹³⁹ Lyndal Roper shows that in 1537, the Augsburg City Council appropriated the legitimate authority to legislate Reformation. Prostitutes were actively discouraged and prohibited to journeymen.¹⁴⁰ In Memmingen, Ulinka Rublack observed similar trends. With the onset of the Reformation, prostitutes who were previously considered to be an unfortunate social group were criminalised, harshly punished and targeted for moral reform.¹⁴¹ In early modern Amsterdam, Lotte van de Pol said that the Calvinist Church (not the official state church, nor the most numerous religious community but the privileged, dominant religious group) likewise propelled the criminalisation of prostitutes.¹⁴² In London, prostitutes were also criminalised, but according to Tony Henderson attitudes towards them were not as harsh as in Augsburg, Memmingen or Amsterdam.¹⁴³

Contemporary attitudes towards prostitutes in Roman Catholic societies also appear to have been restrictive but presumably less restrictive than countries which embraced the Reformed church. In her study on convents and the body politic, Jutta Gisela Sperling explains how in late Renaissance Venice, propelled by Roman Catholic ideals, male humanists and scholars advocated that the most valued attributes a wife contributed to marriage was not her dowry but honesty, chastity, kindness, virtue, obedience, and diligence in administering the family.¹⁴⁴ Catholic perceptions on vanity, female sexual libertinism and prostitution are well rooted in Catholic ecclesiastical literature.¹⁴⁵ In her study on the development of notions and devotions pertaining to St Mary Magdalene in medieval sermons, Katerine Ludwig Jansen suggests that from time immemorial vanity and bodily adornment were considered to be signs of 'harlotry' and deemed to be capital sins.¹⁴⁶ This idea gained

¹³⁸ Merry E. Wiener-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 63, 64.

¹³⁹ Wiener-Hanks, (2000), 63, 64. Lyndal Roper 'Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg', in *History Workshop Journal*, xix (1985), 19, 21.

¹⁴⁰ Roper 'Discipline and Respectability', 19, 21. Roper, 1989), 31. Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1994), 150.

¹⁴¹ Rublack, (1999), 124, 125.

¹⁴² Van de Pol, (2011), 43.

¹⁴³ Henderson, (1999), 29, 33-34.

¹⁴⁴ Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice*, (Chicago, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 52-54, 295.

¹⁴⁵ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 25-29, 46, 47.

¹⁴⁶ Katerine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2001), 166.

impetus through the sermons of medieval theologians who allied vanity with *luxuria* (craving for carnal pleasure).¹⁴⁷ Medieval preachers fused vanity and *luxuria* in the figure of St Mary Magdalene, from a servant who bathed and anointed Christ's feet Mary Magdalene was transformed into a prostitute.¹⁴⁸

Ideas on prostitutes being victims of sexual pleasure (*luxuria*) and sensual luxury (vanity) continued to resonate throughout the early modern period.¹⁴⁹ Storey notes that there was some truth in this stereotype.¹⁵⁰ Prostitutes in Rome were known to possess and flaunt luxury items. Jewellery, elaborate and colourful clothing, flamboyant furniture and house decorations were status symbols and they also attracted customers. A significant number of prostitutes also invested and traded in second-hand jewellery and goods. This was one of the entrepreneurial strategies they devised to plan for an uncertain future.¹⁵¹ Rosa D'Arena's claim placed at the *Castellanica* in November 1732 indicates that similar to Rome, some prostitutes in early modern Valletta may also have traded in second hand goods. D'Arena was singled out as a *publica meretrice* in the Porto Salvo *Status Animarum* registers 1726-1742. In 1729 just three years before she filed her claim, she was described as the wife of Giuseppe who had left (*partito*). She was living alone in premises underneath Fort Saint Elmo in an area known as La Ficara (See Figure 6.7).¹⁵² In 1727 sixty-one year old Maria di Lorenzo was living with her.¹⁵³ In 1742 her mother-in-law, sixty-three year old Madalena and her sister-in-law Diana D'Arena (also a *publica meretrice*) had moved in with her. In 1732 Rosa would have been thirty-two years old. On 22 November 1732, she initiated legal steps against Tomaso Spiteri Ta'Mocho. Spiteri was a servant of a knight and he owed her a ring, a gold ring (or earring), a heart of pearls with a gold frame and two silver broaches worth 5 *scudi* and 7 *tari*.¹⁵⁴ He also owed her a lace ornament worth 9 *tari* and two door knobs valued at 7 *tari*. She had laundered his master's clothes for three months at an agreed rate of 16 *tari* per month, Spiteri had been paid but he had not given her any money. Spiteri also owed Rosa

¹⁴⁷ Ludwig Jansen, (2001), 164-167.

¹⁴⁸ For a detailed account on how Mary Magdalene was 'tarred with the brush of luxuria and consigned to the brothel' see Ludwig Jansen, (2001), 168-177.

¹⁴⁹ L.J. Rosenthal, (2006), 1.

¹⁵⁰ Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', (2008), 72.

¹⁵¹ Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', (2008), 72.

¹⁵² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1729, f.56.

¹⁵³ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727, f.27v.

¹⁵⁴ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 378, Bundle n.p. (22 November 1732). Contram Tomaso Spiteri. '...un anello, un circhetto d'oro ed un cuore tornado d'oro con perle, due fibbie d'argento che vagliano scudi cinque e tari sette, una pizziatura per tari nove compimento due bozzi per tari sette...'. For translation see Chapter V 'Oranmenti, Guarniture e Arnesi riguardanti il vestito si da Uomo che da Donna 22-24 in *Prontuario di Vocaboli Siciliani Attenenti A Cose Donnesche e D'Uso Comune colla corrispondenza Italiana e Francese (scritta e pronunziata)*, (Catania, Tipografia del Reale Ospizio, 1852). For a historiography of jewellery in Malta see Francesca Balzan, *Vanity, Profanity & Worship: Jewellery from the Maltese Islands*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti's 2013).

money for lodging at her house for nine months, other services she had rendered him and miscellaneous goods including a green reptile skin and a jacquard jacket (*giubba d'indiana*) worth 8 *scudi*. Spiteri admitted that he had taken the skin and the jacket with the intention to sell them (*ad effetto di venderle*). He sold the skin for 10 *tari* and the jacket for 8 *scudi*. He had loaned the door knobs but he had not given them back. Rosa was likely to have been trading with Spiteri who was a fraudulent man.

Mary Elizabeth Perry shows how in early modern Seville notions of *luxuria* and vanity embodied in the figure of St Mary Magdalene were useful to city fathers. The cult grew largely in response to puritanical tendencies of the Counter Reformation.¹⁵⁵ Mary Magdalene provided a paradox to the Holy Virgin Mary and enabled the authorities to demonstrate their superiority by defining good and evil.¹⁵⁶ In eighteenth-century Paris, prostitutes were condemned by the Church and presented as a threat to the sacrament of marriage and society.¹⁵⁷ Carmel Cassar's study supports these theories. He suggests that ideas on prostitutes being victims of poverty and vanity emerged in the aftermath of the Council of Trent. In the second half of the sixteenth-century prostitutes in Malta and elsewhere in the Catholic world were identified as disorderly women that needed to be controlled, disciplined and rehabilitated.¹⁵⁸

In Renaissance Rome, Catholicism was mostly concerned with salvation and divine providence. Providence was God's protection against catastrophes and other forms of suffering. A Catholic God could also be revengeful and punish vice with various forms of calamities. Salvation was, however, possible through virtuous deeds and the sacraments. Through the invocation of the Holy Virgin Mary and other saints, prayers, ceremonies and urgings to a life of virtue, a society could placate God's ire for vice and alienate catastrophes. The clergy and the Church were instrumental in providing the necessary mediums through which society rectified failings and communicated with the divine.¹⁵⁹ During a sermon delivered at the inauguration of a female retreat in the monastery for cloistered discolored Carmelite nuns in Valletta, *Padre Pelagio*¹⁶⁰ firmly placed the calamities Malta faced from

¹⁵⁵ Perry, (1980), 224.

¹⁵⁶ Perry, 224-227.

¹⁵⁷ Benabou, (1987), 431-445.

¹⁵⁸ C. Cassar, (2002), 246, 247.

¹⁵⁹ c.f. Thomas M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1589-1597*, (London & New York, Routledge, 2016), 9-15. Perry, (1980), 221-227. T.V. Cohen, E.S. Cohen, (1993), 27-30.

¹⁶⁰ Janica Magro, 'Padre Pelagio Backstabbing de Soldanis', in *De Soldanis*, Godwin Vella & Olvin Vella (eds.), (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2012), 93. Bartholomeo Mifsud *sive* Padre Pelagio Maria (1708-1781) was first a doctor who then became a priest and prelate. He was a well-known preacher in Malta, Rome and Sicily and earned great esteem in Rome and at the Roman Curia.

the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries on female vice. He said that unprotected ‘pastors of souls’ laboured incessantly with prostitutes but their efforts were futile.¹⁶¹ Pelagio’s sermon is not a one off case. In 1764, Camillo Spreti, a knight of St John wrote a manual aimed at offering guidance to young knights performing their caravans in Malta. His advice included the avoidance of local women (especially prostitutes) like the plague and a highly misogynistic sonnet that reiterated *Padre Pelagio’s* views.¹⁶² Pelagio and Spreti’s ideas reflected thoughts conveyed by various early modern Catholic preachers.¹⁶³ This ideology was likely to be the Catholic Church’s driving force behind the promotion of marriage and/or the cloister and the Catholic Counter-Reformation stance against the single status of women.¹⁶⁴ It is also likely to have been the rationale behind the confessor’s refusal to bestow the Pascal precept on the afore-mentioned Catherina Mifsud.¹⁶⁵

In the post-Tridentine period, in his handbook for confessors, the afore-mentioned Bartolomeo de Medina (1527-1580) advised clerics not to absolve the sins of *donne publiche*. He admitted that this was a difficult decision (*un passo difficile*). Nonetheless since *donne publiche* were women of public wrong doings clerics were advised to wash their hands off the matter by saying ‘go with God as I do not know what you two are saying to each other’ (*andate con Dio, che io non sò quell che voi vi diciate*). The priest could then in good conscience advise his superior not to administer the Pascal precept to the *donna publica*.¹⁶⁶ De Medina’s instructions demonstrated that in the Counter Reformation period, the Catholic clergy did not have a clear stance on how to deal with *donne publiche*. They were caught in between two religious philosophical doctrines: the medieval concept of the Magdalene who repented and achieved salvation and the post-Tridentine austerity measures on women especially prostitutes. De Medina’s recommendation was for clerics not to take the responsibility of deciding on such a sensitive and delicate issue and to leave the matter in God’s hands.

In her study on prostitutes in Counter Reformation Rome, Storey adopts a Braudelian approach¹⁶⁷ in recognising shifts in Catholic clerical attitudes towards prostitutes over

¹⁶¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f. 119.

¹⁶² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, 14. (1764). See transcription of sonnet in Appendix 5.

¹⁶³ See for instance Marsilio Onorati, *Vita di Giesu Christo Redentor Nostro*, (Rome, Francesco Cavalli, 1644), 127, 130, 147, 650.

¹⁶⁴ See Ciappara, (2014), 101.

¹⁶⁵ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, f. ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701). Testimony Catherina Mifsud.

¹⁶⁶ De Medina, (1584), 187, 188. See also de Medina’s explanation on how a confessor should behave in cases of a secret confession by a *donna publica* on page 188.

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion on the Braudelian approach see A. Bernard Knapp, *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6. The Braudelian approach also known as the

time.¹⁶⁸ She notes that from 1566-1590 prostitutes bore the brunt of religious and institutional fervour. In the following six decades growing numbers of prostitutes indicated that despite intermittent tempestuous police raids, the number of prostitutes grew. This indicated inconsistency in Church policies that enabled prostitutes to weave their way into society. In subsequent years from 1700 onwards control over prostitutes relaxed. Storey suggests that this was evidenced through the fact that the clergy became more tolerant towards them and less inclined to single them out in the *Status Animarum* records.¹⁶⁹ In Valletta, clerical intolerance towards prostitutes may have lingered longer than in Rome and other Catholic countries. This emerges through the fact that distinguishing prostitutes in the *Status Animarum* registers of Porto Salvo persisted well into the second half of the eighteenth century. Nonetheless not all clerics subscribed to this attitude.

Earthly Possessions

On 15 May 1671, Notary Giuliano Felici (1628-1676) wrote a nine page petition addressed to the Abbess of the *Monastero delle Convertite* Sister Illuminata Metaxi, and the Vicar Sister Antonia Cauchi supplicating them to accept 40 *scudi* in settlement of Catherina Valenti's dues in accordance with the courtesan laws (*leggi delle cortigiane*).¹⁷⁰ The courtesan law was instigated through a Papal Brief issued by Pope Clemente VIII on 6 December 1602. The brief entitled 'Vestro Monasterio et Vovis' awarded the *Convertite* (Magdalene nuns) one fifth of the inheritance of deceased prostitutes. A note annexed to the brief stated that this was a just law because it restored to the Religion goods that they had accepted from knights (*equite*).¹⁷¹ An identical law existed in early modern Rome.¹⁷² The Valletta *Convertite* were clearly putting pressure upon Valenti as Notary Felici implored them to refrain from arguing with his client and molesting her (*lite e moleste*). He informed them that for the last sixteen years his client had been living an honest life. She was currently living off a pension and only owned a 100 *scudi* and some furniture. On 23 September 1656, Catherina Valenti donated 7,000 *scudi* earned through thirty years of prostitution to the

longue durée approach stresses the slow and often imperceptible effects of space, climate and technology on the actions of human beings in the past

¹⁶⁸ This approach was proposed by Olwen Hufton. See Olwen Hufton, *The Prospects Before Her*, (London, Harper Collins, 1995), 488.

¹⁶⁹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 240, 241.

¹⁷⁰ N.A.V. R260 Vol.34 Sep.1669-Aug.1671, ff.339-343. (15 May 1671). See also C. Muscat, (2013), 131-138.

¹⁷¹ A.O.M. 6395, ff. 5v-6. (6 December 1602) Miscellanea de Religione Hierosolimitana, I. [tenentur] de iustitia restituere Religioni bona quae foristan ab aliquot equite acceperunt. See also C.Muscat, (2013), 131-138.

¹⁷² Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome' (2008), 68. See also fn. 38.

church of San Paolo Apostolo. This money was used to establish a tutelary patronage (*jus patronatus*) that provided a benefice in favour of eight clerics and an archpriest *pro tempore*.¹⁷³ The foundation was tied to an obligation to celebrate the divine office and officiate mass in the church of San Paolo.¹⁷⁴ At a later stage Catherina added a further 2,000 *scudi* to the original fund.¹⁷⁵ The Notary informed the nuns that all this had been done with the consent and approval of the late Bishop Miguel Juan Balaguer Camarasa (1635-1663).¹⁷⁶

The *jus patronatus* Catherina Valenti established not only gave her the right to avoid paying her full dues to the Magdalene nuns, but also gave her the right to have her portrait hung inside the sacristy of the church, and secured her right for burial in the church of San Paolo Apostolo.¹⁷⁷ During this period of time the Collegiate of San Paolo prohibited the hanging of portraits of female benefactresses in their church, sacristy, oratory and convent.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless Catherina's portrait was allocated a prominent place in the sacristy. At a later date, notwithstanding the fact that Catherina's portrait had been hanging in the sacristy for some time the Marquis of San Vincenzo Ferreri Giliberto Testaferrata, faced strong resistance on behalf of the clerics of San Paolo who adamantly refused to hang his aunt Camilla Cagnani's portrait in the sacristy.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Notizie della Chiesa di San Paolo della Valletta dal 1565 al 1740, f.5v. Stephen Degiorgio Collection, Malta.

¹⁷⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff. 25v-26. (1656). See also C. Muscat, (2013), 138, 139.

¹⁷⁵ Notizie della Chiesa di San Paolo della Valletta dal 1565-1740, f..5v. Stephen Degiorgio Collection, Malta.

¹⁷⁶ N.A.V. R260 Vol.34., ff. 339-343. (15 May 1671).

¹⁷⁷ Giovannantonio Ciantar, *Malta Illustrata* Vol. II, (Malta, Giovanni Mallia, 1780), 209. See also N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1142, n.p. Galleria Maltese, scritta e compilata dal Sacerdote Francesco Caruana Dingli in Malta, nell'anno 1846 – under Section Dame (no.16).

¹⁷⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 5, Vol. 19, ff. 559-562. (1761) Ignatius Xaverius Mifsud, *Stromatum Melitensium*. Memoriale fatto a Monsignor Vescovo Rull circa i Ritratti di Donne Benefattrici posti nell'aula della Chiesa Collegiata di San Paolo della Valletta.

¹⁷⁹ Stephen Degiorgio and Emanuel Fiorentino, *Antoine Favray (1706-1798)*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2004), 80, 81. Camilla Cagnani was a benefactress of the said church. Clerics eventually acceded to Testaferrata's wish. Cagnani's portrait still hangs next to Caterina Valenti's portrait.



Figure 3.5: Portrait of Catherina Valenti, San Paolo Apostolo Church, Valletta. 150cm x 109 cm
 The painting is undated and the artist is unknown. Stephen Degiorgio and Emanuel Fiorentino suggest that it may have been executed by Antoine de Favray (1706-1798). A Latin inscription accompanying the portrait states that it was taken to the temple in 1656.¹⁸⁰
 Acknowledgement Stephen Degiorgio

Catherina Valenti died on 16 January 1683, aged 91. A sepulchral epitaph was laid over her final resting place inside the church and was subsequently removed when the church was rebuilt in the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹ In 1846, Father Francesco Caruana Dingli described her as a lady of singular charity and devotion towards St Paul. He said that the *jus patronatus* she founded in the church of San Paolo was a great thing for Malta. Valenti's beautiful name would forever be famous for such a grand and distinct contribution. Caruana Dingli praised her great fondness and devoutness towards the church.¹⁸² Her last will, drawn by Notary Giuliano Felici roughly ten years before her death, in essence, awarded all her investments in the Church of San Paolo Apostolo to the parish, the rest went to her son Giovanni Battista Carami and his legitimate male descendants.¹⁸³ From a deed she registered with the same Notary a few months earlier, one learns that her son was in Palermo, Sicily where he was

¹⁸⁰ Degiorgio. Fiorentino, (2004), 81, 103. An MDCLVI in. hoc. templo. curiali. condidit.

¹⁸¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 11, Vol.18, f.203. (1761) Stromatum Melitensium Ignazio Saverio Mifsud.

¹⁸² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1142, n.p. (1846) Galleria Maltese Francesco Caruana Dingli. Under Section Dame (no.16): Donna Catherina Valenti singolare per la sua pietà e devozione verso San Paolo Fondatrice dell'ufficiatura con un arciprete ed otto ufficianti quali [ri...?] Collegiata divenne un opera molto insigne per Malta. La fondazione segue nel 1656 per atti Giuliano Felici, visse anni 91 e morì nel 1683. Il bel nome della Valenti si rese in eterno celebre per tale grand opera distinta. Fu devotissima Signora ed affezionatissima verso la chiesa.

¹⁸³ N.A.V. R260 Sep 1671-1673, Vol.35. ff. 413- 420. (27 July 1673).

about to graduate as a Doctor of laws. In this deed she instructed the liquidation of a further 525 silver *scudi* from money that she held in the Kingdom of Sicily. This money was to go towards her son's studies and subsistence.¹⁸⁴ Valenti's investment in her son's education indicated that similar to merchants and humanists in fifteenth-century Florence, she used her money to invest in her son's education.¹⁸⁵ Vitullo and Wolfthal say that the Florentine merchants invested their money in professional education for their offspring in order to depict themselves as fruitful, industrious citizens whose work and investments benefited the community, rather than sterile, avaricious usurers who hoarded the wealth for themselves.¹⁸⁶ The motivation behind Catherina Valenti's investments in her son's studies may have similarly motivated. She may have wanted to offer her son and his family a stable, respectful life. Living and studying in Palermo also protected her son from stigmatisation.

Eighteen years after Catherina Valenti's death, on 27 October 1701 the aforementioned Ursula Gatt née Zammit known as *La Giariona*¹⁸⁷ was in Notary Gaspare Domenico Chircop's (1699-1740) office drawing up her nineteen-page will. Ursula owned two houses in Valletta: one near the Church of Our Lady of Pilar (*Chiesa detta delli Spagnoli*)¹⁸⁸ and another near the Augustinian Convent and Church (see Figure 1.2). She lived in the latter house.¹⁸⁹ The will included an inventory of Ursula's bedroom and its contents.¹⁹⁰ This bedroom was located on the ground floor level. This description is worth reproducing as it offers an opportunity for one to visualise the interior of a bedroom inside the house of a wealthy prostitute who lived and worked in Valletta in the late seventeenth century:

An iron bed with two woollen mattresses, a fly net, a blanket, and a bed valance in Maltese damask, a pair of gold bed lamps with lattice stands in the shape of big animals, six cow skin chairs, two walnut tables with overlying writing tablets, two mirrors and a white wooden wardrobe, six framed pictures and an effigy of Our Lady

¹⁸⁴N.A.V. R260 Sep 1671-1673, Vol.35. f. 149. (4 January 1673).

¹⁸⁵ Juliann Vitullo, Diane Wolfthal. 'Trading Values: Negotiating Masculinity in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Juliann M. Vitullo, Diane Wolfthal (eds.), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2010), 157.

¹⁸⁶ Vitullo, Wolfthal, (2010), 157.

¹⁸⁷ NLM Lib. Ms 1067, f.69. (1702). See her tailor Salvatore Mifsud's testimony placed in the Bishop's Court on 6 March 1702.

¹⁸⁸ This Church was located near the Auberge d'Aragon on the lower end of Valletta.

¹⁸⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 67v. (1702).

¹⁹⁰ For a discussion on how early modern bedrooms in Malta provided important multi functional spaces unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2014, 131-137. On bedrooms being the symbolic centre of the early modern household see Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption & Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 132-139.

of Sorrows in a gold-gilded frame, a new bluish-green *faldetta* (hooded mantle)¹⁹¹ in silk brocade with yellow touches, a bluish-green brocade over-blouse with gold lace trimmings, six lady shirts: three with lace and three in Dutch chintzes, two pairs of sheets, two plain skirts and one embroidered skirt.¹⁹²

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Ursula's house was well known to all who lived in the area. It was a prominent landmark. It was arguably even more prominent than the Augustinian Church and monastery.¹⁹³ This emerges in a series of court depositions placed in 1701 by ten witnesses who were summoned by the *Castallaniæ* for interrogation. The witnesses were being asked on the attributes of the afore-mentioned Mascolier and Aloysetta Borg.¹⁹⁴ Four witnesses out of ten said that for a period of time Mascolier lived in a house located near Ursulica Zammit's¹⁹⁵ house.¹⁹⁶ Notwithstanding the fact that her house was located next door to the Augustinian Church and monastery, only one witness said that Mascolier lived in a house next to the Augustinian church.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ See Storey, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', (2008), 67. Tessa Storey proposed that the single most expensive item in a woman's wardrobe was the 'zimarra' a long-sleeved cloak. The average price of a zimarra was 15 scudi. In 1783, a faldetta in Malta cost 30 *scudi*. See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f.98. (28 July 1783). It is also likely that this was the single most expensive item in Gatt's wardrobe.

¹⁹² N.A.V. R182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop, f.188. (27 October 1701). See Appendix 6.

¹⁹³ The Augustinian church, sacristy, oratory and priory were rebuilt in 1765. In the seventeenth century the church was smaller and faced in the opposite direction. See 'St Augustine Valletta', in *The Times of Malta*, 17 November 2011.

¹⁹⁴ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 15-22. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

¹⁹⁵ One hereby notes that all witnesses referred to Ursula by her maiden surname Ursula Zammit and not her married surname Gatt.

¹⁹⁶ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 15-22. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

¹⁹⁷ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 15-22. (19 October 1701), f.19v. Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.



The Augustinian Church

Figure 3.6 Street where Ursula Gatt lived near the Augustinian Church.

In her will Ursula nominated her brother Ferdinand Zammit as her heir (*uti heres*).¹⁹⁸ The will included a provision stating that 340 *scudi* were to be transferred to the *Monasterio Convertitarum*. Additionally on the thirtieth day after her death, 10 *scudi* were to be given to the Magdalene nuns for High Mass (*Messa Cantata*) to be celebrated in the Magdalene church for the repose of her soul and the forgiveness of her sins.¹⁹⁹ On 26 February 1702, she passed away. Her death entry in the Porto Salvo *Libro dei Morti* (the death register) revealed and confirmed that she confessed, received Holy Communion and the last rites before she passed. She was buried in the crypt of the Church of Porto Salvo.

¹⁹⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.75v. (1703).

¹⁹⁹ N.A.V. R.182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop 1701-1702, Vol. IV, f.190v.

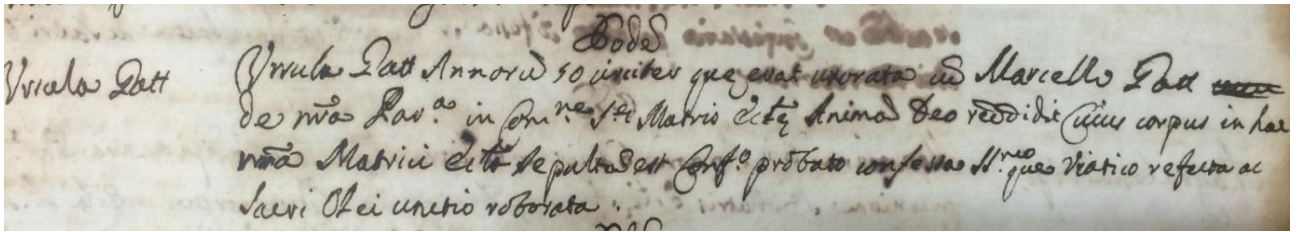


Figure 3.7: Extract registering the death of Ursula Gatt in the Porto Salvo *Libro dei Morti* 1694-1728.

The extract reads: ‘Today (February 27, 1702) Ursula Gatt from our parish, who is around fifty years old and was married to Marcello Gatt, conceded her soul in communion with the Holy Mother Church and was buried in our Matrice [church]. Her confession was approved, she was restored and strengthened by the Holy Viaticum and she received Holy Communion.’²⁰⁰

Acknowledgement: Parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta.

On 2 March 1702, a few days after Ursula’s death, the Magdalene nuns filed a lawsuit against Ferdinand Zammit in the *Magna Curia Episcopalis* (the Bishop’s court). They claimed that the 340 *scudi* Ursula had awarded them did not reflect her full death dues in accordance to the *leggi delle Corteggiane*.²⁰¹ Various witnesses were called to testify some said she was rich and that she gave all her money to monasteries and charities. Augustinian Father Fortunato Gauci said that besides monetary and material donations, Gatt gave them money for the installation of stained glass windows in their chapel, convent and sacristy. She had also donated two tunics (*tonicelle*),²⁰² a woollen chasuble (*pianeta*) with flower designs and gold braiding, and a brocade table cloth with gold thread worth twenty *scudi*.²⁰³ Father Cosimo Mifsud said that Ursula Gatt also gave the Augustinians money for an ‘*apparato d’imbrocato*’,²⁰⁴ and an altar frontal (*avant’altare*) for the Venerable Church of the Order of Friars Minor Observant (*Padri Zoccolanti*).²⁰⁵ Father Mifsud added that Gatt also paid for the display of the Holy Sacrament at the altar of Saint Nicolas in the Augustinian Church on every Friday, throughout the year.²⁰⁶ In her final will, she awarded the Augustinians a further

²⁰⁰ A.P.S. Libro dei Morti 1694-1728, f. 96. Since twenty-four hours had to pass before death could be registered, Ursula Gatt died on 26 February 1702.

²⁰¹ N.L.M. 1067, ff.90-92v. (16 October 1703). On the *Leggi delle Corteggiane* see C.Muscat, (2013), 132-138. The law stated that if a diseased prostitute does not leave the full one fifth of her inheritance to the Magdalene monastery, the Magdalene nuns had the right to claim the entire inheritance.

²⁰² See fn. Daniel Rock, *Hierurgia or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* Vol.II, (London, Joseph Booker, 1833), 652. In medieval times the tonicella (tunic) was a peculiar garment used by sub-deacons. The term tonicella is a denomination used by liturgical writers, the tunic was also referred to as a subtile.

²⁰³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff.82, 82v. (1702). Testimony placed by Father Fortunato Gauci.

²⁰⁴ The significance of this is elusive. It may be referring to a kind of mounted piece of considerable dimensions.

²⁰⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff.83, 83v. Testimony placed by Augustinian Father Cosimo Mifsud. The Friars Minor Observant, were known as the Zoccolanti (clog-wearers) on account of their footwear.

²⁰⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.82. Testimony placed by Father Fortunato Gauci.

150 *scudi* to be used for the celebration of masses.²⁰⁷ Carmelite Father Angelo Saliba said that they received various monetary gifts from her. He said that she gave them six gold coins (*zecchini d'oro*) for a painting for their Convent,²⁰⁸ some table cloths and an extra four gold coins.²⁰⁹ Jesuit Father Emanuele Sanz confirmed that Ursula Gatt was a very religious and pious woman. He said that Father Girolamo Pisano who was the Jesuit's college Bible reader and a renowned theologian in Palermo agreed with him that she could in good conscience, not live with her husband.²¹⁰

Three other clerics and four lay people declared that Ursula was a wealthy *meretrice* who left a substantial inheritance exceeding 20,000 *scudi*. Father Marcello Bonnici said that her inheritance included two houses in Valletta, 5000 *scudi* (6,500 actually) invested in the *Massa Frumentaria*,²¹¹ cash money, and a large quantity of jewellery, gold, silver and furniture. All seven concurred in saying that Ursula's fortune was earned through the shameless use of her body (*acquistati col impudico esercizio di suo corpo*).²¹² Litigation between the Magdalene nuns and Ferdinand Zammit went on for four years. The case was concluded on 24 May 1706 with the Bishop's court awarding part of her inheritance to the nuns and part to her heirs.²¹³

Donna publica Maria Fioccarì who passed away on 21 October 1717 was also buried in the Porto Salvo burial vault.²¹⁴ Fioccarì's will favoured the Confraternità della Carità of San Paolo Apostolo, Valletta. Her house inventory, which is twenty-five pages long enlisted around 500 items, this was appended to her forty-five page long will. This demonstrates that she was an avid collector and that she wanted to control her collections after her death. In his study on death around the world, anthropologist Nigel Barley explains that the Christian

²⁰⁷N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff.82-84. (1703). Testimony placed by Father Angelo Saliba.

²⁰⁸ The subject matter of the painting does not feature in the text.

²⁰⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067. ff. 83. (1703).

²¹⁰N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f. 86. (16 May 1703).

²¹¹N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.68. (1702). Testimony Father Marcellus Bonnici. Her will actually states that she had 6500 *scudi* invested in the *Massa Frumentaria*. N.A.V. R.182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop 1701-1702, Vol. IV, f.184v. For information on the *Massa Frumentaria* See cf. J. Galea, 'The Old Flour Mills of Malta and Gozo', in *Maltese Folklore Review*, Vol. i, 2, (1963), 94.

²¹² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, ff. 66-69v. See for instance Don Marcello Bonnici's deposition N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, ff.68, 68v. (1702): Dixit sò che otto in novi giorni in circa sono, che la suddetta fù Ursola Gatt è passata all'altra vita, e intesi da diverse persone pubblicamente corsi che lascio una heredità molto sostansiosa ascendente in molte milliaia di *scudi* consistente in due corpi di case, *scudi* cinque mila applicati sopra la massa frumentaria, denari contanti e una gran quantità di gioè, ori, argenti e mobile di casa, e tutta questa somma e sostanza l'ha acquistata col impudico esercizio di suo corpo come è notorio è da per tutto pubblicamente si dice è si discorre da tutti suoi cognoscenti questo è quanto posso disporre per la verità.

²¹³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f.92v. (24 May 1706). 'poiche havendosi da detto Corte Vescovile forzato all'esponenti di proseguire detto loro giudizio sin dalla Corte Vescovile si fù finalmente da essa proferita sentenza parte à favor dell'esponente, è parte à favour di detto Monasterio per la quale fù detto sotto li 24 Maggio 1706'.

²¹⁴ A.P.S. Libro dei Morti 1694-1728, f.224v.

Church set up the written will by which the rights of inheriting kin could be ‘neatly side-stepped to enrich holy orders’.²¹⁵ Fioccarei used her will to ascertain that she would have the last word.

Two entries recorded in a journal in April 1771 revealed differences between burials organised at Porto Salvo for prostitutes who did not confess before death, and those who did. At dawn of 2 April 1771, the body of a married woman was found in the Tomba of the Mandraggio. Her throat had been slit and she had been robbed. People suspected that the murder was honour related as the woman was estranged from her husband. She was carried by grave-diggers without a crucifix and buried in the convent garden of Porto Salvo. On 5 April 1771, a confessor informed the Bishop that before she was murdered, he heard her confession that lasted four days and absolved her sins. The Bishop thus ordered the body to be exhumed and taken to the Church. She was taken out of the convent by grave-diggers and placed in a sack. The grave-diggers followed the vicar carrying the crucifix once around the parish and took her to the church where as a fully paid subscriber of the Sisters of the Most Holy Viaticum she was buried in their grave.²¹⁶ It is likely that both Ursula Gatt and Maria Fioccarei had this type of burial.

In their study on kinship networks Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane et al. show that women were, and continue to be extraordinarily creative in manipulating social structures in the interest of personal, intellectual, economic and spiritual pursuits. These efforts require space time labour and will. One way of doing this was through writing personalised wills. Through their will women could leave property and gifts to a wide range of friends and kin. According to Deane et al. females were more inclined to distribute goods among friends, kin and charities than males.²¹⁷ The Valenti, Gatt and Fioccarei stories indicated that the Magdalene nuns may have faced difficulties in collecting their dues from the inheritances of deceased wealthy prostitutes. Both Valenti and Gatt clearly tried to get away with paying less. They wanted to enjoy the privilege of bequeathing the money they earned through prostitution to beneficiaries of their own choice. Fioccarei, on the other hand, established a legate funding monastic dowries for poor young, beautiful prostitutes who wanted to join the Magdelenes. She gave 1,000 *scudi* to the nuns to be used for the infirm and to buy linens and statues of

²¹⁵ Nigel Barley, *Grave Matters*, (New York, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997), 31-33.

²¹⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, ff. 110, 111. (2, 7 April 1771)

²¹⁷ Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, Julie A. Eckerle, Michelle M. Dowd and Megan Matchinske, ‘Women’s Kinship Networks: A Meditation on Creative Genealogies and Historical Labor’ in, *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World*, Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed.), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 230, 231.

Jesus and Mary.²¹⁸ She did not simply transfer one fifth of her earthly possessions to the nuns and let them do with it what they liked. She decided that after her death the money she would give to the Magdalene nuns would benefit sick nuns and young beautiful maidens.

Other prostitutes appear to have had the same resoluteness to settle with the Magdalene nuns by giving them something but not the full twenty percent of their wealth. In doing so, some managed to secure the support of high ranking clerics. For instance in 1689, Domenica Zorba known as *Cuzza* daughter of Bonifatio Zorba from Valletta supplicated the Magdalene nuns to accept 100 *scudi* in final settlement of her dues. She said that she only owned some benefices, a house ceded to her by her brothers to enjoy during her lifetime, some pieces of furniture and a few house ornaments.²¹⁹ In order to give her supplicatio clout Domenica spoke to the Bishop's vicar Antonio Masyo and asked him to write a letter supporting her plea. The vicar informed the procurator of the monastery Dionysius Dalli to accept Domenica's offer and to inform the Magdalene nuns not to molest her or her heirs.²²⁰

Teresa Vella was likewise keen to secure the same deal with the nuns by giving them 75 *scudi* paid in two instalments in settlement of her dues.²²¹ She too managed to get support from the Bishop's office. A decree was issued by Bishop Davide Cocco Palmieri (1684-1711) and registered in Notary Gio Battista Dorbes's (1677-1725) acts on 6 May 1697.²²² Conversely on 26 April 1777, Valentia Borg who was a widow and lived in Floriana, left all her belongings that amounted to around 60 *scudi* to her poor mother and she gave the Magdalene nuns 20 *scudi* (which works out to be more than one fifth).²²³ The Magdalene ledgers showed that courtesan dues averaged between two to three hundred *scudi*.²²⁴ A prostitute's wealth could also be settled in kind. The Magdalene nuns acquired property, goods or a combination of money, property and goods from the inheritances of deceased prostitutes. Property could be anything from a house, tavern, room or a field. Goods included blankets, carpets, necklaces, rings, earrings, pendants or buttons.²²⁵ The wealth prostitutes amassed during their lifetime varied. There are indications that prostitutes who amassed substantial wealth were more inclined to circumvent their dues than poorer ones. The

²¹⁸ N.A.V. Notary Gaspare Domenico Chircop R.182, Vol. 20, ff.110v-133v. (7 October 1717).

²¹⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 f. 29. (1689).

²²⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 ff. 29v-30. (17 August 1689).

²²¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 ff. 31v-32.

²²² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 f. 62v. (1697).

²²³ A.O.M. Treas. 151 B Series A loose leaf n.p. (26 April 1777).

²²⁴ See N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 ff. 40-66. (c.1670-c.1698).

²²⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067 ff. 40-66. (c.1670-c.1698).

former appear to have used religious orders, the Bishop or high ranking religious officials to gain leverage.

In their study on theological treatises, texts written by merchants and paintings and prints produced both north and south of the Alps from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, Vitullo and Wolfthal suggest that notwithstanding mendicant theologian evil notions on mercantile money, it could have ‘fruitful functions’.²²⁶ When money earned from merchant practises (including prostitution) was used in investments or loans it was deemed sterile and usurious. When on the other hand, it was wisely used to benefit the family, in aid of the needy and to help the Christian community it was fruitful.²²⁷ Valenti, Gatt and Fioccarelli’s monetary investments support this theory. As entrepreneurs some prostitutes may have used some of their money to endow churches, monasteries and charities to achieve status and recognition, divert attention to their occupation and pave their way to heaven.

Conclusion

Notions of honour and Catholic ethics are believed to have dictated early modern ways of living. Prostitution posed a threat to both. It was a threat for society because it placed sexuality that was understood to define the private sphere in the market place (the public sphere), and it was a threat to the Catholic faith because it was a vice that withheld God’s providence. This chapter sought to find out the insiders’ viewpoint. An appraisal of the evidence that emerged through the course of this research indicated that perceptions on prostitution varied from one person to another and across social groups. Some may have shunned it because they may have perceived it to be an evil practice. Others may have tolerated it because they saw it as an aberration that was possibly caused by some kind of misfortune. In most instances, however, it appears to have been a normal feature of social life. Prostitutes were not generally seen as *personæ non gratae*. Low class prostitutes were perceived to be persons who like other subordinate service providers had to make a living somehow. This was the way some prostitutes also viewed themselves and their practice. Notwithstanding the fact that prostitutes are traditionally believed to have represented the antithesis of honourable women, the authorities considered them to possess adequate cultural knowledge on how honourable females should behave equal to other persons of their social standing.

²²⁶ Vitullo, Wolfthal, (2010), 155.

²²⁷ Vitullo, Wolfthal, (2010), 167-196.

The *persona non grata* perception of prostitutes may have largely pertained to clerical post-Tridentine thought that in Valletta persisted well into the eighteenth century. Some clergymen were adverse to the single status of women and demonstrated intolerant attitudes towards prostitutes. They refused to hear confessions, denied them the Pascal precept and gave them an unceremonious burial. Notwithstanding clerical resistance, some prostitutes knocked on different church doors and managed to negotiate their way in. The case studies that were analysed in this chapter show that it was important for prostitutes to be in line with the Holy Mother Church. Prostitutes like Battistina Sammut may have led a double life maintaining religious practices during the day time whilst occasionally covertly pursuing prostitution in the night time. Catherina Valenti, Maria Fioccarì and Ursula Gatt on the other hand offered significant gifts to churches in Valletta and were not simply accepted but respected, eulogised and recorded for posterity. These prostitutes understood the cultural social and religious structures. They found openings in the systems and used them to their advantage. Others like Catherina Mifsud tried their best to partake in the Holy Sacraments but were refused. This however did not stop them from persevering with life's battles through prostitution. These stories demonstrated strong determination. Nonetheless their economic pursuits would not have been possible without positive social imaging. Building agreeable social, cultural personas was likely to have been important. Building religious personas may have been important but not indispensable.

Chapter 4

Regulating Prostitution

‘In different nations, all the aforementioned professions, crafts and occupations were largely regulated by Religions and governments. However, in this Religious Principality, one is particularly restricted to nurture, introduce and establish virtuous occupations, do one’s utmost to abolish dishonest ones, restrict those that promote effeminacy, moderate those that are not totally necessary and encourage them only when convenient in accommodating foreigners...’¹

Introduction

In the early eighteenth century when Grand Master Ramon Perellos Rocafull (1697-1720) was at the helm of the Order, an anonymous professional formulated an assessment of the Order of St John’s public policies. The aim of this exercise was to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives and the effectiveness of extant public policies. It comprised a survey on the contemporary state of affairs of the economical activities of the island. He organised the island’s economical activities into three categories: professions, occupations and crafts. Prostitution was not designated as a profession or an occupation it was listed as a craft (*arte*). It was placed under the heading ‘Superfluous and Harmful crafts’ (*le superflue e male arti*).² The most despicable of all superfluous and harmful crafts was begging (not prostitution). He cautioned that girls raised by beggars tended to be ‘impudent’ and ‘dishonest’ and were highly inclined to become prostitutes. These girls were the weeds (*erbe velenose*) of society who influenced other girls with their bad example.³ Badly educated youngsters turned into perverts when they reached adulthood and subsequently had a dreadful

¹ A.O.M. 6405 D, f.9. (c.1704). Tutte dette professioni, arti e mestieri da diverse nazioni guista la sistema delle Religioni e delli governi furono più, ò meno riguardate. Però in questo Principato Religioso, et angusto sopra tutto attendere si dovrebbe ad introdurre, e stabilire le occupationi virtuose, abolire al possibile le disoneste, restringere quelle che causano effeminatezze, moderare quelle che non sono totalmente necessarie e favorirle soltanto quando conferiscono ad attirar comodo da forestieri...

² A.O.M. 6405 D, f.8. (c.1704). Laws in eighteenth-century London likewise enlisted prostitutes along with rogues, vagabonds and beggars. See Henderson, (1999), 76.

³ A.O.M. 6405, f.13v. (c1704) Diverse Scritture. ‘Sono erbe velenose che espongono nel campo della Republica’.

old age.⁴ One thus assumes that prostitution was one of the unvirtuous, dishonest occupations that the author of the above-mentioned excerpt advised the Order of St John to abolish.

The Reformation ushered in a period of stringent regulatory laws on prostitution in both Protestant and Catholic countries.⁵ Similar to early modern Seville, Amsterdam and Paris, prostitution in early modern Malta was a recognized and regulated practice. In Protestant cities like Amsterdam, Augsburg and Memmingen oppressive disciplinary laws were implemented.⁶ In London, Tony Henderson shows that laws on prostitutes were not as harsh.⁷ Harsh laws came into force in Catholic cities like Seville, Madrid and Paris.⁸ In early modern Malta procuring, living off immoral earnings, soliciting and incitement to prostitution were criminalised.⁹ Prostitution was not criminalised.¹⁰ A comparative study revealed that laws pertaining to prostitution in Hospitaller Malta largely replicated contemporary laws enacted in Rome, Naples, Palermo and other Italian cities. Some historians suggest that laws on prostitution in early modern Malta and in Italian cities were moderate because the practice was considered to be a necessary evil that blunted the rampant nature of male libido.¹¹ Others argue that it was because legislators perceived it to be an activity that eased the economic problems that some women faced.¹² Such views on laws regulating prostitution leave a number of questions unanswered. Laws were organic and reactive they evolved, changed and responded to an environment and to circumstances. They were moulded, modified, revised, extended and also at times mitigated to keep in line with norms and threats. In Malta, early modern laws pertaining to prostitution were at times overly harsh in other instances they were moderate. This chapter seeks to explore the communicative function of early modern laws on prostitution by seeking to understand what laws reveal about the legislators, the social

⁴ A.O.M. 6405, f.13v. (c1704) *Diverse Scritture*. ‘...le figlie che con tal pessima occupatione crescono infingarde si rendono sfrontate, e dioneste, e Dio lo sà in quali disordini possono cader, sono erbe velenose che si rispondono nel campo della Republica per attoscare le altre col mal esempio, se l’educatione è cattiva l’età adulta diventa perversa e la vecchiezza pessima’.

⁵ Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23.

⁶ For Amsterdam see Van De Pol, (2011), 91. For Augsburg see Roper, (1989), 63. For Memmingen see Rublack, (1999), 8, 9.

⁷ Henderson, (1999), 90, 91.

⁸ For early modern Seville see Perry, (1980), 227-230. For Madrid see Boyle, (2014), 24. For Paris see Benabou, (1987), 135.

⁹ Bonello, (2002), 20.

¹⁰ Bonello, (2002), 20.

¹¹ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 130, 131. For Rome see Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 244. For Palermo see Cutrera, (1971), 185. For Naples see Di Giacomo, (1994), 254, 256.

¹² Ruggiero, (1989), 153. See also Ruggiero (1989), ‘The Sexual Environment of Renaissance Venice: A Introduction, 3-15, Ruggiero (1989), ‘Perspectives on Normal Sexuality: An Essay’, 146-168. M. F. Rosenthal, (1993), 116.

environment, who and what was perceived to be mischievous and in what ways it was understood to be socially harmful.¹³

The chapter starts by describing the operation of the complex heterogeneous system of government that controlled the harbour district in early modern Malta. It proceeds with an evaluation of sumptuary and criminal laws that controlled the behaviour of prostitutes and shaped their operations. Laws that specifically targeted prostitutes were relatively few, they largely sought to control sexual exchanges with non-Catholics, control excesses and restrict establishment and movement they nonetheless inevitably influenced the way prostitutes worked and handled their business. The fact that prostitutes could legally practice with Catholic bachelors as long as they did not reside in certain areas and adhered to dress codes imposed upon them, allowed significant leeway for entrepreneurship.

Legislators and Prosecutors

Prior to the arrival of the Knights Hospitaller in 1530, when the population numbered approximately 20,000 inhabitants, the judicial system that governed over the Maltese Islands was multipartite.¹⁴ There was the tribunal of the Church and the tribunal of the state, both having civil and criminal divisions. The tribunal of the Church fell under the responsibility of the Metropolitan See of Palermo. Bishops responsible for Malta were often absentees who appointed Vicars General to represent them.¹⁵ These distant spiritual leaders doubled up as Pro-Inquisitors. The state had a tribunal in Notabile (Mdina), known as the *Curia Capitanale* and another at the *Castello* of Gozo known as the *Curia Governatoriale*. The former tribunal fell under the responsibility of the *Università* (the municipal body) of Notabile and the latter was administered by the *Università* of Gozo. Both tribunals administered civil and criminal justice independently.¹⁶ A small merchant community existed in the harbour town of Birgu. The inhabitants of Birgu had their own administration but no tribunal.¹⁷ The local municipalities, with their independent castellany and captaincy had royal councillors, judges,

¹³ On the communicative function of laws see Anthony Duff, Lindsay Farmer, S.E. Marshall, Massimo Renzo, Victor Tadros 'Introduction' in *Criminalization: The Political Morality of the Criminal Law*, Anthony Duff et al. (eds.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 27, 28.

¹⁴ Bonnici, *L'Inkizizzjoni* Vol. I, (1990), 31, 32. See also Koster, (1983), 302. Godfrey Wettinger, 'Concubinage among the clergy of Malta and Gozo ca. 1420-1550', in *Journal of the Faculty of Arts* vi, 4, (1974), 165-188. Godfrey Wettinger, 'A Cleric is Disciplined: Gozo, 1486-7', in *Melita Historica*, xiv, 2, (2005), 161-167.

¹⁵ Adrianus Koster, 'The Knights' State (1530-1798): A Regular Regime', in *Melita Historica* VIII (1983), 299. Bonnici, (1990), 32. Vincent Borg, *Melita Sacra II: The Maltese Diocese and the Sicilian Environment from the Norman Period till 1500 AD* Vol. II, (Malta, Vincent Borg, 2008).

¹⁶ Simon Mercieca, 'How was Judicial Power Balanced in Malta in Early Modern Times? A cursory look at the Maltese Legal System through a Historical Perspective', in *Journal of Civil Law Studies* iv, (2011), 450.

¹⁷ Charles Dalli, *Malta the Medieval Millennium*, (Malta, Midsea Books Ltd., 2006), 171. See also Williams, (1993), 290.

jurats, *baiuli*¹⁸ and other local appointees who were responsible for the economic, judicial and military administration of the islands.¹⁹ Since the islands were part of the Sicilian domain, all three administrative bodies (Notabile, Gozo and Birgu) were answerable to the reigning Sicilian monarch.²⁰ As a ‘satellite in Sicily’s orbit’, laws that regulated civilian behaviour during this period largely reflected Sicilian legislation.²¹

The multipartite system, to a certain extent, facilitated the Hospitaller’s appropriation of temporal control.²² The infrastructural changes that the Order undertook required a great deal of legislation that required a rapid takeover. The new courts and jurisdictions of the Knights quickly deprived the *Università* of Notabile of the right to exercise judicial powers over cases in the harbour area and the rest of the eastern half of Malta.²³ The presence of the Knights on the island also instigated absentee bishops to take a more active role in the pastoral leadership of the people of Malta.²⁴ Besides doctrinal guidance, the first Bishops who were present on Malta also doubled up as pro-inquisitors. They were in duty bound to protect their subjects from heresy.²⁵ The first and last established Episcopal pro-inquisitor of the Medieval Inquisition, was Domenico Cubelles (1540-1566). In 1561, the Roman Inquisition replaced the Medieval Inquisition. Cubelles was reappointed at its helm. Besides being the chief pastor of the Maltese diocese, controlling heresy and adjudicating any person who posed a threat to the Roman Catholic faith, Cubelles was the first of sixty-two inquisitors appointed as an apostolic delegate of the Holy Office. He was therefore also authorised to act as a mediator in religious disputes.²⁶

The onset of the Ottoman siege of Malta in 1565 caused the temporary suspension of Cubelles’s office. It was re-established in 1572, when Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) awarded the Conventual Chaplains of the Order the right to nominate a Bishop from among

¹⁸ Dalli, *Malta* (2006), 171. Baiuli were local agricultural overseers who exercised the King’s authority in a particular geographical area.

¹⁹ Dalli, (2006), 171. See also Williams, (1993), 290.

²⁰ Dalli, (2006), 215-226.

²¹ Dalli, (2006), 241.

²² Mercieca, (2011), 450.

²³ Pauline Muscat, ‘Aspects of Municipal Government in Malta 1720-1780’, unpublished B.A. Honours dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1975, 8, 9. The Order of St John further reduced the power of the *Università* by establishing another *Università* in Birgu invested with the responsibility of administering the economy of the island. The knights claimed that this was necessary because Notabile was too far from the harbour. This was later transferred to Valletta.

²⁴ Koster, (1983), 302.

²⁵ Bonnici, *L’Inkizizzjoni* Vol. I, (1990), 31.

²⁶ Bonnici, *L’Inkizizzjoni* Vol. I, (1990), 39, 57. Initially the inquisitors’ role merged with that of apostolic delegates and was combined in one brief. In 1587 the dual role of the inquisitors was specified in two papal briefs. In 1595 inquisitors were given a third brief which explained their adjudicating power over criminal matters.

their fold.²⁷ Martin Rojas de Portalrubio (1512-1577), a former vice-chancellor of the Order became the new Bishop and Inquisitor of Malta.²⁸ On 3 July 1574, conflict between the reigning Grand Master la Cassière (1572-1581), and Bishop Rojas, led to the separation of the office of the Episcopacy from that of the Inquisition.²⁹ Thereafter the Maltese islands started to be controlled by three religious judicial authorities: the Grand Master, the Bishop and the Inquisitor. All three religious leaders had their own independent court of justice.

Some historians suggest that this tripartite form of religious rule maintained a tyrannical grip on society whilst others argue that the system was beneficial to Maltese citizens who exercised their rights by playing one court against another.³⁰ In the local hierarchical structure, the Grand Master, who from 1571-1798, was based in Valletta, was officially the supreme authority. The Bishop ranked second and operated from Mdina.³¹ The Inquisitor ranked third and he was based in Birgu.³² This official classification was rarely sanctioned. Issues on governance, especially those concerning the adjudication of religious matters were the cause of constant rivalry between the three religious leaders.³³ Prostitutes were often used as pawns in the power struggle between the three. The following excerpt, taken from an early eighteenth-century analysis of the way justice was being administered in Malta, sums up the prevailing juridical scenario. This script indicates that the tripartite system was not working well.

‘There are many tribunals in this domain that cause superfluity and confusion, some of them poorly instructed as they were erected with mixed orientation – this is the reason why several court cases are being transferred and determined by tribunals outside the domain. This situation is detrimental to the Religion, the Judiciary, and the temperament of vassals. It is equally detrimental to the Venerable Magistracy of

²⁷ Alexander Bonnici, ‘Maltese Society under the Hospitallers’, in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993), 315.

²⁸ Bonnici, *L’Inkizizzjoni* Vol. I, (1990), 48-51.

²⁹ John Azzopardi, ‘The Inquisitors as Guardians of the Faith’, in *The Roman Inquisition in Malta*, (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2014), 5.

³⁰ Simon Mercieca, ‘How was Judicial Power Balanced in Malta in Early Modern Times? A cursory look at the Maltese Legal System through a Historical Perspective’, in *Journal of Civil Law Studies* iv, (2011), 464, 465.

³¹ See Figure 1: ‘Map of Malta, Gozo and Comino’.

³² Mercieca, 456. See Figure 1: Map of Malta, Gozo and Comino.

³³ Adrianus Koster, ‘The Knights’ State (1530-1798): A Regular Regime’, in *Melita Historica* VIII (1983), 305. See also Bonnici, *L’Inkizizzjoni* Vol. I, (1990), 257. Stefan Goodwin, *Malta, Mediterranean Bridge*, (Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 64.

Armaments when it deals with non-secular cases. It offers leeway to Greeks and others'.³⁴

Bishops presided over matters concerning the spiritual welfare of the people, the administration of sacraments, benefices and canonries. They also enjoyed the prerogative over cases of marriage such as separation, annulment of betrothals and permission to foreigners to take Maltese spouses.³⁵ In all parishes in Malta, every year at the beginning of lent, Bishops published an edict prohibiting honourable people from communicating with *publiche meretrici*. The edict specified that if a person was caught conversing with a *publica meretrice* or with someone suspected of being a *publica meretrice* they would be punished by having to pay six *onze*. This was specifically enforced during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday.³⁶ The authority of early modern Bishops over prostitutes was, however, limited. They were mainly responsible for matters concerning the clergy (excluding the clergy of the Order).³⁷ Members of Religious Orders were, under normal circumstances, adjudicated by their own superiors.³⁸ The Bishop's arm of the law included a Vicar-General (*Vicario Capitolare*),³⁹ and *alari* who were officers who executed orders to arrest and deliver unto Bishopric justice any offender or criminal to face charges in the tribunal of the Church.⁴⁰ He also had law enforcers known as *sbirri*,⁴¹ and a jailer (*carceriere*).⁴² Cases concerning clerical involvement in illicit sexual relationships (including relationships with prostitutes) officially fell under the responsibility of the Bishop's Court. Diocesan dossiers concerning such cases were generally kept out of the public eye and later destroyed.⁴³ In the early modern period, the diocese of Malta was plagued with all sorts of difficulties.⁴⁴ Grievous issues with

³⁴ A.O.M. 6405, f. 44v. (c.1720). 'Vi sono in questo Dominio tanti tribunali che causano superfluità, e confusione, alcuni delli quali con puoca avvertenza esendosi eretti misti, amprirono le vie da portare le cause fuori del Dominio con discapito della Religione, è Principato nella Giurisditione, e muina delli Vassalli, tale fu il Venerato Magistrato delli Armamenti, che affacciando anche le cause non secolari, apri la via alli Greci, ed altri'.

³⁵ Mercieca, (2011), 451, 452.

³⁶ A.A.M. Registrum Edictorum, Vol. 8, f. 19v.

³⁷ For a discussion on the historical development of the relations between the regular and the secular clergy in Maltasee Koster, (1983), 299-314. There were two types of clergy: the secular or diocesan clergy. They were organized on a territorial base. The regular clergy consisted of the friars and priests of the various religious orders.

³⁸ Mercieca, (2011), 462-463.

³⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol.II, f.139. (26 July 1771).

⁴⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol.II, f.319. (13 June 1774).

⁴¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol.II, f.337. (23 August 1774).

⁴² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol.II, f. 173. (26 January 1772).

⁴³ Revealed through a conversation with Laurence Zahra curator of the Archives of the Archbishopric of Malta in August 2014.

⁴⁴ Bonnici, *L'Inkizizzjoni* Vol.III, (1994), 281.

Inquisitors and Grand Masters weakened the Bishop's jurisdiction.⁴⁵ Apart from continuous political bickering, in the eighteenth century, Bishops appear to have faced several insurmountable challenges. Financial problems,⁴⁶ internal problems,⁴⁷ old age and serious illnesses,⁴⁸ issues concerning excessive numbers of clerics⁴⁹ and insubordinate priests were a constant scourge for most Bishops.⁵⁰ Weak episcopates provided fertile ground for clerical abuse and promiscuity.⁵¹ This was particularly evident from 1713-1780 when Bishop Giacomo Cañaves (1713-1721),⁵² Bishop Bartolomeo Rull (1757-1769)⁵³ and Bishop Carmine Giovanni Pellerano (1770-1780)⁵⁴ were at the helm of the diocese of Malta. Various incidents indicated that these Bishops largely demonstrated inaptitude in controlling unchaste clerics.⁵⁵ The Bishop's main court was located in Mdina. This posed a problem. It was isolated from the harbour cities and it was therefore difficult to monitor clerics based there. Informants could not reach him quickly or easily and his law enforcers were substantially delayed. These drawbacks created a window of opportunity for Grand Masters to gain control over Episcopal jurisdiction in the harbour cities.

The Inquisitors' brief did not include regulating prostitution. Their primary role was to safeguard the purity of the Catholic faith and maintain obedience to the Holy See. Inquisitors enjoyed the right to adjudicate matters concerning heresy (that included blasphemy), polygamy, and solicitation during confession, apostasy, witchcraft and defamation. All persons living on the island, including Knights and the Bishop, were liable to prosecution.⁵⁶ Several women faced trial in the Inquisitor's court for multiple accusations that included heresy, witchcraft and prostitution.⁵⁷ Chapter 3 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation' (section Notions of honour and Identity) revealed that albeit being common, such accusations had no bearing on actuality. Inquisitors were fully aware that multiple defamations against

⁴⁵ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 229-233, 300, 308.

⁴⁶ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 339.

⁴⁷ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.III, 148, 385, 437.

⁴⁸ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 308, 341, 360, 362. See also Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.III, (1994), 281, 329, 340, 341.

⁴⁹ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.III, (1994), 290.

⁵⁰ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 32, 323, 324, 332.

⁵¹ For an analytical perspective on sexual abuse as perpetuated by members of the clergy, see Diane Langberg, 'Clergy Sexual Abuse', in *Abuse, Women, and the Bible*, C.C. Kroeger, & J.R.Beck (eds.), (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1996), 59-68.

⁵² Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 308.

⁵³ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.III, (1994), 282.

⁵⁴ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.III, (1994), 339-341.

⁵⁵ Bonnici, *L'Inkiżizzjoni* Vol.II, (1992), 33.

⁵⁶ Mercieca, (2011).

⁵⁷ C. Cassar, (2002), 172.

women were at times a ploy deployed by neighbours in pursuit of ‘political strategies.’⁵⁸ Nonetheless some Inquisitors used prostitution to add impetus to their criticism of the Order.

The supreme authority of the Order was the Chapter-General that addressed new situations through the revocation, confirmation or modification of existing laws. It also devised new statutes to sustain the government, the building of fortifications and the administration of hospitals and other state buildings and resolved constitutional issues concerning the knights’ moral behaviour.⁵⁹ The authority of Chapters-General was sometimes hampered by long periods between their summoning. In the absence of Chapters-General, legislation was drafted by Grand Masters. Grand Masters ran the island and the Order alongside the Council. They were princes and temporal lords of Malta and they enjoyed more liberties in running the country than in matters concerning the Order.⁶⁰ The responsibilities of the Grand Master and the Council included the island’s security, health care, the administration of daily affairs, law enforcement and the hearing of cases and supplications from both members of the Order and secular subjects.⁶¹ The Grand Master’s Palace was very much the centre of the grand master’s life: it was not just his residence but also his court of law. This is where errant knights, including those who broke their vow of chastity, faced their trial. All errant knights, even those residing elsewhere would be brought to the Grand Master’s Palace in Valletta for adjudication. In 1771, Frà Nicolo Ortusan a Castillian deacon was accused of ‘fragility with comedians in Spain’ (*fragilità con i Comedianti in Spagna*). He was transferred to Malta in chains and sentenced to six years imprisonment in all forts. He however ended up spending a year in Fort St Elmo and released.⁶² Archival evidence seems to indicate that knights adjudicated by Grand Masters for unchaste behaviour were low ranking knights or weak knights. It is also generally unclear whether the concerned woman was a prostitute or otherwise. Punishments prescribed by Grand Masters on miscreants differed. Some faced bludgeoning (*bastonate*), others were transferred to the criminal court of the Castellaniœ dressed in secular clothing. Others were incarcerated in a *guva* for two months and then incarcerated in one of the harbour forts or exiled

⁵⁸ Carmel Cassar, ‘Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Control in Seventeenth Century Malta’, in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, (1993), 317.

⁵⁹ Williams, (1993), 287, 292.

⁶⁰ Antonio Micallef, *Lectures on the Statutes of the Sacred Order of St John of Jerusalem*, Michael Galea (Trans.), (Karlsruhe, KIT Scientific Publishing, 2012), 15-19. The Sacred Council was made up of Grand Crosses present in the Convent and the Piliers of each Langue.

⁶¹ Williams, (1993), 293. Olivier Farran, ‘The Sovereign Order of Malta in International Law’, in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, iii, 2, (April, 1954), 222-224.

⁶² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. 2, f.130. (19 June 1771)

In 1631, the Chapter General formulated a detailed reformatory constitution that established a solid framework for an efficient early modern central government system.⁶³ During the subsequent 145 years, the Chapter-General did not meet. It only reassembled in 1776 when serious financial problems called for an urgent meeting.⁶⁴ Legislation during the greater part of the early modern period was thus largely the prerogative of Grand Masters.⁶⁵ In a bid to stave off Chapters-General and criticism, and maintain their absolutism, most Grand Masters did their utmost not to upset the senior members of the Order and the local nobility. According to Ann Williams, Grand Masters reached this objective by ruling benevolently. She shows that Grand Masters ran the country in a charitable way.⁶⁶ Similarly David Borg-Muscat suggests that Grand Masters ruled in a humanitarian manner. He implies that the Grand Master's rule was public spirited.⁶⁷ In his study on early modern proclamations (*bandi*) Jonathan Muscat argues that the Grand Master's manner of ruling his people was paternalistic, condescending and patronising.⁶⁸ Chantelle Buttigieg's study on eighteenth-century petitions notes that it was compassionate and benevolent.⁶⁹ Williams, Borg-Muscat and C. Buttigieg reiterate Giacomo Bosio's sixteenth-century description of the Grand Master as a paternal benevolent leader full of compassion for the miseries and sufferings of his beloved people.⁷⁰ A close analysis of regulations concerning illicit sexual practices revealed that the Grand Master's governance was more akin to a *bonus pater familias* (a good family father).

⁶³ On the 1631 Chapter General see Mark Aloisio, 'The Chapter-General of the Order of St John, with special reference to that of 1631', unpublished B.A. degree dissertation in History, Department of History, University of Malta, 1995.

⁶⁴ Williams, (1993), 294.

⁶⁵ Jonathan Muscat, 'The Administration of Hospitaller Malta – *Bandi* and *Prammatiche* 1530-1798', unpublished Masters degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011, 2.

⁶⁶ Williams, (1993), 294. In compliance to their traditional Jerusalem role the functions of Grand Masters evoked piety and charity.

⁶⁷ David Borg-Muscat, 'Absolutism and the Power of Social Control in Malta: 1775-1825', unpublished M.A. degree thesis, Department of History, University of Malta, 1999, 27. See also David Borg-Muscat, 'Reassessing The September 1775 Rebellion: A Case of Lay Participation or a 'Rising of the Priests''? in *Melita Historica: Journal of the Maltese Historical Society*, xiii (2002) 3, 243. In his reassessment of the September 1775 rebellion of priests Borg-Muscat said that from 1773-1775 growing political issues with the Bishop's and Inquisitor's exorbitant and excessive jurisdictional rights led to an increasingly tyrannical and power-hungry Magistracy.

⁶⁸ J. Muscat, (2011), 3.

⁶⁹ Chantelle Buttigieg, 'Petitions to the Magistracy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Malta', unpublished B.A. honours dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011, 82.

⁷⁰ Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, Vol.III, (Rome, 1594), 297. Più d'ogn'altro s'empia di paterna pietà e compassione il Gran Maestro, alle miserie, e alle calamità di quell suo povero, e diletto popolo.

The idea of *bonus pater familias* emerges in Roman civil and family law.⁷¹ There is no specific, exhaustive list of rules on how a good family father should act.⁷² The function requires particular virtues that a good father is expected to demonstrate in given circumstances. A good father is mild and rational, but at the same time firm and disciplinary. His efforts never relax. He is treated like a visionary, in full confidence of the good to be obtained by perseverance. The Grand Master was an agent of respectable work, of reason and humanity.⁷³ Similar to a good father who hands down positive qualities he learned from his own father to the next generation, the Grand Master endeavoured to obtain the good will of his people by perpetuating already-noticed laws. These laws were traditionally believed to be dictated by wisdom, justice, true policy and benevolence. They reflected the Order's founding charitable and fraternal spirit and strengthened the Grand Master's *bonus pater familias* outlook.⁷⁴ By adhering to traditional archaic laws, Grand Masters maintained the spirit of their predecessors and the conservative and authoritarian spirit of the Order.

In his 1624 account of his visit to Malta, Carl August Ehrensvärd offered an interesting description of the Grand Master as a little king who was old as a Pope, righteous as an officer and much loved by his subjects. He said that the Grand Master was constantly seen inside churches.⁷⁵ On 7 March 1644, the Order's council was deliberating the enactment of laws which largely replicated earlier laws issued in April 1565, on the vigil of the Great Siege.⁷⁶ On 22 March 1644, the threat of siege was imminent and the Council decided to take action. All useless persons (*disutili*) had to leave the country. The first *disutili* to be deported were *donne publiche* and slaves.⁷⁷ The Grand Master nonetheless instructed the Venerable War Commission to give *donne publiche* enough time to settle their affairs before leaving.⁷⁸

⁷¹ Peter Birks, *The Roman Law of Obligations*, Eric Descheemaeker (ed.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014), cvii, 79. The common law continually invokes 'the reasonable man'. One standard used by the Romans was that of the *bonus paterfamilias*. Literally he is a 'good head of the family'

⁷² Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, (Chicago, La Salle, Open Court, 1999), 109.

⁷³ Duke de Liancourt, *A Comparative View of Mild and Sanguinary Laws* Edition II, (London, Darton & Harvey, 1796), 24, 25.

⁷⁴ Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'A Pilgrimage of Faith, War and Charity: The Order of the Hospital from Jerusalem to Malta' in *Religion, Ritual and Mythology: Aspects of Identity Formation in Europe*, Carvalho, Joaquim (ed.), (Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2006), 84.

⁷⁵ Von Numers, (1985), 8.

⁷⁶ Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Ill[ustriss]ma Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, Vol III, (Naples, 1684), 501. '... e che specialmente dovessero mandar via i Forestieri inhabili al maneggiar l'arme; e con essi le Meretrici, gli Schiavi, e le Schiave franchi, e altri inutili'.

⁷⁷ A.O.M. 6553, f.59. (26 March 1645). '... facendo imbarchar in primo luogo (oltre le donne publiche e schiavi) quelle persone che non solo sono disutili, mà si ritrovano senza provisioni...)

⁷⁸ A.O.M. 6553, f. 58. (22 March 1644). '...et un altro bando prescrivendo il medesimo termine alla partenza di tutte le donne publiche senz'eccectione alcuna dandogli questo tempo et termine permettendo per mettere à sesto l'affari loro...'

In consideration of the fact that the majority of the persons being sent to Sicily were not conversant in Italian, the Grand Master and the Council decided to identify priests and regulars who could be sent by their superiors to accompany the *disutili* and administer the sacrament of penance and distribute one *tari* per day to each person for victuals.⁷⁹ Houses in the harbour, of an impediment to the Senglea front, had to be demolished. The commission had to check to whom these houses belonged and make sure that owners would be duly compensated.⁸⁰ Families living in Valletta, Vittoriosa and Senglea were to move to the country.⁸¹ Since they were being deprived of their possessions, the Grand Master stipulated that they were to be given bread, wheat and some money from the Common Treasury.⁸² The Grand Master's decisions were described as highly gratifying to God and praised by all.⁸³ On 22 July 1645 another order was issued for all the *disutili* to be repatriated. The enemy moved towards Candia (present-day Crete) and the island of Malta was safe. Ensuring that families being sent to the country had food to eat, homeless families would be compensated, that *donne pubbliche* would have enough time to sort out their affairs, that persons being deported would have priests to take care of their spiritual, social and material needs and that deported persons were repatriated are qualities one would expect from a good father. *Bonus pater familias* at times also necessitated effective discipline to compel dependents to act according to the Grand Master's ideas of what was right and wrong.

Legislation and the Legal System

Prostitution was a problem that troubled the Order long before its establishment on Malta. As early as 1421 the statutes of the Order forbade the knights from associating with prostitutes or maintaining concubines.⁸⁴ On 3 March 1456, the Council issued a regulation ordering the eviction of prostitutes from harbour houses beneath the walls of the Convent's residence on Rhodes. Thereafter they were confined to an isolated area within the city. In fifteenth-century Rhodes confining laws proved to be difficult to enforce. In 1478, the Chapter General issued a new law that granted civilians the right to evacuate prostitutes living next door on condition that the person purchased the house at its proper value.⁸⁵ The Order's frequent revision of laws regulating the residence of prostitutes indicated that this issue was a complicated matter.

⁷⁹ A.O.M. 6553, f. 58v- f.59. (26 March 1645).

⁸⁰ A.O.M. 6553, f. 58v- f.59. (26 March 1645).

⁸¹ A.O.M. 6553, f. 57v. (26 March 1645). Decreti del Ven. Cons. in materia di Guerra dal 1554 al 1645.

⁸² A.O.M. 6553, f. 57v. (26 March 1645).

⁸³ A.O.M. 6553, f. 58v- f.59. (26 March 1645). '... quest'opera tanto grata à Dio, e lodevole appresso tutti ...'

⁸⁴ Paul Cassar, *Medical History of Malta*, (London, Wellcome Hist. Libr., 1964), 224.

⁸⁵ Jean Poutiers, *Rhodes et ses Chevaliers 1306-1523*, (Brussels, Impr Catholique, 1989), 141.

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century the Order faced similar challenges with prostitutes living in Valletta. In 1580, Grand Master Jean de la Cassière (1572-1582) expelled prostitutes from Valletta.⁸⁶ According to Pompeo Falcone, a prelate of the Holy See, La Cassière's law stated that only high ranking personalities were allowed to keep courtesans in Valletta.⁸⁷ In 1591, Grand Master Verdalle (1581-1595), prohibited prostitutes from living in public roads or near churches.⁸⁸ Valletta, similar to Rome, was a city dominated by a culture of 'celibate but worldly churchmen',⁸⁹ the knights referred to it as the 'Convent'.⁹⁰ Tessa Storey says that in Counter-Reformation Rome the 'presence of young, unmarried, immigrant males' gave rise to a very particular set of social dynamics and sexual tensions.⁹¹ In 1567, in Rome, the social dynamics of the city were activated, and sexual tensions escalated when Pope Pius V (1566-1572) proposed the banishment of prostitutes.⁹² The Pope's proposals were strongly opposed by the *Popolo Romano*, cardinals and his vicar general.⁹³ Despite resistance in 1569 the project went ahead and by 1570 prostitutes were issued with an order to reside in the Ortaccio (the nettle bed) near the Trinità. This area was walled off and initially placed under strict control. In 1592 Pope Clement VII issued a repeat order instructing prostitutes to reside in the Ortaccio.⁹⁴ This showed that the regulation on the residence of prostitutes was being circumvented.⁹⁵

The presence of *cortigiane* and *publiche meretrici* in Valletta was reported to the Holy See. On 17 July 1626 Francesco Barberini (1597-1679) the cardinal-deacon of S. Onorifio, the nephew of Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644), sent a letter to Grand Master Antoine de Paule saying that the Pope perceived the fact that *meretrici* were freely living in major roads close to Auberges as a truly dishonourable thing and such indulgences were highly offensive to God. The Grand Master and the Council were ordered to remove such women from these areas.⁹⁶ This order was possibly issued through the instigation of the Apostolic Delegate and the Inquisitor of Malta, Onorato Visconti (1624-1627). Throughout his term in

⁸⁶ Bartolomeo dal Pozzo, *Istoria della Sacra Religione Militare*, Part I, (Verona, G.Berno, 1703), 180. See also E. Buttigieg, (2011), 85-88.

⁸⁷ Pompeo Falcone, 'Una relazione di Malta', in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, vi, (1934), 5.

⁸⁸ A.O.M. 99, f. 62. (1543-1548) Liber Conciliorum

⁸⁹ On the Knights celibate status and their worldliness see E. Buttigieg, (2011), 140-146.

⁹⁰ E. Buttigieg, 146.

⁹¹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 61.

⁹² Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 70-88.

⁹³ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 77.

⁹⁴ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 75, 76.

⁹⁵ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 89.

⁹⁶ A.O.M. 6384, f.13n.p. (17 July 1626). Corrispondenza di Stato della Religione. Pare anco a Sua Santità cosa poco lodevole che le meretrici habitino così liberamente nelle strade Reali, e vicine all'Alberghi, essendo occasione di molta offesa di Dio la molta comodità. Perciò ha ordinate il SS s'adopri, che per ogni modo Illustrissimo Gran Maestro et Consiglio faccino levare tali donne da simili lochi. See Appendix 7.

office, Visconti had issues with the knights. He sent frequent letters reporting various violations of the Order to the secretariat of the Pontifical state and even directly to Pope Urban VIII himself.⁹⁷ The decisions taken by the Council of the Order to respond to the Pope's Orders replicated Pope Pius V's 1567 *luogi*.⁹⁸

In 1630, the Council of the Order appointed Frà Franco de Cremeaulx and Frà Don Giovanni de Villaroel to follow up on a decision recently promulgated by the Chapter General to issue and publish the necessary *bandi* and penalties prohibiting *donne cortiggiane* from living in certain areas in the city of Valletta.⁹⁹ In 1631 during the reign of Grand Master Antoine de Paule (1623-1636) through a unanimous vote the law came into force. It stipulated that *donne cortiggiane* were not allowed to live in the principal streets of the city of Valletta: *Strada San Giacomo* (Merchants' Street), *Strada San Giorgio* (Republic Street) and *Strada San Giovanni* (Old Bakery Street). They were also prohibited from living in the two *Vanelle* (covered walkways) located between the main door of the Conventual Church proceeding under the Palace, and the other passing under the Chancellery.

The 1627 *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo mention a *Vanella* facing the main door of St John's Church (the Conventual Church) *dirimpetto la porta grande di S Giovanni*. Stanley Fiorini suggests that this *Vanella* was present-day Zachary Street.¹⁰⁰ The description in the courtesans' regulation however indicates that this road went in the opposite direction. It was a covered walkway that linked the Conventual Church to the Palace, access to the Palace being below street level. The *Vanella* linking to the Chancellery likewise appears to have been below street level. The regulation also stipulated that courtesans were prohibited from living on the transverse roads from the top part of the city up to the Church of Porto Salvo. Houses vacated by courtesans were to be administered by the Grand Master and the Council.¹⁰¹ The fact that it took the Order of St John five years to implement this law may indicate that this law may have been resisted. The defined zone (see Figure 4.1) may have sought to reach a difficult compromise. The Porto Salvo *Status Animarum* records from 1726-1762 demonstrated that up to the second half of the eighteenth-century *publiche meretrici* were living outside this zone (see Figure 6.7).

⁹⁷ Bonnici, (1990), 232. For Inquisitor Visconti's issues with the knights see 222-225.

⁹⁸ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 75-80. Luoghi referred to the places where prostitutes were ordered to live.

⁹⁹ A.O.M. 110, f. 104v. Liber Conciliorum 1630. Commissiones per far eseguire l'ordinatione circa il non dover habitare cortiggiane in certe strade di questa Città Valletta.

¹⁰⁰ Fiorini, (1986), 49.

¹⁰¹ A.O.M. 1655, f.101. Ordinationes Capituli Generalis 1631. See Appendix 7.

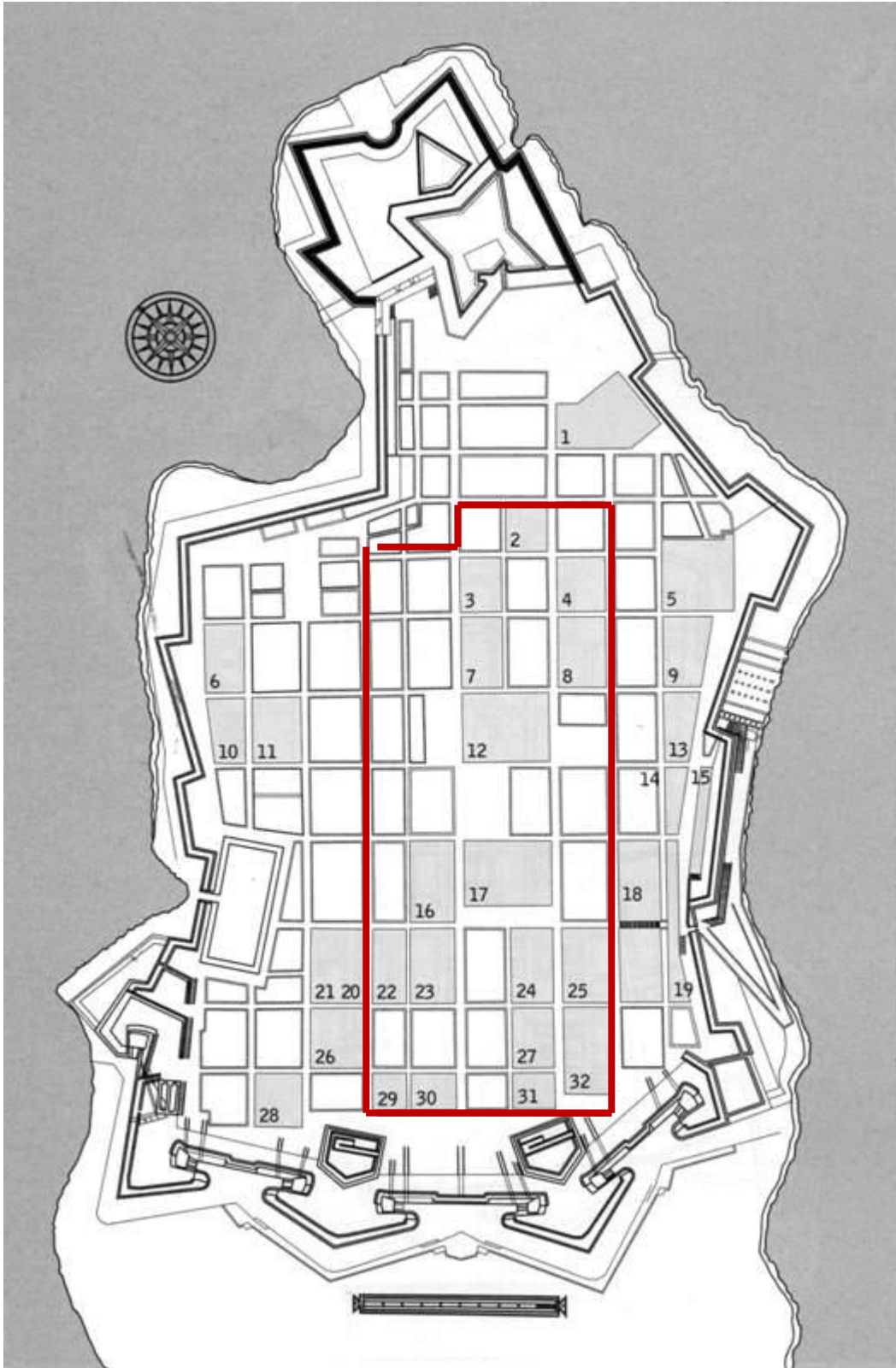


Figure 4.1: A Seventeenth-century map of Valletta showing the area where courtesans were not permitted to reside (area delineated by the red rectangle) as stipulated in the 1631 law.

Computer reproduction of a drawing of Valletta by Giovanni Battista Vertova (1592-1647) kept in the Castle of Costa di Mezzœ. Acknowledgement Denis de Lucca.¹⁰²

¹⁰² De Lucca, (2001), 58, 59.

The 1509 code of laws known as the *Pragmaticae Rhodiae* was transferred to Birgu in 1530 with little change. Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L'Isle Adam's (1521-1534) *Statuta et Ordinationes* enacted in 1533, Grand Master Juan Homedes's (1536-1553) *Pandectae et Ordinationes* in 1553, the *Bandi e Comandamenti* of 1555 issued during the reign of Grand Master Claude de la Sengle (1553-1557), and Grand Master Hugues Loubenz de Verdalle's (1582-1595) *Statuti et Ordinationi* dated 1593, were sixteenth-century codes of law that largely duplicated the *Pragmaticae Rhodiae* with minor additions.¹⁰³ The *Pragmaticae Rhodiae* included eleven laws on adultery, rape, procurers and prostitutes. Before 1509, adultery was punishable by death, thereafter the punishment was reduced to one hundred ducats. Adulteresses (regardless of whether they were prostitutes or not) were whipped and placed in a monastery.¹⁰⁴ Customers of prostitutes who were not Catholics were sentenced to death by hanging.¹⁰⁵

The *Pragmaticae Rhodiae* did not differentiate between male and female procurers. Both were punished by being whipped through the country and then placed on a pillory in a public place under a placard revealing their crime. In addition, their tongues were perforated with a hot rod. If the act was of a more despicable nature, punishment was at the discretion of the ruling judge. Recidivists were banned from all areas that fell under the jurisdiction of the Order. Parents who prostituted their children were sentenced to death. If the procurer was the victim's brother or sister, his/her tongue was severed. Husbands who procured their wives' sexual services were put on a horse or a donkey with the tail of the animal in their hands, wearing a mitre on their head and whipped throughout the country. The 1509 statutes also stipulated that men could not keep prostitutes in a brothel and earn a commission or profit from their services.¹⁰⁶ A study of various collections of laws published in Malta in early modern times showed that up to the end of the eighteenth century, Grand Masters persisted in recycling the *Pragmaticae Rhodiae* and their relevant penalties.

The tradition of flogging prostitutes and relegating them to an area outside the town walls was common in the Languedoc region and in London.¹⁰⁷ In London, male procurers had their heads and beard shaved except for a two inch fringe on the head. They were also placed

¹⁰³ Anthony Luttrell, 'Malta and Rhodes: Hospitaller and Islanders', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993), 267-268.

¹⁰⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 153, ff. 106-108. (1509). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740 f. 84v – 86. De Adulterus (24 February 1509)

¹⁰⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 153, ff. 106-108. (1509).

¹⁰⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.86v. De lenonibus (24 February 1509). See also N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 153, ff. 106-108. (1509).

¹⁰⁷ Otis, (1985), 19, 20. Martha A. Brozyna, 'Secular Law' in *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, Martha A. Brozyna (ed.), (Jefferson, NC. McFarland & Company Inc., 2005), 121, 122.

on a pillory.¹⁰⁸ Courtesans had their heads shaven, they were paraded in the streets with a hood of ray on their head, and a white wand in their hand and placed on the pillory. Procurers were taken to the pillory with a distaff dressed with flax.¹⁰⁹ In Renaissance Venice and Pescia, floggings and mutilations were common penalties for both male and female adulterers.¹¹⁰ In his study on gender and sexual culture in Renaissance Italy, Michael Roche shows significant gender discrepancies.¹¹¹ He argues that in Venice male adulterers were imprisoned or exiled and lost their wife's dowry.¹¹² From 1480 to 1550 no husbands were convicted for adultery.¹¹³ A wife's infidelity, on the other hand, was the cause of perpetual shame. This according to Roche influenced the courts' tendency to add public humiliation to harsh punishment. Adulteresses were whipped along the streets in various states of undress, their heads were at times shaven and a defamatory mitre was placed on their head.¹¹⁴ Marking offending prostitutes with a hot rod was in use in Florence in the fourteenth century.¹¹⁵ In Florence the rod was placed on the side of the face and not on the tongue.¹¹⁶ In early modern Spain prostitutes were punished by public humiliation, whippings, having their nostrils slit and exile.¹¹⁷ In her essay on gendering in early modern Madrid, Margaret Boyle suggests that the conflation between penitence and punishment was popularised by the Spanish Inquisition's ritual of public penance bestowed on condemned heretics and apostates.¹¹⁸ She argues that public spaces were designed to reflect the power and order of the court, public humiliation in these public spaces reinstated the elite's power.¹¹⁹ Boyle's argument merges

¹⁰⁸ Brozyna, (2005), 121, 122.

¹⁰⁹ Brozyna, (2005), 121, 122.

¹¹⁰ Michael Roche, 'Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy', in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, Judith C. Brown, Robert C. Davis (eds.), (London, New York, Routledge, 1998), 158, 159.

¹¹¹ Roche, (1998), 158.

¹¹² Roche, (1998), 158.

¹¹³ Roche, (1998), 158.

¹¹⁴ Roche, (1998), 158, 159.

¹¹⁵ Robert Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze* vol 7, (Florence, 1962), 616. I Galligo, 'Circa ad alcuni antichi e singolari documenti riguardanti la prostituzione tratti dall'Archivio Centrale di Stato di Firenze' in *Giornale Italiano delle malattie veneree e delle malattie della pelle* Vol. X, (1869), 125.

¹¹⁶ Galligo, (1869), 125. 'Ma se quella cotale meretrice la quale sia scopata come detto è, sia poi ritrovata ricaduta nel puttineccio in alcumo de detti vietati luoghi; debba essere marcata con uno ferro caldo nella faccia dalato diritto, si che palesemente appaia cotale merco.'

¹¹⁷ Mary Elizabeth Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels in Counter-Reformation Spain' in *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* Vol. 7, Anne J. Cruz, Mary E. Perry (eds.), (Minneapolis, Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 141.

¹¹⁸ Margaret E. Boyle, 'Gender Recogimiento in Early Modern Madrid', in *Unruly Women: Performance, Penitence and Punishment in Early Modern Spain*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2014), 20.

¹¹⁹ Boyle, (2014), 24.

into Mary E. Perry's theory on prostitutes being used by the authorities to justify governmental powers.¹²⁰

Female public humiliation and harsh physical punishments were by and large maintained in most early modern European cities.¹²¹ They were meted out to offenders in Malta up to the end of the eighteenth century.¹²² In February 1663, whilst on a short visit to Malta, Duke Ferdinand Albrecht of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel reported seeing a bare-backed female procuress on a donkey driven through the streets of Valletta with her hands chained in front and her feet chained under her. A trumpeter and a hangman accompanied her. At intervals, they stopped and at the sound of the trumpet, they flogged her. Following this parade, she was placed on a ship and perpetually exiled from the island.¹²³ In Grand Master de Rohan's 1794 *Diritto Municipale*, low class procurers were flogged and placed under a placard stating 'for procuring' (*per ruffianesimo*).¹²⁴ Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel's report and the regulation in Grand Master De Rohan's Code of laws indicated that similar to early modern Madrid, Venice and Pescia, public spaces in Valletta were at times transformed into street theatres for moralising purposes.¹²⁵

Numerous, regular *bandi* indicated that Grand Masters strove hard to expand their sphere of influence over the populace.¹²⁶ Through their study on late Renaissance Roman laws Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen show that *bandi* were open-ended to allow the required time and elasticity for frequent revisions and updates. Their regularity indicated that the 'borders of the illegal were in flux'.¹²⁷ Tessa Storey argues that *bandi* sought to improve public order whilst enforcing distinctions of social hierarchy. Attempts at enforcing *bandi* in early modern Rome were rarely rigorous.¹²⁸ The situation in contemporary Naples and Palermo was similar.¹²⁹ *Bandi* pertaining to prostitution can be divided into two: sumptuary laws and laws regulating carnal commerce. These frequently updated laws reveal which types of conduct necessitated periodic reminders from legislators and prosecutors.

¹²⁰ Perry, (1980), 212.

¹²¹ See for instance essay by Julius R. Ruff, 'Popular violence and its prosecution in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France', in *Crime, Law and Popular Culture in Europe. 1500-1900*, Richard McMahon (ed.), (Oxon, New York, Routledge, 2013), 32-51.

¹²² See Ciappara, (2001), 472, 473.

¹²³ Freller, *Malta* (2009), 543, 544.

¹²⁴ *Diritto Municipale di Malta*, (Malta, F. Cumbo, 1843), 182.

¹²⁵ Boyle, (2014), 20. Roche, (1998), 158.

¹²⁶ See J. Muscat, (2011), 1-4. On an overabundance of laws indicating a state keen to maintain its grip on society and striving to expand its' sphere of influence over the populace see T.V. Cohen, E.S. Cohen, (2000), 5.

¹²⁷ T. Cohen, E. Cohen, (2000), 5

¹²⁸ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 97.

¹²⁹ Di Giacomo, (1994), 169. Cutrera, (1971), 98.

Sumptuary Laws

Sumptuary laws were anti-luxury laws that were the most frequently enacted forms of early modern legislation.¹³⁰ Theories on the function and application of early modern sumptuary legislation abound.¹³¹ Scholars like for instance Susan Vincent, Hugh Trevor-Roper and John A. Wagner suggest that early modern sumptuary laws stemmed from a God fearing culture that maintained glamour to simulate lust and vice.¹³² Lyndal Roper and Alan Hunt show that draconian injunctions on female clothing portrayed society's anxieties.¹³³ Giovanni Bonello suggests that in early modern Malta sumptuary laws on clothing attempted to control extravagances, promote morality and public security.¹³⁴ He argues that enforcing sumptuary laws proved to be a complicated matter because women quickly devised ways how to circumvent them.¹³⁵ Emanuel Buttigieg argues that since clothes were inherent to early modern social, political, religious and economic discourse their consumption needed to be controlled.¹³⁶ Through her study on sumptuary laws in Florence, Genoa and Venice, Evelyn S. Welch notes that such laws were enacted as part of a government's campaign to maintain social distinctions.¹³⁷ She shows how sumptuary laws also controlled excessiveness and served to maintain sexual distinctions.¹³⁸ Tessa Storey likewise suggests that sumptuary laws on female apparel sought to control the excesses of courtesans and differentiate respectable women, from dishonest ones.¹³⁹ She explains how such laws often targeted prostitutes because their lifestyle and apparel portrayed loose sexuality, threatened the moral and social

¹³⁰ Saúl Martínez Bermejo, 'Beyond Luxury: Sumptuary Legislation in 17th-Century Castille', in *Making, Using and Resisting the Law in European History*, G. Lottes, E. Medijainen, J. Vidar Sigurdson (eds.), (Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2008).

¹³¹ Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, 'Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, xxxix, 3 (2009), 597-617. Muzzarelli claims that though studies on sumptuary laws abound the focus has been largely on mentalities. Comparing legislation on sumptuary laws from different geographical regions and political regimes can help to shed light on the largely unexplored history of regulatory practices.

¹³² Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: The Various Life of Sir Theodore de Mayerne*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006), 127. John A. Wagner, *Voices of Shakespeare's England*, (Oxford, Greenwood Publishing, 2010), 16. See also Susan Vincent, 'Clothing the Early Modern Body', in *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present*, Sarah Toulalan, Kate Fisher (eds.) (London, New York, Routledge, 2013), 171.

¹³³ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, (New York, St Martin's Press, 1996), 255. Roper, (1985), cvi, 74.

¹³⁴ Giovanni Bonello, 'Law vs Fashion – The Maltese Saga', in *Histories of Malta Vol. II*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2001), 54. See also Giovanni Bonello 'Laws vs Fashion: The Maltese Saga' in *Costume in Malta – A History of Fabric, Form & Fashion*, Nicholas de Piro, Vicki Ann Cremona (eds.), (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 1998), 60-74.

¹³⁵ Bonello, (2001), 66.

¹³⁶ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 134.

¹³⁷ Evelyn Welch, *Art in Renaissance Italy 1350-1500*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 279.

¹³⁸ Welch, (1997), 279.

¹³⁹ Tessa Storey, 'Clothing Courtesans' in *Clothing Culture 1350-1650*, Catherine Richardson (ed.), (Burlington, Ashgate, 2004), 95-101.

order of respectable society and defied patriarchal control.¹⁴⁰ Ulinka Rublack explains how sumptuary laws sought to alienate foreign influences, ‘freeze hierarchies of rank’ and preserve and protect cultural traditions.¹⁴¹ Maria Hayward’s study merges into Rublack’s theories. She likewise considers sumptuary laws to be politically motivated. According to Hayward such laws mostly targeted court personnel and political and social climbers.¹⁴² Saúl Martínez Bermejo’s research on sumptuary legislation in seventeenth-century Castile reveals that sumptuary laws did not only maintain social order, but also sought to control the excesses of monarchs and their ministers through exemplarity.¹⁴³ The elite were expected to set an example for the rest of the population by curbing exaggerated luxuries. In seventeenth-century Spain, in the time of Philip IV (1621-1640), Kings were however above the law.¹⁴⁴ In certain early modern societies like Mantua, Parma, Bergamo, Milan, Seville, Vienna and Venice prostitutes, were obliged to wear distinctive plain items to distinguish them from honest women.¹⁴⁵ Perpetrators were liable to have their garments publicly ripped by respectable women and were fined or whipped.¹⁴⁶ Conversely in other societies like for instance in Spain, France and Scotland, only prostitutes were allowed to wear luxurious garments like embroidered dresses, elaborate hats and abundant jewellery. This steered virtuous women away from wearing rich clothes.¹⁴⁷ Glamour appears to have been a serious concern for the Order. Most early modern sumptuary laws were applicable to all women. Some differentiated between honest and dishonest women.¹⁴⁸ Prostitutes were a significant

¹⁴⁰ Storey, ‘Clothing Courtesans’, (2004), 95-101.

¹⁴¹ Rublack, (1999). 105. Ulinka Rublack, ‘Clothing and cultural exchange in Renaissance Germany’ in *Early Modern Europe: Forging European Identities 1400-1700* Vol. IV, Herman Roodenburg (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), 258-287.

¹⁴² Maria Hayward, ‘Fashion, finance, foreign politics and the wardrobe of Henry VIII’ in *Clothing Culture 1350-1650*, C. Richardson (ed.), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), 165-177.

¹⁴³ Bermejo, (2008), 94, 95.

¹⁴⁴ Bermejo, (2008), 94, 95.

¹⁴⁵ Debbie Clare Olson, ‘Clothing’ in *Prostitution and Sex Work* Vol. 1, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Connecticut, London, Greenwood Press, 2006), 108, 109. On sumptuary laws establishing a hierarchal order by criminalising plebeian access to luxury see Darcy Donahue, *Dressing Up and Dressing Down: Clothing and Class Identity in the Novelas Ejemplares*, in Cervantes, *Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 2004, xxiv, 107. Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio, ‘Rango y Apariencia: el Decoro y La Quiebra de la Distinción en Castilla (siglos XVI-XVIII)’ in *Revista de Historia Moderna: Anales de la Universidad de Alicante*, (1998-1999), xvii, 263. On luxuries being a necessity to distinguish separate social orders see Alejandro López Álvarez, ‘Poder, Lujo y Conflicto en la Corte de los Austrias, Coches, Carrozas y Sillas de Mano, 1550-1700’, Madrid (2007), 155.

¹⁴⁶ Clare Olson, (2006), 108, 109. On sumptuary laws establishing a hierarchal order by criminalising plebeian access to luxury see Donahue, (2004), xxiv, 107. Álvarez-Ossorio (1998-1999), xvii, 263. On luxuries being a necessity to distinguish separate social orders see López Álvarez, (2007), 155.

¹⁴⁷ Olson, (2006), 108, 109.

¹⁴⁸ See Bonello, ‘Law vs Fashion’, (2000), 53-67.

component of the latter.¹⁴⁹ Grand Master Gregorio Carafa's 1681 *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* specifies that certain laws were applicable to women who engaged in extra-marital sexual affairs *donne meretrici* and women suspected of practising prostitution *donne sospette di puttanesimo*. Both categories are subsequently collectively referred to as dishonest women (*donne disoneste*). This revealed that differentiating between women who were earning material gain from sexual affairs and those who were not was problematic. Ambivalence made the imposition of different dress codes a complicated matter. Indeed, in Malta sumptuary laws that specifically targeted courtesans or prostitutes were few and far between.

In 1593, Grand Master Hugues Loubenx de Verdalle (1582-1595) decreed that courtesans could not be seen outside their house wearing gold or silver dresses, or dresses sewn out of any other fine or coloured fabric. Courtesan dress had to be unadorned. They were only allowed to wear a simple dress with a brocade or silk jacket. Courtesans were also prohibited from wearing gold necklaces, strings of pearls or any other types of jewellery. The law stipulated that banned garments and accessories would be confiscated from courtesans and an eleven *onze* fine would be imposed on first time offenders. Second time offenders would have all forbidden items confiscated, a fine amounting to 20 *onze* would be imposed on them and they would be exiled. Tailors who sewed prohibited garments for courtesans were liable to pay a 10 *onze* fine. Recidivists were incarcerated for one year.¹⁵⁰

In c.1640, during the reign of Grand Master Jean-Baptiste Lascaris de Castellar (1636-1657), excessive fashion trends may have called for a revision of the existing sumptuary laws. A law entitled 'Prohibitions of Female dress' came into force. The *bando* commenced with a statement saying that revisions and reconfirmations of previous *bandi* on female dress extravagances had proven to be futile. Persisting superfluity in female dress fuelled female arrogance and insolence and required stricter regulatory measures. The prohibition included a long list of injunctions comprising embroidery, lace, gold and silver accessories, frills, swags, pleats, pearls and jewels. Plain shoes, hats and gloves were allowed as long as they only had simple buckles or buttons.¹⁵¹ These restrictions may have triggered off stiff female protest. Shortly after its enactment the *bando* was modified to permit 'honest' ornaments that included a maximum of ten silk loops for buttons and a tiny bit of silk rivet

¹⁴⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f.102. *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* Caraffa (1681). In the initial part of this article prostitutes are referred to as 'donne meretrici', and women suspected of practising prostitution (*donne sospette di puttanesimo*) the same article later refers to them collectively as dishonest women (*donne disoneste*).

¹⁵⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 704, ff. 139v - 140. *De Pena portantium vestes prohibitas* (1593). *Bandi* Grand Master Verdalle.

¹⁵¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, ff. 225, 226 (c1640). See Appendix 8

braiding on the edges of the *faldetta* (see Figure 4.3).¹⁵² Perpetrators would have their garments confiscated, and would additionally have to pay a 30 *scudi* fine. Second-time offenders would have to pay 60 *scudi* and third time offenders 100 *scudi*. One third of the money would go to the person reporting the matter to the officials and the rest was distributed to the monasteries of virgins and that of the penitents.¹⁵³ A portrait of Flaminia Valenti, a seventeenth-century courtesan now exhibited in the San Antonio Palace, Attard showed how these laws were circumvented. Instead of jewellery, she has bows around her neck and wrists, and the sleeves with slits imitate lace inserts. The dress does not have frills, swags, pleats instead she has puffed sleeves. The overall effect of the dress is quite glamorous.



Figure 4.2: Portrait of courtesan Flaminia Valenti.
Oil on canvas - 150cm x 150cm - Artist: Unknown
Acknowledgement: Oliver Gatt

Flaminia Valenti was allegedly the mistress of Grand Master Antoine de Paule (1623-1636).¹⁵⁴ Little is known about this mysterious portrait. The inscription states that Flaminia Valenti, mother of the late Margherita Valenti née Pittardi left a substantial inheritance to the female hospital in Valletta, as per deed drawn up by Notary Gaspare Domenico Chircop on 11, 12 February 1717. Since she was an important benefactress of this hospital, it is possible that this portrait used to hang in the female hospital in Valletta.

¹⁵² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 228. (c1640). Injunctions stipulated though the ‘Prohibitions of Female dress’ *bando* were also applicable to children.

¹⁵³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 227, 228. (c 1650). ‘... ciappette di seta nella sopra robba e di puochi passamani rivetti, ò farcite di pura seta nell’estremità a mezzo delle faldette che non eccedano il numero dieci...’ Tailors, embroiders and lace-makers who infringed this law faced a 50 *scudi* fine

¹⁵⁴ For some details on the life of Flaminia Valenti see Chapter 3 ‘Attitudes, Action and Negotiation’.

In 1643, Grand Master Lascaris (1636-1657) issued another *bando* reinstating that honest women caught wearing prohibited garments risked losing their privileges. Dishonest women caught wearing glamorous clothing during lent would be subject to the confiscation of the offending garment and would be humiliated. Prostitutes were only allowed to wear a simple mantle in coarse material. Early modern sumptuary legislation did not only attempt to restrict prostitute's attire but it also impinged on their mode of transportation. In 1643, Grand Master Lascaris concurrently decreed that prostitutes could not travel in a sedan chair or in a carriage.¹⁵⁵ By introducing these new measures in lent, Grand Master Lascaris hoped to harness the power of penance in his favour. On 21 May 1658, his successor Grand Master Martin de Redin (1657-1660) revised previous *bandi* allowing honest women to have lace and some other adornments on their mantles.¹⁵⁶ Another undated law enacted c1640-c1666 stated that prostitutes could not wear a *faldetta* with whalebone.¹⁵⁷



Figure 4.3: Young Women in Eighteenth-Century Maltese Attire.¹⁵⁸

Artist: Antoine Favray (1706-1792) - Oil on canvas - 44 x 69.5 cms

The two ladies on the far left (gold and cream coloured dresses) are wearing indoor attire, the ladies in black *faldettas* are wearing outdoor attire. The black *faldetta* hoods have whale bones (note how the right hem of the hood of the lady on the forefront arches over the lady's right shoulder). In contrast the maid servant (far right) is wearing a simple hood over a coif (no whale bone). This is the type of hooded mantle that prostitutes were allowed to wear. Acknowledgement: Derek John

¹⁵⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f.325. (1643). Puttane non possono andare in seggia, ne in carrozza. See also N.L.M. 738 ff.222-223. (1640-1666). See Appendix 9.

¹⁵⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 367, 368. (21 May 1658). Prammatiche Lascaris. Includes several proclamations dated 1640-1692.

¹⁵⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 324, 325. (No date). See also N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 738, f. 222. (c.1650). Prammatiche Lascaris e Cottoner, (1640-1666).

¹⁵⁸ Stephen Degiorgio, Emmanuel Fiorentino, *Antoine Favray (1706-1798)*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2004), 25. In their study on Antoine Favray, Stephen Degiorgio and Emmanuel Fiorentino identified this painting as a pair. They say that the whereabouts of this pair of paintings are unknown. They are recorded as stolen from the art gallery of St James in London.

In 1624, in Rome, a *bando* prohibiting dishonest women from wearing a mantle and travelling in a carriage came into force. The ban on prostitutes travelling in carriages was enacted once again in 1655, and in 1676.¹⁵⁹ *Bandi* restricting prostitutes' attire and mode of transport were also present in early seventeenth-century Sicilian legislation. On 27 November 1605, in Sicily, a law entitled *Bando delle meretrice circa il vestire* was enacted on order of the King's viceroy and general. It stated that in defiance of the myriad of prohibitions on auspicious and pompous dress and décor, many prostitutes were still wearing elaborate garments and travelling in carriages and sedan chairs. The new law prohibited prostitutes from wearing ostentatious dresses and from using luxury modes of transport.¹⁶⁰ In 1621, in Naples, a similar scenario led Cardinal Zapata, the viceroy, to reinstate a *bando* that had been excised by his predecessor the Duke of Ossuna. The Neapolitan *bando* prohibited prostitutes from travelling in the city in a carriage, and sailing around the coast of Posillipo in a *felluca* (a traditional wooden sailing boat).¹⁶¹ Di Giacomo and Cutrera both note that these *bandi* were largely ineffective.¹⁶² According to di Giacomo, notwithstanding severe punishments, in the seventeenth-century, the main streets of Palermo, Naples, Rome, Venice and Florence were full of well-dressed prostitutes.¹⁶³

A similar scenario appears to have prevailed in contemporary Valletta. A proposal on restraining luxuries (*lusso*) was drafted in c.1720. The author stated that the prevailing disorder stemmed from exaggerated luxuries. Houses were brimming with gold and silver objects and other decorative useless items, and low-class men, women and children went around in calèches, wearing fine fabrics, lace mantles and other luxurious garments. He recommended disciplinary measures starting with prostitutes who were to be prohibited from wearing mantles over their shoulders, lace headdresses and travelling around the city in calèches and carriages. Over and above the regular prostitute tax,¹⁶⁴ prostitutes who wanted to enjoy the right to wear luxury garments should be made to pay a supplementary monthly tax.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ N.L.S. Crawford Collection, B.9. (37), (1624). N.L.S. Crawford Collection, B.16. (1), (1655). N.L.S. Crawford Collection, B.27 (12). (1676). *Bandi*, Rome, Italy.

¹⁶⁰ Cutrera, (1971), 165.

¹⁶¹ Di Giacomo, (1994), 195

¹⁶² Di Giacomo, (1994), 197, 198.

¹⁶³ Di Giacomo, (1994), 198.

¹⁶⁴ C. Muscat, (2013), 132,133. It is assumed that this is referring to the courtesan tax introduced in 1602 entitled *Vestro Monasterio et Vovisthat* awarded one fifth of the money, possessions and property of all prostitutes working in Malta to the Magdalene Nuns.

¹⁶⁵ A.O.M. 6405, f.32. (c.1720). See Appendix 8.

The wardrobe collection of Ursula Gatt indicates that the apparel of a prostitute during this period of time was not plain. Her collection of clothes included a new, hyacinth blue and yellow, silk brocade '*faldetta*', as well as a matching hyacinth blue brocade jacket with gold bobbin lace, half a dozen day-blouses; three in embroidered fabric and three in Dutch cloth and three skirts, one embroidered with thread and the other two were plain skirts.¹⁶⁶ In October 1670, Cristina Pallavicini, an 'honest' Genoese noble woman, was about to marry Marquis Ippolito Malaspina from Fosdinovo, Italy. Her wedding trousseau consisted of Dutch cloth day-blouses, some with bobbin lace, Aras cloth day-blouses, a jacket with small snares, a velvet dress and a brocade dress trimmed with silver lace, and other items.¹⁶⁷ *Publica meretrice* Ursula Gatt's collection of clothes was similar to that of the noble Cristina Pallavicini.

Sumptuary laws on female dress appear to have peaked at the end of the seventeenth century during the reign of Grand Master Ramon Perellos (1697-1720) with the publication of a detailed *bando* prohibiting a long list of female garments. Prostitutes caught wearing banned clothing suffered the worst fate. They were exiled from Malta for ten years.¹⁶⁸ In 1724, during the reign of Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736) injunctions on the sale of lace, ribbons and other fine fabrics, on streets and in houses were reinstated.¹⁶⁹ Thereafter it appears that interest in increasing such laws started to wane.¹⁷⁰ In his systematic study of the anthropology of clothing, Ronald A. Schwarz identifies four basic anthropological theories on the origin of clothing and adornment: protection from the environment, protection from supernatural forces, protection from shame and to attract attention to 'genitals and their erotic functions, thus increasing the observer's sexual interest in the wearer'.¹⁷¹ The latter may have been of serious concern to early modern civic authorities in Valletta especially since the city was a Convent city. The aforementioned sumptuary laws may well have sought to restrain female attempts to draw male attention to themselves and to certain erotic parts of their body like the neck line, arms and shoulders. These restrictive measures were tighter on prostitutes because their body was public and thus

¹⁶⁶ N.A.V. R.182 Gius. Dom. Chircop 1701-1702, Vol. IV, f. 183.

¹⁶⁷ 'What a trousseau did have to have in 1600?' transcribed by Fosdinovo Laboratory, retrieved on 4 June 2014 from <http://www.artericami.it/index.php>

¹⁶⁸ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740 C, f.146 (1509-1681). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210, f. 173. (1608-1718). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 23, f. 27. (1759).

¹⁶⁹ *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (Malta, Stamparia di Sua Altezza Serenisima, 1724), 137. Clause XXXIII.

¹⁷⁰ See Bonello, (2000), 62.

¹⁷¹ Ronald A. Schwarz, 'Uncovering the Secret Vice: Toward an Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment', in *The Fabrics of Culture*, Justine M. Cordwell (ed.) et al., (The Hague, Paris, New York, Mouton Publishers, 1979), 23-46. See in particular page 26.

marketable. A relaxation of sumptuary laws was possibly a result of legislators giving up on prohibiting females from pursuing their innate desire to look attractive by wearing beautiful dresses and accessories. As Flaminia Valenti's portrait shows sumptuary laws encouraged dress designers to find alternative ways of making dresses attractive.

Regulating the Public Commerce of *Meretrici*

The 1653 statutes enacted during the magistracy of Grand Master Lascaris (1636-1657), sought to control prostitution not just through elaborate sumptuary laws but also through laws regulating all forms of carnal commerce (remunerated and non-remunerated). The intuition behind the use of harsh punishment appears to have been mostly for deterrence. The harsher the penalty, the more it deters. This emerges through the fact that in the *Libri dei Carcerati* one rarely comes across the prescription of physical forms of punishment. Honest and dishonest women were prohibited from conversing with non-Catholics or entering the prison slaves. Honest women caught transgressing the law had to pay 10 *scudi* and dishonest transgressors were flogged. Jews or non-Catholics caught in the act of (paid or unpaid) fornication with a Catholic woman were likewise flogged and their ears and the tip of their nose were chopped off. If the fornicator was a free person he would permanently lose his free status. Male slaves caught practising with Catholic women suffered the same fate and had to row on a galley for ten years without remuneration. Death by hanging awaited second time offenders. Female first time offenders faced public flogging; a ten-year exile awaited recidivists. Owners or administrators of properties who rented rooms to male non-Catholics or Jews for sexual encounters with Catholic prostitutes faced similar harsh punishments. Non-Catholic first time male offenders faced ten years rowing on the galleys and recidivists were hanged.¹⁷²

In October 1660, during the reign of Grand Master Rafael Cotoner (1660-1663), another statute concerning adulterers came into force. Married men found guilty of carnal practices with prostitutes were liable to pay 25*scudi* for the first offense, 50 *scudi* for the second offense and 100 *scudi* for the third offense. Two thirds of the money would be invested in pious acts and one third would go towards funding official costs. Recidivists were permanently exiled from the island. First timer offenders who were ordinary folk (*gente dozzinale*), were publicly flogged three times, for a second offense they had to work for six months on public projects, third time offenders had to row on the galleys for two years and

¹⁷² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210, ff. 65, 66. (February 1653).

recidivists had to row on the galleys without remuneration for five years.¹⁷³ Seventeenth-century laws on prostitution largely targeted consumers of hired sex and not the service providers. They reflect the binary traditional *raison d'être* of the Order: the commitment towards protecting Christianity and helping the needy. The main objective of these laws was to prohibit interfaith alliances. Resistance to interfaith partnerships shows self-segregation and the determination to preserve and protect the Roman Catholic faith intact. This view shows that the Order's ideal of 'united Christendom' was not only against Islam¹⁷⁴ but against all non-Catholic religions.¹⁷⁵ It also reveals that their holy crusade was not limited to sea expeditions (partially supported through free labour sourced from the afore-mentioned penalties) but was also exercised through coercive behaviour controlling intimate relationships. The 1660 laws differ from previous laws in including monetary penalties imposed on rich violators. Fines levied for crimes on rich men benefitted charitable institutions. This merged into the Order's charitable outlook and endorses the early modern cultural idea that the rich were expected to use some of their money to help the needy. The fact that it was used as a form of punishment indicates that financing pious acts may not always have been voluntary. It was also a common form of punishment rich Catholic men were made to endure to pay for their misdeeds.

These trends were further reinstated through the enactment of four statutes (numbered VI-IX) entitled *Delitti della Carne* that formed part of a body of laws called *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* enacted in 1681, during the reign of Grand Master Gregorio Carafa (1680-1690). A brief explanatory preceding the laws declared that these laws were being enacted for the good government and excellent direction of the Grand Master's state and vassalage.¹⁷⁶ The first statute in *Delitti della Carne* (Clause VI) reinstated Cotoner's aforementioned 1660 penalties on adulterers. Two thirds of the penalty money went to the Congregation of Poor People and Beggars and one third went to the officials of the Order. Recidivists caught in flagrancy faced exile from the entire domain at the arbitrary discretion of the Order.¹⁷⁷ If the accused was not in a position to pay the fine, his first punishment

¹⁷³ N.L.M. Ms. 1210, ff. 98, 99. (October 1660)

¹⁷⁴ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 100.

¹⁷⁵ For a discussion on sexual relations between Christians prostitutes and non-Christian men in 13th -14th century Spain see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecutions of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, (New Jersey, West Sussex, Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f.101. (1681) *Leggi e Costituzioni Pragmaticali* (Carafa). '...Per il bon governo et ottima direttione del Suo Stato, e Vassallaggio...?'

¹⁷⁷ cf. Paul Cassar, 'Grand Master Cotoner and the foundations of the lectureship of anatomy and surgery 1676', in *Melita Historica* VIII (1980) 1, 39. The Congregazione dei poveri mendicanti was set up in 1656 by Grand Master Jean-Baptiste Lascaris de Castellar (1636-1657) to provide financial relief for poor people and beggars.

would be three pulls at the rack in public.¹⁷⁸ Second time offenders faced six months labour in public works and third time recidivists had to row on the galleys for two years. Incurrigibles who dared repeat their mistake for the fourth time had to row on the galleys for five years without remuneration. These laws were applicable to all adulterers who were suspected or caught in the act by the Court's officials in the day or night-time in 'suspicious' locations. The list of 'suspicious' locations included bastions, watch towers, walls, fortifications, boats, houses, rooms, storerooms, cellars, gardens and the countryside. The testimony of the official/s arresting the delinquent was sufficient for incrimination.¹⁷⁹

The second statute (Clause VII) stipulated that any family woman accused of pursuing the life of a public *meretrice* through public display, was punished by lashes and permanently exiled from the domain.¹⁸⁰ The third statute (Clause VIII) stated that Jews and non-Catholics, regardless of their status (free or slaves), were prohibited from entering the houses of *meretrici*, or of women suspected of practising prostitution (*in casa di donne meretrici, o sospette di puttanesimo*). They were likewise prohibited from receiving such women in their house, in their patron's house or in houses belonging to third parties. Free non-Catholics would lose their freedom. Slaves, vassals and local inhabitants would be punished by being forced to row on the galleys for four years without earning a single penny (*senza soldo*). If they were physically unfit to row, they were liable to spend eight years in public service without a salary. The testimony of any person witnessing such a deed was sufficient for incrimination.¹⁸¹

Dishonest women who allowed male Jews and non-Catholics into their homes, or visited them in other houses were punished by public flogging and four years exile from the entire domain. This statute was applicable to all Catholic women caught with Jews or non-Catholics in any suspicious place. It was likewise applicable to any dishonest women caught performing obscene acts.¹⁸² In cases whereby the 'venereal act' (*atto venereo*) was consumed, besides losing their freedom, free male non-Catholics would be flogged and their ears and the tip of their nose would be cut off. If the wrongdoers were slaves, they would suffer the

In 1663 Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner (1663-1680) introduced a tax imposition on tobacco to raise the necessary revenues for the Congregazione.

¹⁷⁸ For a detailed explanation on the pull at the rack also known as the rope torture, see Edward Peters, *Torture*, (Philadelphia, Penn, 1985), 251.

¹⁷⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f.101, 101v. (1681) Leggi e Constitutioni Pragmaticali Article VI.

¹⁸⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v. (1681) Leggi e Constitutioni Pragmaticali Article VII. Quallsisia donna accusata convinta di menar vita da publica meretrice, constando fa publicità sia frustata, e mandata in esilio perpetuamente da questo dominio.

¹⁸¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v.

¹⁸² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v, 102. (1681) Leggi e Constitutioni Pragmaticali Article VIII.

additional pain of having to row on the galleys for ten years without a salary. Recidivists were hanged. Women caught practising with Jews or non-Catholics were publicly flogged and exiled from the domain for ten years. Recidivists were sentenced to death by hanging. Persons hosting sexual liaisons between Catholics and Jews or non-Catholics in their houses, or any suspicious place, faced rowing on the galleys for ten years; recidivists were hanged.¹⁸³

Carafa's laws show a clear commitment in reinforcing laws introduced by his predecessor. They show that Cotoner's fines imposed on rich men who frequented prostitutes may have yielded positive results in alleviating the burden of financing charitable institutions. This may possibly have been perceived to be preferable to physical forms of punishment. A study of the *Libri dei Carcerati* indicates that the aforementioned draconian laws were rarely implemented. Most appear to have paid a fine and were released. Knowledge that they risked harsh punishment was possibly intended to threaten wrongdoers and deter them from carrying out the act. This argument is an area that awaits scholarly exploration. Carafa built on Cotoner's pecuniary penalties by broadening the range of male violators liable to pay fines hence demonstrating his commitment towards families and charity a true *bonus pater familias*. The extensiveness of Grand Master Carafa's laws on prostitution suggests that he might have inherited a disconsolate state of affairs.¹⁸⁴ One can detect a serious effort at reining in society that may have become too loose.

In 1724, under the magistracy of Antonio Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736), the laws of Malta were published in 250 books entitled *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*. In this corpus of laws, some existing laws were maintained and others were adjusted or revised.¹⁸⁵ This largely reflected prevailing practices in continental Europe.¹⁸⁶ Section twenty-one in Vilhena's book of laws dealt with *Delitti della Carne*. The first article on upper class and lower class family men caught practising with *meretrici* maintained article VI in Carafa's 1681 legal manuscript, with an addendum stating that the Order reserved the right to arbitrarily punish *meretrici* involved in such sexual liaisons. The second article on family women involved in extramarital affairs duplicated Carafa's previous article VII. The third and fourth articles on Jews and non-Catholics caught practising with Catholic women were revised. Article three stipulated that free Jews or non-Catholics who entered houses of honest women lost their free status and slaves were flogged in public and had to row on the galleys

¹⁸³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v, 102. (1681) *Leggi e Constitutioni Pragmaticali* Article IX.

¹⁸⁴ On Cotoner's mal-administration see A. Bonnici, (1992), 91, 92, 176.

¹⁸⁵ See cover page of *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (Malta, Stamparia di Sua Altezza Serenisima, 1724).

¹⁸⁶ Goodwin, (2002), 64. *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 23. These laws officially entitled *Bandi Capitani* were published on 1 September of every year.

for two years (reduced from four). The belongings of incriminated slaves found in the houses of honest Catholic women were confiscated. Honest women who permitted slaves into their homes (for the purpose of copulation) had to pay 10 *scudi*, and second time offenders paid 20 *scudi*.

Suspicious women (presumably prostitutes) were prohibited from allowing non-Catholics to enter their houses, their patron's house or houses belonging to third parties. Lawbreakers were publicly flogged and exiled for four years. Free male non-Catholics caught inside houses of such women lost their status and their personal belongings and slaves faced four years rowing on the galleys. The testimony of anyone witnessing such acts was sufficient to elicit the aforementioned punishments. Witnesses were not required to present any form of evidence. Punishments were applicable to all philanderers including couples conversing in suspicious places. The statement in statute III of Grand Master de Vilhena's *Dei delitti della Carne* goes on to specify that couples who were not witnessed performing any obscene acts were exempted (*eziandoche non si fossero veduti fare atto alcuno d'oscenità*).¹⁸⁷ In De Vilhena's 1724 *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali* restrictions on couples included impositions on those who booked rooms in hotels (*camere locande*) or inns (*persone che tengono letti*). Lascaris's former 1653 statutes forbidding hoteliers and innkeepers from renting rooms to prostitutes was modified. Adolescent unbearded boys (*giovani sbarbati*) and couples were prohibited from sleeping in rooms in hotels and inns Vilhena's laws prohibited. Married couples had to book separate rooms and if they had an adolescent son or sons they presumably had to find alternative accommodation for them.¹⁸⁸ De Vilhena's laws had a significant spill over effect impinging on the business of innkeepers and hoteliers and the freedoms of upright citizens.

Non-Catholics were allowed to travel on boats to any of the four harbour cities, however, they could only travel if other male passengers were present. Moreover, only one non-Catholic at a time was allowed on a boat. If all the passengers on the boat were female, embarkation was forbidden. The fourth article reiterated article IX in Carafa's *Delitti della Carne* with an addendum including punishments for all female non-Catholics involved in sexual liaisons with Catholic men. In such cases, free female Catholics lost their freedom. Slaves were flogged (*frustate a sangue*) and recidivists had their ears and nose cut off.

¹⁸⁷*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 105.

¹⁸⁸*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 8. (See Bando 53).

Catholic men found guilty of engaging in a carnal relationship (paid or unpaid) with a non-Catholic female faced ten years rowing on a galley. Recidivists were hanged.¹⁸⁹

Article forty in the first section introduced a restriction on ill-reputed women (*Donna di mal nome, ò cattiva fama*). The law stated that such women could not keep the door of their houses open between the ringing of the *Castellanix* bell at 18:00hrs and the toll of the Pater Noster at 04:00hrs. Lawbreakers had to pay 12 *tarì* to the officer who denounced the matter.¹⁹⁰ Port regulations enlisted in section sixteen also included an article stating that women could not travel from Sicily to Malta unless they were in possession of a special permit issued by the Order. Honest women would be sent back and dissolute women would be flogged and perpetually exiled from the country. Owners of vessels were warned that five years unpaid rowing on a galley awaited any captain or boat owner who disobeyed this law. Crew members who failed to report the matter within six hours after their arrival on the island were punished by being forced to row for two years.¹⁹¹

The introduction of restrictions on women, and male non-Catholics travelling by boat across the harbour may indicate that boats may have been used for socialising and may have provided potential meeting places for prostitutes and clients. The law on women moving house enlisted under port regulations as stated in Chapter 2 ‘Sources, Myths and Realities’ indicated that this was a problem. The Order was fully aware that policing prostitution also required the policing of sea channels. Prostitutes exploited different modes of travel to expand their boundaries and increase their business opportunities.

De Vilhena’s laws also included prohibitions on the freedom of movement of women from one harbour town to another. Women were warned not to move house from the country to harbour towns and not to move from one harbour town to another. Honest women were fined 11 *onze*, *meretrici* (that included *publiche meretrici*) were exiled.¹⁹² These statutes may have portrayed anxieties over female mobility, initiative and entrepreneurship that possibly endorse Roper and Hunt’s aforementioned contentions on draconian injunctions.¹⁹³ Three significant changes relevant to prostitution are evident in De Vilhena’s section on *Delitti della Carne: meretrici* who offered their services to family men who were previously not

¹⁸⁹*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 105, 106.

¹⁹⁰*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 7. Chapter 1 regulated the parameters of the office and jurisdiction of the *Castellano* (governor),

¹⁹¹*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 80. Clause XXXVII.

¹⁹²*Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (1724), 136. Clause XXX. Nessuna persona, ed in particolare nessuna donna ardisca sloggiare, e mutare domicilio d’una Città all’altra, nè da campagna senza nostro Decreto sotto pena di pagare al Fisco onze dieci, ed essendo meretrice d’esser esiliata.

¹⁹³ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, (New York, St Martin’s Press, 1996), 255. Roper, (1985), 74.

liable to punishment (Article I) were incriminated, bachelors who were vassals or local inhabitants (who previously suffered the same fate as Jews and non-Catholics) were decriminalised and non-Catholic females (prostitutes and non-prostitutes) were included in the regulation (Article IV). This clearly steered the legal focus away from a male scope to a more female scope.

In 1784, during the reign of Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan (1775-1797), the Order's statutes were recodified. The *Diritto Municipale* replicated most regulations on *meretricato* present in de Vilhena's *Leggi e Costituzioni* with two new additions. Harsher laws for incitement and procuring were prescribed and husbands who knowingly permitted their wives to lead a dissolute life were liable to serve on the galleys for five years.¹⁹⁴ Procurers faced five years in exile. Low class procurers bore the additional pain of being publically flogged under a placard with the words *Per Ruffianesimo* written on it.¹⁹⁵ This shows that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Order was still enacting fifteenth century laws and punishments. Such radical measures point to the possibility that during de Rohan's reign the Order was in a chaotic state and was desperately attempting to regain its control over the people of the island through extensive regulatory measures.

Conclusion

The legislation and enforcement of regulations concerning prostitution fell under the responsibility of the Grand Master and the Council of the Order. As a religious organisation, the Order of St John was expected and advised to criminalise and abolish prostitution. This was circumvented through the periodic re-enactment and revision of existant sumptuary laws and laws regulating carnal commerce. This chapter suggested that updates in early modern sumptuary laws stemmed from concerns regarding provocative female dress trends and the need to constantly caution women not to be excessive. The enforcement of sumptuary laws posed a challenge. Flaminia Valenti's portrait reveals that creativity was not lacking, dresses conforming to dress codes could still look glamorous and attract attention.

Broadly speaking, the practices of prostitutes were regulated through carnal commerce laws, however, regulatory measures on prostitutes also featured sporadically under night-time regulations, port and travel regulations and other headings. Harsh punishments were prescribed for lawbreakers but appear to have been rarely implemented. This chapter suggests that draconian punishments were largely meant to serve as a threat to discourage

¹⁹⁴ *Diritto Municipale di Malta*, 182.

¹⁹⁵ *Diritto Municipale di Malta*, 182.

people from breaking the law. Carnal commerce laws prescribed by the Chapter General and from 1631-1776 by Grand Masters mostly endeavoured to support families, protect virgins, promote the superiority of the Roman Catholic faith and maintain its exclusivity. Laws targeting prostitutes up to the second half of the seventeenth century show that the primary concern was with the inappropriateness of them residing in areas where churches and the Convent were located. Thereafter adulterers and subsequently inter-faith liaisons took precedence. The frequent re-enactment of archaic laws with periodic minor updates and escalating penalties plus an ever increasing range of miscreants indicate that the Order's reluctance to reform its laws may have failed to address social change and regulatory measures may not have reached their goals.

Laws operate in distinctive ways. They perform a particular kind of communicative function speaking in a moral voice to define a range of public wrongs and to censure those who commit them. This chapter shows how the moral voice of laws targeting prostitutes offers historians an opportunity to understand the intrinsic socio-political climate embedded in these laws. It also enables a realistic understanding of which aspects of prostitution were culturally understood to be socially harmful and which prostitutes or consumers of hired sex were perceived to be mischievous. Studying laws as simple responses to some perceived social problem reveals whether they were instrumentally appropriate (or inappropriate), the roots of laws have a story to tell, they relate a people's history, a history from below.

Chapter 5

Lawbreakers, Deviants and Troublemakers

‘And because there is nothing that contributes to the growth of this disease more than the public commercial activities of *meretrici*, as from 11 April instant they will be banned... whoever practises will be rigorously punished’.¹

Introduction

In a Convent-city where similar to Counter-Reformation Rome a significant number of men were without a legitimate way of satisfying their carnal appetites, the presence of prostitutes was not regarded with equanimity.² Philosophical criticisms on the need to ‘weed’ prostitutes out of Valletta were common but in reality rarely fervently pursued. Controlling prostitutes was a shared responsibility. It started from the pulpit with church indoctrination. This was perpetuated through family control. When family control faltered some turned to the Grand Master for help. The next level of control was the community. Prostitutes who transgressed the limits of acceptable behaviour were reported to law enforcement officers known as *Ministri di Giustizia* (Ministers of Justice),³ also referred to as *Ministri di cattura* (Ministers responsible for capturing people),⁴ *Ministri della Gran Corte* (Ministers of the Grand Court),⁵ or simply *Ministri*.⁶ The Valletta military patrol occasionally also gave a hand in policing prostitutes.

Similar to other scholarly investigations on early modern prostitution this chapter is based on court records. The surviving prison registers of the *Magna Curia Castellania* provided the backbone of this investigation. These registers are incomplete and they

¹A.O.M. 6402, f.284. (c.1670) Diverse Scritture. ‘E perche per la dilatazione di questo male non vi è cosa tanto approposito quanto il publico commercio delle Meretrici, venne perciò sotto li 11 Aprile immediatamente bandite..., e chi le pratica rigorosamente punito’.

² See E. Buttigieg, (2011), 54. Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 61. On prostitutes not seen with equanimity see for instance A.O.M. 6384, f.32. (17 July 1626). Letter sent by cardinal deacon Francesco Barberini to the Grand Master. ‘Pare anco a Sua Santità cosa poco lodevole, che le meretrici habitino così liberamente nelle strade Reali, et vicine alli Alberghi, essendo occasione di molta offesa di Dio la molto commodità’.

³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f. 128. (c.1601-c1622).

⁴ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 31. (29 August 1774). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.42. (12 December 1774). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1771-1783, f.126. (20 January 1778).

⁵ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, f.13. (18 September 1731). *Penalis Paulum Vassallo et Catherinam Habela*.

⁶ N.A.M. 1795-1798, f.104. (16 January 1798).

inevitably carry the biases of the scribes who wrote them.⁷ Nonetheless as Ulinka Rublack suggests ‘it is necessary to trust court records and to respond to them emphatically’.⁸ According to Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero court records reveal an ‘otherwise invisible or opaque realm of human experience’.⁹ Court records are one visible realm of the human experience of prostitutes who were lawbreakers, deviants and troublemakers. These women were the exceptions, for the majority never ended up in court.

Prostitutes caught in the regulatory net were rarely impassive. Some reacted to disciplinary impositions by supplicating the Grand Master’s clemency. Others challenged the authorities by disobeying court orders. The historiography of prostitution has largely focused on how authorities controlled and oppressed such women.¹⁰ Prostitutes are often depicted as victims of society and passive receivers of justice; in reality some were abusive and challenged authority. This chapter shows that incarcerated prostitutes were significantly unruly, deviant and were not inclined to abide by laws or court orders. They resisted attempts to reform, defied legal disciplinary action and exploited cracks in the political system to their advantage. It is important to discern good entrepreneurs from deviant ones.

Kin control

The control of adulterous women and wayward daughters who pursued prostitution in early modern Malta started with frequent religious chastisements on the sin of female lust.¹¹ In 1750 Padre Pelagio lamented that for a female to turn out well, wise, reserved, prudent moderate in speech and bearing a virtuous demeanour was a miracle.¹² In 1770 the Bishop suspended Padre Simone, a Carmelite, because of excessive criticisms against women.¹³ In 1771 Don Gaetano Mannarino who was serving in the collegiate church of San Paolo in Valletta segregated the female congregation according to status. Married women, widows and virgins were to sit separately in order to avoid cross influences.¹⁴ In July 1771, Frà d’Argiani

⁷ Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2007), 136.

⁸ Rublack, (1999), 3.

⁹ Muir, Ruggiero, (1994), vii.

¹⁰ For a detailed analysis of the different theories of control see Loraine Gelsthorpe, ‘Back to Basics in Crime Control: Weaving in Women’, in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* Vol, vii, 2, (2004), 76-103. John Braithwaite, ‘What’s wrong with the sociology of punishment?’ in *Theoretical Criminology*, vii, 1, (2003), 5-28.

¹¹ Ciappara,(2014), 86, 87.

¹² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119. (c.1750). See C. Muscat, (2013), 25.

¹³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 67. (21 September 1770).

¹⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 138, 139. (26 July 1771). Don Gaetano Mannarino was a cleric. He served Jesuit missionary campaigns in Rome and returned to Malta in 1765. Against the wishes of Archpriest Grima he was appointed parish priest of the collegiate of St. Paul in Valletta. He was one of the leaders of the revolt of the

a knight who was the commander of the artillery and happened to be on a work visit in Gozo, witnessed sermons and processions organised by Mannarino.¹⁵ He sent a letter to the bishop reporting that the sermons were not well composed (*prediche mal composte*) and that Mannarino's processions were scandalous (*processioni assai scandalosi*). Gozitan virgins were made to follow the procession with a crown of thorns on their head and a scarf covering their faces.¹⁶ Though these sermons and actions may have been excessive (which explains how they ended up in the archives) the fact that early modern clerics indoctrinated their congregations on the evils of female dissoluteness is plausible.

In sixteenth-century Augsburg controlling daughters was a parental responsibility.¹⁷ Elisabeth Foyster, on the other hand, shows that in seventeenth-century England it was a male responsibility. Upholding honour at home was paramount to male acceptance in honourable public spheres. Besides physical control (wife beating), this was also exercised through female social control.¹⁸ Laura Gowing suggests that from 1660 onwards it was no longer viable for the church in early modern England to control sexual continence outside marriage. This responsibility was taken over by secular courts and the Societies for the Reformation of Manners.¹⁹ The difficulties that the task of policing adulterers and fornicators posed to the authorities gradually led to increased toleration.²⁰ Women's creation of material and virtual spaces and their presence in spaces where they were not supposed to be, created anxieties.²¹ The fact that these female spaces challenged patrilineal and patriarchal norms was a cause of worry for both kin and community members.²² Frans Ciappara describes kin relationships in early modern Malta as being very strong.²³ He suggests that sexual relationships outside marriage were a responsibility shared by kin and Church, however, Church interference in such matters was often challenged by the people.²⁴

priests in 1775. See David Borg-Muscat, 'Reassessing the September 1775 Rebellion: a Case of Lay Participation or a 'Rising of the Priests?'' in *Melita Historica*, xiii, 3 (2002), 239-252.

¹⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 138, 139. (26 July 1771).

¹⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f. 138, 139. (26 July 1771).

¹⁷ Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), 116.

¹⁸ Elisabeth Foyster, Male Honour, 'Social Control and Wife Beating in Late Stuart England', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vi, (1996), 215-224.

¹⁹ Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2014), 17. Dabhoiwala, 'Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800', *Journal of British Studies*, xlvi, 2 (2007), 290-319.

²⁰ Gowing, (2014), 17.

²¹ See Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, (New York, St Martin's Press, 1996), 255. Lyndal Roper, 'Going to Church and Street: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg', in *Past and Present*, cvi, (1985), 74

²² See Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, 'Introduction' in *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World*, Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed.), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 11.

²³ Ciappara, (2014), 83- 100.

²⁴ Ciappara, (2014), 121-125.

On 27 April 1687, Father Ugolino Bonici, the parish priest of the Casal of Žejtun wrote a letter to Bishop Davide Cocco Palmieri (1684-1711) informing him that Catherina the wife of Filippo had not confessed or received the paschal precept for many years. She was separated from her husband and had been exiled on various occasions because she was a scandalous woman. He said that she had been missing from the village for many days and it was unlikely that she was in hiding because she was about to give birth. He asked the Bishop not to waste time in instructing his guards to look for Catherina as she was a licentious woman and her child should therefore not be given access to the gates of heaven through Holy Baptism.²⁵ This letter indicates that part of the parish priest's responsibilities was to monitor and report licentious female parishioners with the aim of precluding them from the church and the sacraments. When faced with wives who abandoned the family in pursuit of prostitution, husbands enjoyed the right to request their incarceration. For instance on 19 June 1791, Vincenza Ludò was incarcerated for seven days and consequently sent to the *Conservatorio* on her husband's request. Vincenza was accused of running away from home, adultery and spending some nights in the house of a procuress.²⁶

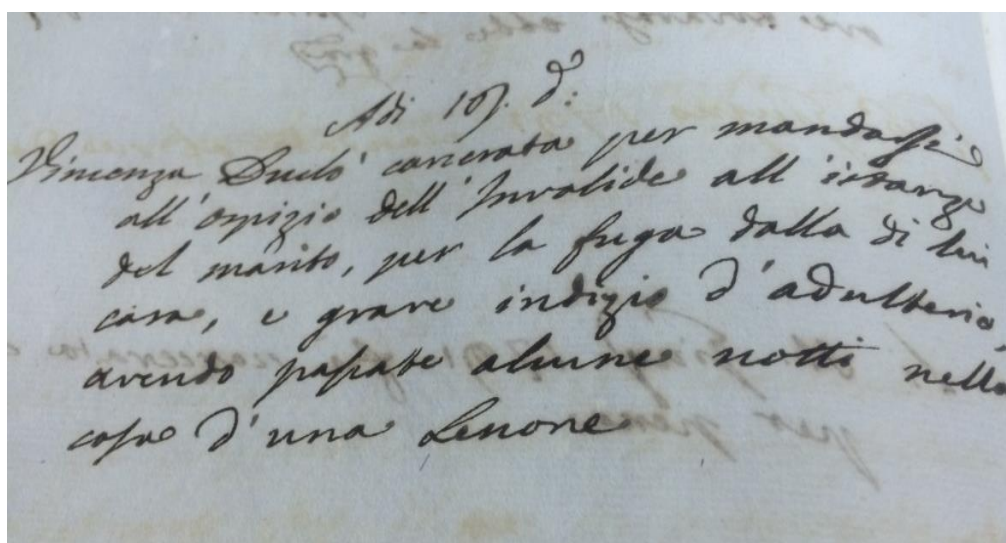


Figure 5.1: Excerpt from the *Libro dei Carcerati* 1788-1795 (f.108) recording Vincenza Ludò's incarceration and her subsequent detention in the *Ospizio* at her husband's request.

In other instances families faced with licentious female dependents sent a supplication (*supplica*) to the Grand Master imploring his help. Through supplications, the Grand Master reached out to families in despair.²⁷ The custom of supplicating was also popular in the

²⁵ A.A.M. ST. AO A 1687-1688, f. 319. (27 April 1687).

²⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f.108. (19 June 1791).

²⁷ See C. Buttigieg, (2011), 1-8, 72. Everyone was allowed to petition the Grand Master, regardless of their place and role in society. Petitioning was a common practice; even the elite made use of this faculty. On

kingdom of Naples where, according to Stephen Cummins, early modern Kings received a large number of petitions.²⁸ Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen argues that supplicating was integral to Christian thought and simulated ‘a prayer to God’.²⁹ Supplicating was the traditional language people used to address monarchs. It represented the god-like status of monarchs and emphasised the disparity in power between supplicant and king.³⁰ Similar to early modern European monarchs the Grand Master was considered to be a quasi-divine figure who offered special graces. Hearing and responding positively to supplications enhanced his *bonus pater familias* outlook.

The suburb of Floriana that was born in the early 1700s to take the overspill of Valletta was home to a large complex that accommodated poor elderly persons, females who were in danger of leading immoral lives and mischievous females. This institute was called the House of Mercy (*Casa della Carità*).³¹ The project, conceived under the reign of Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena in 1729, was originally meant to host poor elderly males and females in separate divisions.³² The female division was subsequently organised into three sections: a house for female elderly persons (*ginecco*),³³ a female workhouse and a female detention centre. The workhouse was initially known as a House for Persons Withdrawn from Society (*Casa delle Ritirate*),³⁴ it was later referred to as a Conservatory for Persons Withdrawn from Society (*Conservatorio delle Ritirate*)³⁵ or simply *Conservatorio*.³⁶ Inmates housed in the *Conservatorio* worked as cotton processors, they earned money and could potentially contract marriage.³⁷ In 1737, when the aforementioned Michel’Angelo Sammut discovered that his wife Battistina was secretly earning money through prostitution fearing his wrath she ran away from her house in Vittoriosa and sought refuge in the *Casa*

petitions see also Victor Mallia-Milanes, ‘The Birgu Phase of Hospitaller History’, in *Birgu – A Maltese Maritime City* Vol. I, Lino Bugeja, Mario Buhagiar, Stanley Fiorini (eds.), (Malta, Malta University Services Ltd., 1993), 90-96.

²⁸ Stephen Cummins, ‘Forgiving Crimes in Early Modern Naples’, in *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe*, Laura Kounine and Stephen Cummins (eds.), (Surrey, Ashgate Publishing, 2016), 260.

²⁹ Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen, ‘Narratives of Reconciliation in Early Modern England’, in *Discourse of Anger in the Early Modern Period*, Karl A.E. Enekel and Anita Traninger (eds.), (Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2015), 419, 420.

³⁰ Van Dijkhuizen, 419, 420.

³¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.112. (20 December 1751).

³² Antonio Cremona, *L- Ospizju tal-Furjanau l-Erwieh ta’ Wied Ghammieq*, (Malta, Department of Information, 1959). 5. c.f. Denis de Lucca, ‘The City-Fortress of Valletta in the Baroque Age’, in *Journal of Baroque Studies*, i (2013), 11. Degiorgio, (2012), 27-29.

³³ Sandro Sciberras, ‘Hospitals and Charitable Institutions in Early Eighteenth Century Baroque Malta’, unpublished M.A. dissertation, International Institute for Baroque Studies, University of Malta, 2003, 41.

³⁴ See N.A.M. Box 378, Bundle de Uxorcidio Michel’Angelo Sammut, f.18. (16 January 1737).

³⁵ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f. 78. (13 March 1742).

³⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795 f.6 (30 September 1788).

³⁷ See S. Sciberras, (2003), 63.

delle Ritirate.³⁸ This indicated that this unit may also have served as a refuge for victims of domestic violence. In 1786, a *Castellanìa* judge sent sisters Maria and Natalizia Busutill to the *Conservatorio*. He specified that they were being sent there to be educated and to protect them from being influenced by vice (*ad effetto d'essere educate e non inviziarsi col cattivo esempio*).³⁹ Some of the inmates placed in the *Conservatorio* were females who were perceived to be at risk of pursuing immoral lives. This view is endorsed through the fact that the *Conservatorio* was a place where fathers placed wayward daughters⁴⁰ and where Grand Masters lodged daughters of prostitutes.⁴¹ In Europe, institutes similar to the *Conservatorio* made their appearance in the sixteenth century.⁴² They were born out of the Counter-Reformation movement and society's preoccupation with licentious women. They were modelled on monastic discipline. Margaret Boyle suggests that the scope of these institutions was to create a single sex environment aimed at addressing particular female physical, spiritual, moral or economic needs.⁴³ Notwithstanding its relatively late establishment the Grand Master's *Conservatorio* in Floriana conformed to this model and ideology.

The third section was officially referred to as a detention centre (*reclusorio*).⁴⁴ From 1741-1798, in the *Libri dei Carcerati*, this term does not feature. Prison scribes referred to the female detention centre inside the House of Charity as the House for Poor Worthless Individuals (*Casa delle Povere Invalide*),⁴⁵ the Hospice for Poor Worthless Females (*Ospizio delle Povere Invalide*), the Hospice for Poor Females (*Ospizio delle Povere*),⁴⁶ or the Hospice for Worthless Females (*Ospizio dell'Invalide*),⁴⁷ and at times simply *Ospizio*.⁴⁸ There seems to be some confusion regarding the *Ospizio*. Antonio Cremona, Paul Cassar, Sandro Sciberras and Sandra Scicluna describe the entire complex as the *Casa della Carità* and suggest that in

³⁸ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, f.18. (16 January 1737), Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel' Angelo Sammut.

³⁹ N.A.M. Libro de Carcerati 1781-1788, f.230. (24 May 1786).

⁴⁰ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 17. (1 April 1774). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 40. (8 November 1774).

⁴¹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro de Carcerati , 1796-1798, f.52. (16 February 1797).

⁴² Boyle, (2014), 4.

⁴³ Boyle, (2014), 4.

⁴⁴ S. Sciberras, (2003), 41. Sandra Scicluna, 'The Mad, the Bad and the Pauper: Help and Control in Early Modern Carceral Institutions' in *The History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, Paul Knepper, Anja Johansen (eds.), (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016), 666.

⁴⁵ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 52. (5 June 1775). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781 f. 62. (26 September 1775). I have opted to translate 'invalidi' with the words 'worthless individuals' rather than invalid to avoid confusion with sick. 'Invalidi' in this case referred to persons with no value and not sick persons.

⁴⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.169. (2 July 1779).

⁴⁷ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.159. (13 March 1779) N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati , 1788-1795, f.137. (8 March 1792), N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f.242. (25 February 1795).

⁴⁸ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f.190. (25 March 1785). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 38 (6 July 1789).

1785 Grand Master De Rohan changed the name to *Ospizio*.⁴⁹ The present research revealed that the *Ospizio* was not referring to the whole establishment but to the female detention centre. By 1779 prison scribes were already referring to this unit by this title.⁵⁰ In previous years it was referred to as the House for Poor Worthless Females (*Casa delle Povere Invalide*). It is possible that by adopting less disparaging titles such as ‘hospice for poor people’ rather than a ‘house for worthless individuals’, or ‘conservatory’ rather than a house for ‘persons withdrawn from society’ in the last quarter of the eighteenth century some scribes demonstrated both word-sensitivity and the ability to transmute harsh titles. Women incarcerated for leading a dishonest life, adultery, contravening banishment orders and procurement who were transferred to the *Ospizio* were sometimes shackled and/or forced to labour in shackles. Female prisoners placed in the *Ospizio* who were prescribed forced labour generally worked in the store rooms of the institute.⁵¹ They were given the daily food portion (bread and vegetable soup) given to all convicts.⁵² The *Conservatorio* and the *Ospizio* were also open to families seeking to discipline errant female dependents.

On 17 June 1771, Teresa Spiteri was arrested through a request placed by her husband. He claimed that she escaped from their conjugal home in Ghaxaq to go to Valletta to work as a *puttana*.⁵³ Teresa was placed in the *Casa della Carità*⁵⁴ but she was eventually released through another supplication sent by her husband. A year later, Teresa was back in Valletta working as a prostitute. This time, her mother supplicated her arrest and imprisonment. Teresa spent thirteen days in prison. On 20 August 1772, she was released and ordered to stay out of all the harbour towns.⁵⁵ A month later, on 8 September 1772, she was re-incarcerated for two days and her previous banishment was reinstated.⁵⁶ In March 1742 following a conjugal quarrel Carmina Galea spent five days in prison and was exiled to Gozo. Her husband had her incarcerated for prostitution. Her mother Palma Sayd intervened through another supplication. She implored the Grand Master’s clemency. Carmina’s exile

⁴⁹ A. Cremona, (1959), 6. Paul Cassar, ‘The Concept and range of charitable institutions up to World War I’, in *Malta Medical Journal* Vol. xviii, 1, (2006), 47. S. Sciberras, (2003), 36, 37, 40. S. Scicluna, (2016), 666.

⁵⁰ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1773-1781, f. 159. (13 March 1779). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1773-1781, f.169. (2 July 1779).

⁵¹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.112. (20 December 1751).

⁵² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 52. (5 June 1775). ‘... con dovesi somministrare alla medesima la solita pietanza giornale dalla Gran Prigione nella maniera che si dà alli forzati.’ For the prison daily issue of bread and soup see Wettinger, (2002), 120-123. For a description of the daily routine of girls lodged at the Conservatorio see S. Sciberras, (2003), 62, 63.

⁵³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 150. (17 June 1771).

⁵⁴ The text does not indicate in which unit she was placed.

⁵⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.189. (7 August 1772).

⁵⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 192. (8 September 1772).

was changed to detention in the *Casa della Carità*. The couple later reconciled.⁵⁷ In 1774, following a failed attempt to control his dissolute daughter by having her spend ten days in prison, Anna Zammit's father supplicated the Grand Master to keep her in the *Conservatorio*.⁵⁸ In January 1793 Rosa Formosa was likewise arrested and incarcerated for leading a dissolute life. The supplication was placed on behalf of both her parents. She was incarcerated for one day and consequently entrusted to a custodial relative.⁵⁹ Relatives who were not immediate family members also enjoyed the right to control kin members suspected of prostitution. For instance in September 1788 the relatives of the Vafromier sisters, Catherina, Vittoria and Margarita, supplicated the Grand Master to arrest and detain them in the *Conservatorio*.⁶⁰

Internment in the *Casa della Carità* was generally paid for by the member/s of the family who requested it or by a pious person (*a spesa di una persona pia*).⁶¹ In June 1771, Teresa Spiteri's husband covered the costs of her internment.⁶² Likewise in 1774, Anna Zammit's father paid for his daughter's stay in the *Conservatorio*.⁶³ On 26 September 1775 Maria Borg known as Carcariza (from Birkirkara) was imprisoned for sixteen days. Her husband requested her incarceration because she disobeyed him and persisted in pursuing sex work. Maria too was sent to the *Conservatorio* at her husband's expense. He paid fifteen *oncie* per month for her upkeep.⁶⁴ In consideration of the fact that in 1773 a man employed on a farm earned between 3 to 3.5 *scudi* per week, at a cost of approximately 9.4 *scudi* per week, only well-off relatives could afford to keep wayward females in the *Conservatorio*.⁶⁵ Requests for confinement in the institute and supplications to the Grand Master may have been a last resort for some relatives who endeavoured to protect the family from a potentially 'calamitous situation'.⁶⁶

This parallels the results of William Sanger's 1858 empirical investigation on prostitutes placed in the penitentiary on Blackwell Island in New York City. More than half

⁵⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f. 78. (13 March 1742).

⁵⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 17. (1 April 1774).

⁵⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 159. (28 January 1793).

⁶⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 6. (30 September 1788).

⁶¹ For examples of pious persons paying for the internment of a prostitute in the Ospizio see for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, ff. 47, 52, 87. (1797).

⁶² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 150. (17 June 1771).

⁶³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 17. (1 April 1774). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 40. (8 November 1774).

⁶⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 62. (26 September 1775).

⁶⁵ Y. Vella, (1999), 4.

⁶⁶ cf. Carmel Cassar, 'Monks of Honour: The Knights of Malta and Criminal Behaviour in Early Modern Rome' in *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke*, Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo, Joan-Pau Rubiés (Eds.), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 80

the prostitutes in the penitentiary were daughters of skilled workers or elite artisanal families.⁶⁷ One however cannot rule out the possibility that some women were falsely accused of prostitution and locked up by abusive relatives. Through his study on the records of charitable organisations, Faramerz Dabhoiwala shows how debates on backgrounds that instigated prostitution have always been subject to discussion.⁶⁸ Lotte Van de Pol describes uncontrollable females as ‘wayward daughters’ driven by lust, mendacity, laziness and excessive fondness for sweets and finery.⁶⁹ The aforementioned Teresa Spiteri’s reasons for arrest included kicking up a fight⁷⁰ and holding a dancing party.⁷¹ It is possible that some ‘wayward’ daughters may have been looking for the stimuli of city life. Some were rebellious and loved to party. Some persisted in pursuing prostitution despite family and state control. Seven months after having spent ten days in prison, the aforementioned Anna Zammit was back on the streets working as a prostitute.⁷² In October 1778, Maria Borg known as *la Napolitana* (the Neapolitan) was incarcerated for four days and exiled to Gozo for fighting with her husband and practising with a certain Giovanni Abela. Maria was also accused of contravening a previous court order not to practise or meet up with Abela in any place.⁷³

Antonino Cutrera showed that in the early modern period a common trait in Palermitan prostitutes was their tendency to respond to disciplinary measures by creatively devising alternative ways how to pursue their business.⁷⁴ Salvatore di Giacomo who studied prostitution in Naples, concurred with Cutrera in saying that changing habits and restraining dissolute traits was futile.⁷⁵ These theories seem to echo age old biological and/or psychological theories proposed by nineteenth-century scientists like Michael Ryan, Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero who forged a connection between natural physiological variations and a predisposition towards prostitution.⁷⁶ Despite significant efforts to prove that some women were born with a physical predisposition to be prostitutes, Ryan said that science did not have an answer for their irrational behaviour. Ryan would probably have deemed Teresa, Anna and Maria’s behaviour to be ‘irrational’. The decisions taken by all aforementioned women were, however, not irrational; they were deliberate.

⁶⁷ Sanger, (1858), 535, 536.

⁶⁸ Dabhoiwala, (2012), 272-274.

⁶⁹ Van de Pol, (2011), 147.

⁷⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 192. (8 September 1772).

⁷¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 214. (26 August 1780).

⁷² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 17. (1 April 1774). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 40. (8 November 1774).

⁷³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.147. (26 October 1778).

⁷⁴ Cutrera, (1971), 157.

⁷⁵ Di Giacomo, (1994), 197, 198.

⁷⁶ Self, (2003), 29.

Frans Ciappara questioned the whereabouts of 153 persons who in 1779, in the village of Qrendi, were unaccounted for.⁷⁷ He suggests that similar to what was happening in other European countries these people may have left home to escape face-to-face village life.⁷⁸ All aforementioned prostitutes hailed from villages, they were country women who may have attempted to break away from their family and their community in pursuit of a different life. It is possible that prostitution enabled them to fast track their objectives. The harbour towns with their cosmopolitan lifestyle may have had a magnetic pull on certain women who like the aforementioned Teresa, Anna and Maria may have sought change. Country women who moved to the harbour towns to work as prostitutes were likely to have been socially identifiable and prone to higher forms of community and state control.

In cases concerning prostitution, family social control was not limited to females. Sons who frequented prostitutes were likewise reported and disciplined by parents through the Grand Master's intercession. For instance, in 1768, Salvatore Cuppelli was reported by his parents for practising with a *publica meretrice*. He was incarcerated for nine days and only released when his parents' thought he learnt his lesson.⁷⁹ The range of people who enjoyed the right to demand the arrest of prostitutes by supplicating the Grand Master extended to include wives of adulterers who patronised prostitutes. In 1795, a certain Anna supplicated the arrest and incarceration of Giovanna Caruana a prostitute. Giovanna was incarcerated for eight days and warned not to communicate with Anna's husband.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ciappara, (2014), 58.

⁷⁸ Ciappara, (2014), 57-68.

⁷⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 33. (5 October 1768).

⁸⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 251. (8 July 1795). In the text she is referred to as Anna (no surname).

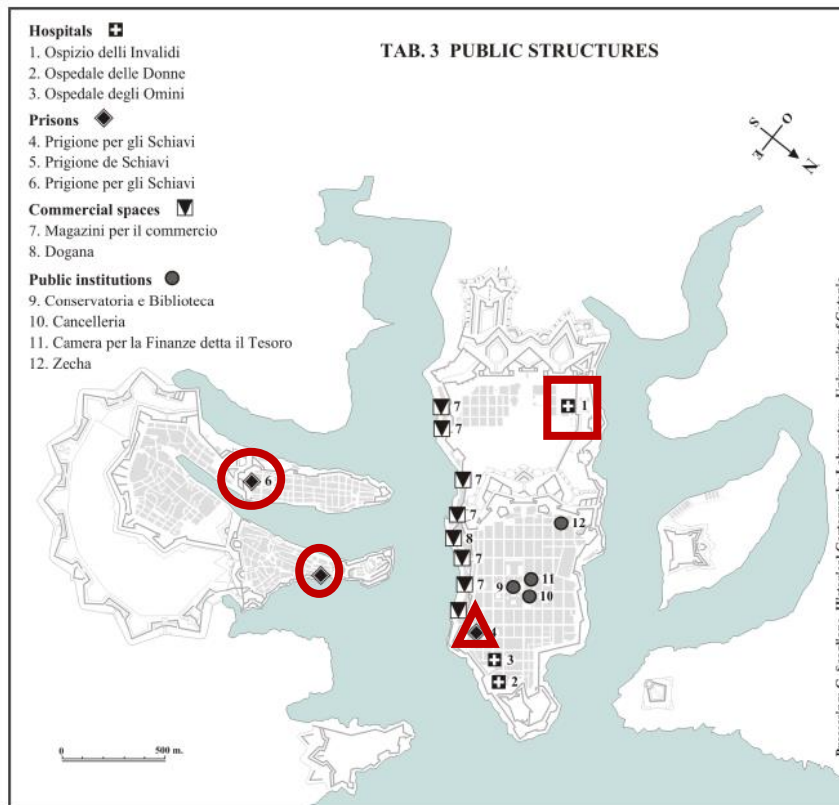


Figure 5.2: Location of the *Ospizio* in Floriana and the state prisons in Valletta, Vittoriosa and Senglea. The red square indicates the location of the *Casa della Carità*, Floriana. The red triangle indicates the location of the state prisons (*Gran Prigione*) in Valletta and the red circles indicate the Vittoriosa and Senglea prisons. Sebastiano Ittar, Engraving on copper 640 x 420 mm Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Acknowledgement Giannantonio Scaglione⁸¹

Community control

Unlike most areas in early modern Europe where cities offered varying degrees of anonymity,⁸² Valletta, the three cities and Floriana were small and compact. In the eighteenth century they were the home to thirty-five per cent of the population.⁸³ They accommodated approximately 33,516 persons.⁸⁴ Not unlike sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venice, Florence and Rome, people living in the harbour area lived in tight conditions.⁸⁵ Cramped urban spaces made family life more of a public neighbourhood affair than a private one. Joanne M. Ferraro suggests that close living quarters fostered some community power and

⁸¹ Scaglione, (2011), 28.

⁸² For a theoretical study of cities and migration see Laurence Fontaine, 'Gli Studi sulla Mobilità in Europa nell'Età Moderna; Problemi e Prospettive di Ricerca,' *Quaderni Storici* xcvi (1996), 739-756.

⁸³ E. Buttigieg, (2011), 5, 6.

⁸⁴ Blouet, (1964), 183-194. For population distribution see Table 1.1 in Ciappara, (2001), 2.

⁸⁵ For Malta see De Lucca, (2013), 11. For Venice see Ferraro, (1995), 504. For Florence and Rome see Mark Galeotti, *Paths of Wickedness and Crime: the underworlds of the Renaissance Italian City*, (New York, Mark Galeotti, 2012), 17, 18.

control over the conduct of family members.⁸⁶ In reality when prostitutes moved from the villages to harbour towns to escape from face-to-face living they were jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. Maintaining anonymity in Valletta and the harbour towns was a challenge.

A significant number of incarcerated prostitutes were caught and sent back to their villages. For instance in August 1773 Orsola Brincat from Qormi was incarcerated for three days for being in Floriana in the night time with a *publica meretrice* and two men. She was sent back to Qormi and ordered to live with her mother. On 7 December 1773 she was rearrested in Valletta. She was incarcerated in chains for three days and sent back home. Eight days later she was caught in Valletta once again and exiled to Gozo. On 15 August 1776 she was back. This time, however, she was pardoned and consigned to her father to be married.⁸⁷ Carmel Cassar shows how neighbours mostly disapproved of prostitution when it threatened their own family life.⁸⁸ Rosa Vitteni's case shed some light on why some families felt threatened. In 1773 neighbours reported Rosa *la Carcura* (the slipper) a *publica meretrice* because they were worried about their sons. Rosa was incarcerated for one day and exiled to Gozo. The precise terminology used to describe Rosa's crime was *andava suolando figli di famiglia* technically meaning that she was soling the sons of families. Since Rosa was nicknamed 'the slipper', this may have been used in tongue-in-cheek humour, a metaphor for copulation.⁸⁹

In her 1966 classic book *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas suggested that notions of dirt were socially constructed and were based on people, animals or things being out-of-place.⁹⁰ In a later revision she shows that religion was at the root of social ideas on notions of dirt and dirtiness.⁹¹ Ashforth and Kreiner describe dirty work as physically, socially or morally tainted.⁹² Physically tainted work involves jobs linked to garbage or death. Socially tainted work involves contact with stigmatised or subordinate groups. Morally tainted work is any activity that is perceived to be sinful. Prostitution according to Ashforth and Kreiner

⁸⁶ Joanne M. Ferraro, 'The Power to Decide: Battered Wives in Early Modern Venice', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. xlviii, 3, (1995), 504.

⁸⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 231. (6 August 1773) N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781 f. 3. (7 December 1773), N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.5. (15 December 1773).

⁸⁸ C. Cassar, (2002), 175.

⁸⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768 – 1773, f. 241. (15 October 1773).

⁹⁰ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo 1966*, (London, Pelican Books, 1970), 12.

⁹¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, (London, New York, Routledge, 2002), xvi.

⁹² Blake Ashforth, Glen Kreiner, 'How Can You Do It? : Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity', in *Academy of Management Review* xxiv, (1999), 413-434.

combines all three forms of taint.⁹³ Rosa's exile indicates that early modern notions of dirt may have been partially based on parental instincts and the innate desire to protect innocent children. The eviction of disorderly prostitutes from neighbourhoods in early modern Valletta was likely to have been based on excessiveness. Practising with underage boys was excessive.

Neighbours were at times disturbed, threatened, molested, scandalised, insulted and also physically assaulted by certain types of prostitutes and their patrons. Drunkards, thugs, thieves and vagrants were known to cluster around the houses of prostitutes.⁹⁴ Disturbances were common and complaints were frequent.⁹⁵ Besides the risk of them being excessive, they were at times a nuisance. In 1782, prostitutes Maria Delicata and her daughter Evangelista scandalised the neighbourhood by hurling insults at a person who was carrying the Holy Viaticum in the street. They were incarcerated for nineteen days.⁹⁶ In August 1769, Rosa Villiani was incarcerated for two days and banned from the street where she was living for fighting and slandering honourable persons.⁹⁷ In 1779 *publica meretrice* Maria Merla was ordered to move house for molesting the neighbourhood (*molesta al vicinato*).⁹⁸ A year later she was arrested for hurling insolences at the night captain during his patrol.⁹⁹ Rowdy parties organised by some prostitutes also caused commotion. In 1760, Gratia Callus and Margarita Theuma, who were both *publiche donne* living in Valletta, were incarcerated for one day for organising a crowded, noisy and disorderly party in their house.¹⁰⁰ In 1778, Antonia Pellegrini from Senglea who is described as a *puttana*, applied for a permit to hold a music and dancing party (*per aver tenuto in casa sua suono e ballo*). Her request was turned down but she went ahead anyway. She was arrested and sentenced to three years exile or a 10 *oncie* fine. She paid the fine.¹⁰¹ Antonia's case revealed that parties required permits issued through the *Castellanix* and that organising a party without a permit carried a hefty fine. Parties offered good opportunities for prostitutes to pick up clients but excessive parties could make people's homes feel uninhabitable.

⁹³ Ashforth, Kreiner, (1999), 413-434.

⁹⁴ Van de Pol, (2011), 60-63.

⁹⁵ On the tendency for people to regularly report people for religious wrong-doing to the Inquisitor see Ciappara, (2000), 357. On prostitution provoking neighbourhood objections in early modern Amsterdam see Van de Pol, (2011), 56-61. For early modern London see Henderson, (1999), 119. For early modern Paris see Benabou, (1987), 109.

⁹⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1782, f. 49. (10 May 1782).

⁹⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768 - 1773. f. 71. (31 August 1769).

⁹⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.164. (14 May 1779).

⁹⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.228. (29 November 1780).

¹⁰⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f. 10. (27 October 1760). ...'á causa che nella notte scorsa facevano un gamo nella loro casa, trattenendo diverse persone'.

¹⁰¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 143. (1 September 1778).

Neighbours' reports on disorderly prostitutes in eighteenth-century Paris were common. During the reign of Louis XV (1710-1774), corruption infiltrated the King's Police force and a general *laissez-faire* attitude prevailed. This fuelled vice and empowered the moral police force (*la Police des Mœurs*).¹⁰² There were two types of informants who acted as spies for the Parisian moral police force; poor wretches (*de pauvres hères*) who Erica-Marie Benabou explains were nicknamed flies (*les mouches*) and 'satellite' recruits who were awarded exemptions.¹⁰³ The former were people who earned a few pennies for spying on worldly women (*femmes du monde*). They used to stand at doors unnoticed and reported the activities of prostitutes to the moral police.¹⁰⁴ The latter were persons from the underworld who provided the police with secret information. In return these spies expected exemptions.¹⁰⁵ Certain neighbourhoods in eighteenth-century London were likewise disturbed by prostitutes. Watchmen of the local watch committees were entrusted to act as informants for the police constables, beadles and patrols.¹⁰⁶ In early modern Amsterdam constables and deputy bailiffs were paid according to the arrest orders they issued and the executions that they implemented.¹⁰⁷ This called for abuse. It drove some constables and deputy bailiffs to offer monetary rewards to informants who helped them capture deviants.¹⁰⁸ In Valletta grand viscounts and lieutenants were directly appointed by the Grand Master.¹⁰⁹ Similar to the constables and deputy bailiffs in early modern Amsterdam, grand viscounts and lieutenants were paid according to the arrest orders they issued and the executions that they implemented.¹¹⁰ A seventeenth-century description of the responsibilities of grand viscounts and lieutenants stated that they had to survey the land in the night time and protect it from bad men. They had to supervise bridges and ensure that no one walked in the streets after six o'clock in the evening without light.¹¹¹ The description goes on to say that in adherence to old statutes the grand viscount or his lieutenant could forcefully take 12 *aspri*¹¹² from each

¹⁰² Benabou, (1987), 61, 105, 106.

¹⁰³ Benabou, 1987), 105.

¹⁰⁴ Benabou, (1987), 61, 105, 106.

¹⁰⁵ Benabou, (1987), 106.

¹⁰⁶ Henderson, (1999), 105.

¹⁰⁷ Van de Pol, (2011), 123.

¹⁰⁸ Van de Pol, (2011), 123.

¹⁰⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 209. (13 January 1773).

¹¹⁰ Van de Pol, (2011), 123.

¹¹¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.9. (c.1601-c1622). '...guardare la terra de nocte da mali Uomini. Visitare li ponti, e quelli far'aconciare e non lassar andare dà poi la terza campana alcuna persona senza lume'. See full job description in Appendix 10.

¹¹² Frederic Chapin Lane, Reinhold C. Mueller, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice: Coins and Moneys of Account* Vol. 1, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 300, 301. Aspri were old silver coins. They were originally byzantine coins then they were adopted by the Turks. They were eventually also adopted by other states that had commercial relationships with the Ottoman Empire.

infamous man or prostitute or tavern keeper who left their door open after the evening six o'clock bell (the third bell).¹¹³ Precautions were however, taken to discourage abuses. If the grand viscount or his lieutenant were found to be fraudulent they would be deprived of their office and would have to pay the injured party double the money that they charged. For every order he [the grand viscount] would get three *aspri* and four *dinari*, and for every civil execution his lieutenant would get five *aspri* and he [the grand viscount] received double.¹¹⁴ To date this research has not revealed any evidence of rewards being offered to informants. Nonetheless rapid police action may indicate that some informants were likely to have collaborated because there was something in it for them.

On 17 September 1731, in the *Castellanix* tribunal, Antonio Felice the night captain of Floriana explained how he had been informed that Paolo Vassallo a blacksmith living in Cospicua was on a boat with Catherina Habela a *publica meretrice*. Paolo and Catherina were under a Court order not to practise. Catherina claimed that the prohibition order never reached her because she was in exile in Gozo.¹¹⁵ It is possible that since both Antonio and Catherina had a criminal record they were under surveillance. Felice (the night captain) accompanied by Lorenzo (no surname) a viscount followed them on a boat all the way to the town of Paola (Casal Nuovo), up to the bridge that led up to the village.¹¹⁶ Paolo noticed that they were being followed and fled. Later that night he was captured, but on the way to prison he escaped and took refuge inside the church of the *Santi Osservanti*.¹¹⁷ Catherina did not run away.¹¹⁸ It is likely that Paolo had more to lose than her. Punishments prescribed on men who disobeyed court orders not to practise with certain prostitutes were harsh. In 1754, Michel'Angelo Lampo a married man from Valletta was caught in the house of Antonia tal-

¹¹³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.9. (c.1601-c1622). '...lo Visconte ò suo luogotenente possi pigliare aspri 12 da cadauno Uomo infame ò donne bagasce ò tavernari, che troverà la porta loro aperta dà poi la terza campana...' cf. Silvano Crepaldi, *Santi e Reliquie*, (Milan, Lampi di Stampa, 2012), 311. This is likely to refer to the toll of the Ave Maria that rang three times a day at 06:00hrs at 12:00hrs and at 18:00hrs. It is thus assumed that the ringing of the 'third' bell was at 18:00hrs.

¹¹⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.9. (c.1601-c1622). 'Aderendo a le institutioni antique statuimo che lo Visconte ò suo luogotenente possi pigliare aspri dodici da cadauno Uomo infame ò donne bagasce ò tavernari, che troverà la porta loro aperta dà poi la terza campana, et trovandosi in questo dicto Visconte ò suo luogotenente in qualche fraude sia private di suo officio et paghi la parte lesa lo duplo, habi per ogni comandamento aspri tre e danari Quattro, et per ogni esecuzione Civile el suo luogotenente aspri cinque et lui el duplo'.

¹¹⁵ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, f.8. (18 September 1781). 'Sei anni sono incirca sò che detto Maestro Paolo fù preccettato da questa Gran Corte à non dovermi praticare io però sono stata mandata in esilio al Gozzo, senza essermi stata mai ingionta verun precepto di non poterlo praticare'.

¹¹⁶ See Figure 5.3.

¹¹⁷ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, Penalix Paulum Vassallo et Catherinam Habela, Testis Faby Cristoforo. (17 September 1731).

¹¹⁸ N.A.M. Processi Box 375 N/A 92/04 Bundle, f.8. (18 September 1781). 'Io sopragionta da detto Uomo, trovai ch'era Lorenzo Visconte di questa Gran Corte quale mi menò seco su d'una barca ove trovai al Capitano di notte della Floriana Antonio Felici, e mi condussero dalli Signori loro'.

Fitaia. His punishment consisted of one year's work in a ditch. He was also prohibited from wandering in the streets of Vittoriosa, Senglea and Bormla after sunset.¹¹⁹ Others faced the rope torture,¹²⁰ unpaid work in public service or a hefty 10 *oncie* fine.¹²¹



Fig. 5.3. Paolo Vassallo and Catherina Habela's journey from Vittoriosa to Paola (Casal Nuovo).

Paolo left on a boat operated by a 14-15 year old boy from Vittoriosa and headed to the Valletta Marina from where he picked up Catherina. They proceeded to the deep end of the harbour where they disembarked and walked over a bridge to reach Paola (Casal Nuovo) (top left corner red box outline).

Extract of an Eighteenth-Century Map of the Grand Harbour by Sebastiano Ittar. This extract shows all the towns around the Grand Harbour: Valletta, Floriana and the three cities.

Engraving on copper 640 x 420 mm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
Acknowledgement Giannantonio Scaglione.¹²²

¹¹⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, f.5. (14 May 1754).

¹²⁰ For a description of the eighteenth century rope torture (strappado) see Kenneth Gambin, *Torture and the Inquisition*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2004). See also Lisa Silverman, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France*, (Chicago & London, Chicago University Press, 2001), 96.

¹²¹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f.15. (11 September 1741).

¹²² Scaglione, (2011), 28.

On 25 October 1743, Pietro Paolo Castolino supplicated the Grand Master's intervention in rectifying an injustice that he had suffered through the action of captain Giannovio.¹²³ Castolino said that he had just returned to Malta after a voyage in the Levant and that he had in his possession a letter that he was asked to deliver to a certain Paulica. He was consigning the said letter when Giannovio pounced upon him and arrested him. Castolino was accused of being a married man caught inside the house of a *publica meretrice*. In order to maintain his good reputation and avoid humiliation and incarceration, Castolino borrowed some money and paid the 25*scudi* fine on the spot.¹²⁴ In his supplication to the Grand Master he said that he had paid the fine as a warrant. He informed the Grand Master that when the incident happened, Paulica's door was wide open. Moreover, he had been separated from his wife for eleven to twelve years.¹²⁵ He claimed to have been unjustly blamed and appealed to the Grand Master to bestow upon him the grace of having his money back. He pledged that he would pray to God for the Grand Master's salvation and long life.¹²⁶

Paulica Hagius was a *publica meretrice* from Vittoriosa known as *dell'Armario* (of the closet). Between 13 March 1742 and 25 October 1743 she had already been detained in prison twice. On 13 March 1742, she was incarcerated for five days for an unspecified crime.¹²⁷ On 19 April 1743, she was incarcerated for six days for slandering a certain Felice Nigri and calling him a pimp.¹²⁸ Her name reappeared in the prison records after Castolino's visit. On 2 August 1751, a fight between two sailors broke out at her house.¹²⁹ In November 1751, she was in trouble again. She was involved in a brawl with a certain Teodoro from Vittoriosa.¹³⁰ On 2 April 1753, she was re-incarcerated for thirty-five days for another

¹²³ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1742-1743, f.141. (7 October 1742). At times prison scribes referred to captains and viscounts on first name basis. This is occasional and demonstrates a certain camaraderie between scribes and captains. It is likely to have been inadvertent. Captain Giannovio was likely to have been captain Giannovio Fenech. On 7 October 1742 Captain Giannovio Fenech arrested a certain Matteo Ellul in his room in the night time when he was in the company of other men and puttane. Ellul was also accused of impertinent behaviour towards viscounts. See also N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1742-1743, f.150. (2 November 1742). The incarceration of Angelo Farrugia a drunken sailor caught behind a woman's door by captain Giannovio Fenech.

¹²⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1742-1743, loose leaf n.p., (25 October 1743). 'Vedendosi dunque l'oratore in questi termini non seppe far altro, e per non perdere la sua reputatione e non vedersi condurre nei carceri, teneva posto certo denaro della gente, subito consegnò scudi venti cinque a detto Capitano per esser liberato della publicità'. Clause VI in Carafa's 1681 statutes *Delitti della Carne* stipulated that any family man caught with a *meretrici* for the first time paid a twenty-five *scudi* fine. This law was duplicated in de Vilhena's 1724 *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali* and in 1743 it was clearly still in effect.

¹²⁵ On judicial separations in early modern Malta see Ciappara, (2001), 160, 161.

¹²⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1742-1743, loose leaf n.p., 25 October 1743. A search in the N.A.M. to establish whether the Grand Master conceded to Castolino's request did not yield any results.

¹²⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f. 78. (13 March 1742).

¹²⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f.202. (19 April 1743).

¹²⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 85. (2 August 1751).

¹³⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 106. (4 November 1751).

unspecified crime.¹³¹ Paulica was clearly known to neighbours and to the *Ministri* and was likely to have been under close observation. These two case studies show that illicit activities of certain prostitutes were relayed to the *Ministri di cattura* efficiently and effectively.

It is possible that some informants who reported prostitutes' to the *Ministri* were women. Women spent a significant amount of time in their house and each others' houses within the neighbourhood and suspicious persons and out of the ordinary activity would immediately be noted. At times reports that reached the *Ministri* may also have stemmed from ambiguous social relations and tensions between neighbouring rivals. In her study on the multiple meanings and functions of early modern Venetian society Monica Chojnacka shows that neighbourhoods were made up of houses with 'porous' boundaries that were largely dominated by women. Men mingled easily and intimately with female neighbours, but their role was secondary. She explains how women living in neighbourhoods knew each other very well and how the neighbourhood interrelationship was often based on reciprocity.¹³² In consideration of the fact that adult men were often away at sea for long periods of time, it is possible that a similar matriarchal society prevailed in early modern Valletta.¹³³

The *Ministri*

'On the roof of the houses are terraces, where the citizens can escape from the controls and molestations of the guards and soldiers. In fact, it is not easy to walk in the streets of the city in the night when the patrols are all the time checking passers-by and sometimes even arresting them'.¹³⁴

Carasi, a French soldier who claimed to have served in the Regiment of Malta in Valletta from 1780-1782 confirmed the existence of efficient guards (*Ministri*) and soldiers who policed the streets of Valletta.¹³⁵ Religion and disease are often believed to be the main drivers behind the birth of armed bands of police.¹³⁶ Kathryn Norberg argues that police forces in early modern European cities were a result of burgeoning states and the extension of

¹³¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.194. (2 April 1753).

¹³² Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, (Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 50, 51.

¹³³ C. Cassar, (2000), 134. C. Cassar, (2002), 166. Ciappara, (2001), 44.

¹³⁴ Carasi, (2010), 135.

¹³⁵ Carasi, (2010), 7-11.

¹³⁶ Francisco Vázquez García, Andrés Moreno Mengibar, *Poder y prostitución en Sevilla*, (Seville, Universidad de Sevilla, 1998), 33.

state power.¹³⁷ In Valletta in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the appointment of a grand viscount and a lieutenant for the purpose of policing the city are described as adhering to very old statutes (*adherendo a le institutione antique*).¹³⁸ The nature of work of the grand viscount and the lieutenant were modelled on the job descriptions of the medieval police officers who policed Rhodes.¹³⁹ These replicated the police service in various fourteenth- and fifteenth-century medieval Italian communes, in offering monetary rewards for capturing law breakers.¹⁴⁰ The *Castellania's Ministri* fell under the leadership of the grand viscount (*granvisconte*)¹⁴¹ and his lieutenant (*luogotenente*).¹⁴² Besides enforcing the law, protecting property and limiting civil disorder, the grand viscount's responsibilities also included the issuing of residence visas to foreigners.¹⁴³ Early modern European city governments employed a few constables or beadles and often depended upon the cooperation of civic militias and neighbourhood watches organised by citizens.¹⁴⁴ City governments according to John-Horacio Keane, never had a professional police.¹⁴⁵ In early modern Valletta besides a civic militia the Order of St John had an established organised police force.

Officers were engaged to help the grand viscount and his lieutenant to maintain law and order. This included superior public health officials (*cattapani maggiori*) and public health officials (*cattapani*),¹⁴⁶ captains (*capitani*)¹⁴⁷ and night captains (*capitani di notte*),¹⁴⁸ who had viscounts (*visconti*)¹⁴⁹ and assistant viscounts (*sotto visconti*).¹⁵⁰ The captains were at

¹³⁷ Kathryn Norberg, 'The body of the prostitute: medieval to modern', in *Sex and the Body 1500 to the Present*, Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher (eds.), (Oxon, New York, Routledge, 2013), 400-404.

¹³⁸ N.L.M. 740, f. 9. (c.1601-1622).

¹³⁹ For a description of the Order's curia in Rhodes see Anthony Luttrell, *The Hospitaller State on Rhodes and its Western Provinces, 1306-1462*, XII (Aldershot, Ashgate/Variorum, 1999), 142-144.

¹⁴⁰ See William M. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287-1355*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1981), 120-122.

¹⁴¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1771-1783, f. 2. (24 November 1773). In the chain of command viscounts fell under the captain of the police and not directly under the grand viscount.

¹⁴² See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1741 – 1743, f. 140. (4 October 1742). See also N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 110. (12 December 1751).

¹⁴³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 225. (3 March 1773). The foreigner had to present a petition addressed to the Grand Master to the Gran Visconte.

¹⁴⁴ John Horacio Keane, 'Introduction: Cities and Civil Society', in *Civil Society: Berlin Perspectives*, John Horacio Keane (ed.), (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2006), 3.

¹⁴⁵ Keane, (2006), 3.

¹⁴⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 253. (1 September 1773). Up to 1773 there were sixteen *cattapani* in Valletta. Thereafter they were reduced to six.

¹⁴⁷ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1773 – 1781, f. 152. (7 December 1778). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781 – 1788, f. 157. (22 August 1784).

¹⁴⁸ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 1773 -1781, f. 117. (13 September 1777), N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773 – 1781, f. 228. (29 November 1780). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 171. (9 February 1772).

¹⁴⁹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, f.142. (31 August 1757). f.171. N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, (7 November 1784).

¹⁵⁰ N.A.M. Processi Box 279, N/A 92/04, Joseph Antonius Alessanti et Interrogatum Loose Leaf. (25 September 1701).

times referred to as police captains (*capitani de'sbirri*),¹⁵¹ and viscounts police (*sbirri*).¹⁵² The hierarchical organisation of the law enforcement unit appears to have been a pyramidal structure (See Figure 5.4). *Cattapani* were only responsible for health and trading issues, they were not involved in policing prostitutes. Captains and viscounts worked together. The captains were responsible for arresting disorderly individuals. Viscounts captured criminals and took them to prison. Although the three cities and Floriana had their own *Ministri*, in serious cases the Valletta captains were called in to take over. For instance in January 1772, two women were arrested in Vittoriosa. Both women were implicated in the murder of the Bishop jailer's son. The women sought ecclesiastical refuge in the church of San Antonio, however in the night time they used to stroll around the city (*galleggiare di quà e di là*). The Valletta night captain was informed. Through his timely action the two women were caught and incarcerated in the state prison (*Gran Prigione*).¹⁵³

Similar to the constables, beadles and watchmen in eighteenth-century London, the *Ministri* operating in Valletta and its neighbouring harbour towns had multiple tasks to accomplish and various misdeeds to monitor.¹⁵⁴ They had to find, arrest, and lock up thieves, murderers, street ruffians, burglars, vagabonds, bandits, beggars, procurers, rapists, wife beaters and disorderly prostitutes and adulterers. A cursory examination of the most common causes of incarceration in the prison records from 1741 to 1798 revealed that dealing in contraband wheat, faulty weights and measures, violent fights, scams, escaped convicts, playing prohibited games, vagrancy, begging for alms and wife beating were far more common than crimes linked to prostitution. For instance in 1754, fifteen men were arrested for wife beating,¹⁵⁵ whereas only five men were detained for dealing with prostitutes.¹⁵⁶ Likewise in 1755, fourteen men were arrested for domestic violence and only three for crimes linked to prostitution. Hunting down troublesome prostitutes and their illicit clients was one task amongst many tasks that the *Ministri* had to execute, it however does not appear to have been a primary task.

Ministri were expected to indiscriminately protect all members of society including prostitutes. Persons who coerced or otherwise verbally or physically injured prostitutes were arrested. In August 1741, Francesco Hagius, a sailor, was incarcerated for twenty days for

¹⁵¹ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 106. (June 1791).

¹⁵² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 206. (31 December 1772).

¹⁵³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 173. (26 January 1772).

¹⁵⁴ Henderson, (1999), 106.

¹⁵⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, ff. 236, 244. N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, ff. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29.

¹⁵⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, ff. 240, 244. N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, ff. 1, 5, 24.

throwing stones at a *donna publica*.¹⁵⁷ On 11 September 1741, Gio Camilleri and Antonio Agius were incarcerated for seven days for slapping Margarita Muscat a *donna di partito* in the face.¹⁵⁸ In August 1751, Saverio Calleya, a soldier, was incarcerated for six months for being impertinent towards prostitute Madalena Gueva.¹⁵⁹ In December 1751, Francesco Parodi a French man from Savoy was incarcerated for eight days for being disrespectful towards a *donna publica* and forcing her to practise with him.¹⁶⁰ On 5 June 1752, Michele Bezzina, the Grand Bailiff's secretary, behaved disrespectfully towards Grazia a prostitute. He ripped off her clothes and beat her up. He was incarcerated for six days.¹⁶¹ In 1715, Maria Mizzi took her procurer Albimo Vassallo to court. She accused him of forcing her to practise with men that she did not want to practise with.¹⁶²

Some prostitutes appear to have been inclined to collaborate with *Ministri*, while others were not. In a study on crime in Renaissance Rome, Mark Galeotti shows multiple ways how collaborating with the police and securing amenable police protectors helped ensure no unwelcome raids and offered protection, support and rescue.¹⁶³ Erica-Marie Benabou's research likewise shows that a significant number of Parisian prostitutes who were patronised by law enforcement officers enjoyed various benefits. She argues that notwithstanding the fact that this practice cut across all ranks the ones who were prosecuted were generally the lower ranking enforcement officers.¹⁶⁴ In Valletta a similar scenario prevailed. From 7 November 1784 to 15 August 1785, Margarita Cachia a prostitute who was described as the *amasia* (lover)¹⁶⁵ of viscount Andrea Azzupardo, was repeatedly ordered not to practise with him. Margarita who hailed from the village of Attard was also accused of abandoning her family. She was banished from Valletta, Floriana and the three cities on four different occasions but she kept coming back.¹⁶⁶ Relationships between prostitutes and viscounts, like Margarita and Andrea's affair, are hard to nail. Margarita may have practised with Andrea because she needed his protection or they may have been in love. All *Ministri*

¹⁵⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f. 8. (25 August 1741).

¹⁵⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1742, f. 16. (11 September 1741).

¹⁵⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 86. (2 August 1751).

¹⁶⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 110. (12 December 1751).

¹⁶¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 137. (5 June 1752).

¹⁶² Yosanne Vella, 'Women Victims of Crime in Eighteenth Century Malta', in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 2004), 20.

¹⁶³ Galeotti, (2012), 16, 17.

¹⁶⁴ Benabou, (1987), 104, 105.

¹⁶⁵ Although the term *amasia* literally means a lover this research revealed various instances whereby prostitutes were described as lovers. The fact that Margarita Cachia was prohibited from 'practising' with Azzupardo and that she was banished from all harbour towns under the pain of exile from the entire domain indicates that she was likely to have been a prostitute. See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 201 (15 August 1785).

¹⁶⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 171. (7 November 1784), f. 177 (15 December 1784), f. 194. (19 May 1785), f. 201 (15 August 1785).

(including viscounts who were the lowest ranking officials) had a warrant that allowed them access to houses. This is evidenced through the incarceration of a certain Benedetto Laganà who spent three days in prison for knocking at the door of a *puttana*, pretending to be a *Capitano*.¹⁶⁷

Some *Ministri* appear to have had ulterior motives for visiting prostitutes' houses. In 1757 viscount Francesco Borg was repeatedly warned to stop visiting prostitutes. In August 1757, he was apprehended once again in the house of a *donna pubblica* in the night time. He was incarcerated for twenty-seven days. On 27 September 1757 he was released with a warning that if he was caught again in the house of *puttane*, he would be incarcerated for two months.¹⁶⁸ From 1741-1798 only five viscounts were incarcerated for mistreating prostitutes. This showed that such incidences were exceptional. Similar to eighteenth-century London, prostitutes and viscounts may have generally reached some sort of compromise.¹⁶⁹ The fact that only viscounts (the lowest ranking *Ministri*) appear to have been prosecuted may also point to the fact that similar to Paris, higher ranking *Ministri* who patronised prostitutes were never brought to justice. Other possibilities exist. The Valletta *Ministri* may generally have behaved ethically, or prostitutes abused by *Ministri* may have been reluctant to report them because of potential negative repercussions.

Some viscounts were tough guys and bullies. In February 1775, viscounts Gio Paolo Cortis, Gio Maria Tanti and Giuseppe Attard were incarcerated on request of the Consul of Naples (*Console di Napoli*) for having beaten up (*per aver messo mano sopra*) an official (*uno coll'uniforme*) of the King of Naples.¹⁷⁰ In April 1766, viscount Antonio di Battista was incarcerated for severely beating up his wife Grazia.¹⁷¹ In March 1777 viscount Giuseppe Vassallo was incarcerated for beating up his mother.¹⁷² Abusive behaviour and bullying may have instigated the antagonism of certain prostitutes towards certain *Ministri*. Benabou says that in eighteenth-century Parisian society, antagonism towards the police was prevalent. It was one of the ways how prostitutes expressed contempt towards the authorities.¹⁷³ Tessa Storey argues that in seventeenth-century Rome antagonism stemmed from flagrancy.¹⁷⁴ The findings of the present research concur with Storey's views and also suggests that certain

¹⁶⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 35. (20 September 1774). The entry only says *Capitano* - it is likely to be referring to the *Capitano di notte*.

¹⁶⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, f. 142. (31 August 1757).

¹⁶⁹ Henderson, (1999), 139, 140.

¹⁷⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1771-1783, f.47. (23 February 1775).

¹⁷¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1764-1767, f. 127. (3 April 1766).

¹⁷² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1771-1783, f. 103. (8 March 1777).

¹⁷³ Benabou, (1987), 304.

¹⁷⁴ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 2008), 113.

prostitutes were antagonistic towards viscounts when faced with abuse. Antagonism may have been a reaction to fear. On 22 October 1771, Francesca Mizzi, a *publica meretrice*, wounded a viscount by hitting him in the head with a piece of wood. She was incarcerated for six days.¹⁷⁵ On 9 February 1772, Maria Borg a *publica meretrice* hurled insults at Ignazio Debono, the night captain. She was incarcerated for two days and released.¹⁷⁶ On 16 January 1798 Rosa Darmanin insulted the lieutenant of Vittoriosa. She was released with a warning not to molest the *Ministri* and to show them respect.¹⁷⁷ Some prostitutes retaliated when *Ministri* attempted to intimidate them or hindered their business. Some also stood up to prison guards. On 13 June 1777, Vincenza Bugeja a *publica meretrice* insulted and threatened the deputy jailer. She had to spend an extra five days in prison.¹⁷⁸

In early modern Valletta prostitutes were charged and arrested by *Ministri*. All cases were adjudicated through the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ*,¹⁷⁹ also known as the lay court *Corte Laicale*.¹⁸⁰ The Grand Master was at the helm of this organisation.¹⁸¹ The *Castellaniæ* was divided into two departments, the judiciary and the law enforcement unit (*Ministri*).¹⁸² The lay civil and criminal arbitral tribunals (*tribunali laici*)¹⁸³ were presided over by judges (*Judex Castellaniæe*) and legal Auditors (*Uditori*).¹⁸⁴ A tribunal of first instance was composed of the *Castellano* and two judges, one of whom had the jurisdiction over civil and the other over criminal cases. Besides judges and the *Castellano* there was also an Exchequer, a vice-Exchequer, two notaries and several clerks.¹⁸⁵ All these court officials were controlled by a separate court that was presided over by the Chief Justice (*Sup. Mag. di Giustizia*).¹⁸⁶ The main focus of this study is on the criminal section of the *Castellaniæ*.

¹⁷⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Cacerati 1768-1773, f. 161. (22 October 1771).

¹⁷⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 171. (9 February 1772).

¹⁷⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, f.104. (16 January 1798). ‘Fu scarcerata col patito per pena e precettata in plena Curia di non molestare li Ministri, e di rispettarli’.

¹⁷⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 110. (13 June 1777).

¹⁷⁹ Borg-Muscat, (1999), 24. The Court of Notabile (Curia Capitanale) presided over the civil and criminal cases involving inhabitants of Notabile, Rabbato, Zebbug, Siggiewi, Lija and Attard. The Gozo Court (Curia Governatoriale) presided over by a governor who was the Grand Master’s representative in Gozo was responsible for Civil and Criminal cases on the island of Gozo.

¹⁸⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, ff.164, 165. (16 December 1771).

¹⁸¹ For a description of the Grand Master’s role see A. Micallef, (2012), 95-96. See also N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 237. (8 April 1773).

¹⁸² Borg-Muscat, (1999), 24.

¹⁸³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol II, f. 335. (19 August 1774).

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Bonello, ‘Notes for a History of the Judiciary at the Time of the Order’, retrieved on 29 November 2014 from www.judiciarymalta.gov.mt/history. Borg-Muscat, (1999), 25.

¹⁸⁵ Borg-Muscat, (1999), 24. The arbitral tribunal also included prosecutors, procurators and lawyers. In the event of an appeal the case was referred to the Appellate Court, which was presided over by one judge, which Court formed a different tribunal in the same Castellaniæ Court.

¹⁸⁶ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f.161. (4 February 1793). In the Libri dei Carcerati the chief justice is referred to as Sup. Mag. di Giustizia.

The criminal judges of the *Castellaniae* functioned more or less like Amsterdam's early modern chief officers (*hoofdofficiers*).¹⁸⁷ They were both chief constables and public prosecutors. They sent law enforcement officers all over the city to deliver warnings, prohibitions and injunctions, they had the power to order house searches, they issued warrants of arrest, incarceration and release, they imposed fines, settled quarrels, and they decided how to punish perpetrators.¹⁸⁸ In crimes concerning carnal commerce, with exception to those crimes that were covered by statutes and carried specific penalties, the legal system in Malta, not unlike the contemporary legal system in Amsterdam, left it largely up to the criminal judges to decide how to punish disorderly prostitutes.¹⁸⁹ In the *Libri dei Carcerati* the *Castellaniae* judges are referred to as Honourable Judges '*Perillustris Sr. Giudice*'.¹⁹⁰ The Grand Master, however, always had the last word.

The right hand man of the *Castellaniae* judges was the court governor (*Castellano*).¹⁹¹ The *Castellano*'s main task was to oversee the swift and upright administration of justice in Valletta, Floriana, the three cities and the rural villages that fell under the *Castellaniae*'s jurisdiction.¹⁹² To accomplish his task the *Castellano* was assisted by a vice *Castellano*,¹⁹³ at times also referred to as the *Castellano* lieutenant (*luogotenente del Castellano*).¹⁹⁴ In the rural villages the *Castellano*'s agents were known as the *Capi Casali*.¹⁹⁵ *Capi Casali* had night captains and health officers (*cattapani*).¹⁹⁶ In 1773 the *Capi Casali* of Żejtun, Żurrieq, Gudja, Mosta, Birkirkara and Mqabba were invested with authority over the night captains and over the *cattapani*. They were also given permission to keep stocks inside their houses.¹⁹⁷

Sentences handed down to prostitutes and other deviants through the *Castellaniae* may largely have sought to collect money and please the Grand Master rather than carry out the administration of justice in accordance with the rule of law. This offered leeway to

¹⁸⁷ For a full description of the jurisdiction of the judge see A. Micallef, (2012), 83-89. Van de Pol, (2011), 93.

¹⁸⁸ Borg-Muscat, (1999), 24.

¹⁸⁹ Van de Pol, (2011), 93, 95.

¹⁹⁰ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f. 69. (13 February 1742).

¹⁹¹ For a full job description of the Castellano see A. Micallef, (2012), 130-134.

¹⁹² cf. Conrad Gerald Thake, 'Mdina: Architectural and Urban Transformations of a Citadel in Malta', Ph.D dissertation, Berkeley, University of California, 1996, 117. Rabat, Dingli, Siġġiewi, Żebbug, Attard, and Mosta fell under the jurisdiction of Mdina's courts of the city magistrates.

¹⁹³ For an instance whereby the vice *Castellano* is mentioned see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 26. (21 April 1789).

¹⁹⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.8. (c.1601-c1622).

¹⁹⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f. 253. (1 September 1773).

¹⁹⁶ cf. Attilia Tommasino, *Sessa Aurunca nel Periodo Aragonese*, (Ferrara, G. Corbo, 1997), 130.

Cattapani were public officials attached to the *Castellania* responsible to safeguard any issues related to public health. They enforced the genuine quality of food, guarded against fraudulent weights and measures, price-hikes and illicit trading.

¹⁹⁷ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 253. (1 September 1773).

wrongdoers and called for abuse. Criminal judges were appointed by Grand Masters during the month of August. Their term in office lasted two years.¹⁹⁸ They had a direct police squad that they deployed to any area that fell under their jurisdiction.¹⁹⁹ Their salary was a portion of the fine inflicted on criminals and their reappointment was entirely based on their ability to preserve the Grand Master's favour during their term in office.²⁰⁰ Most judges ended up being pawns in the hands of Grand Masters; they lacked autonomy, integrity and initiative.²⁰¹ In his 1780 systematic analyses of the Maltese judiciary, Giandonato Rogadeo (1718-1784), a distinguished Italian lawyer, offered a highly critical view of the Maltese judiciary.²⁰² Rogadeo's depreciative view was challenged by Frà Antonio Micallef (1725-1809) an erudite conventual chaplain of the Order of St John²⁰³ who was a professor of Civil Law in the University of Malta from 1771 to 1809. In 1782 Micallef published his *Prospectus* in defence of Maltese judges and the people of Malta.²⁰⁴ Simon Mercieca's research supports Micallef's view. He shows that some contemporary Inquisitors held the *Castellaniæ* judges in high esteem.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁸ On the appointment and job description of the judges of the *Castellaniæ* see N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, ff. 5, 6. (c.1601-c1622).

¹⁹⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 12, f. 329. Also see Bonello, (2014).

²⁰⁰ Bonello, (2014).

²⁰¹ Giovanni Bonello, 'Fra Giorgio Correa' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. VI, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2005), 29. See also Bonello, (2014), 6.

²⁰² Giandonato Rogadeo, *Ragionamenti*, (Lucca, 1780), (Naples, 1783). See also Bonello, (2014). Giovanni Bonello, 'How a Stranger saw the Maltese Legal Profession in 1780' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. I, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2000), 155.

²⁰³ Micallef's served as Almoner of the Holy Infirmary and accompanied the Order's navy on sea voyages. See Michael Galea, Wolf-Dieter Barz, 'Commendatore Fra Antonio Micallef 1725-1809', in *Juris Fontes*. Wolf-Dieter Barz and Michael Galea (eds.), (Karlsruhe, Kit Scientific Publishing, 2012), 25, 26.

²⁰⁴ A. Micallef, (2012), 25.

²⁰⁵ Mercieca, (2011), 457.

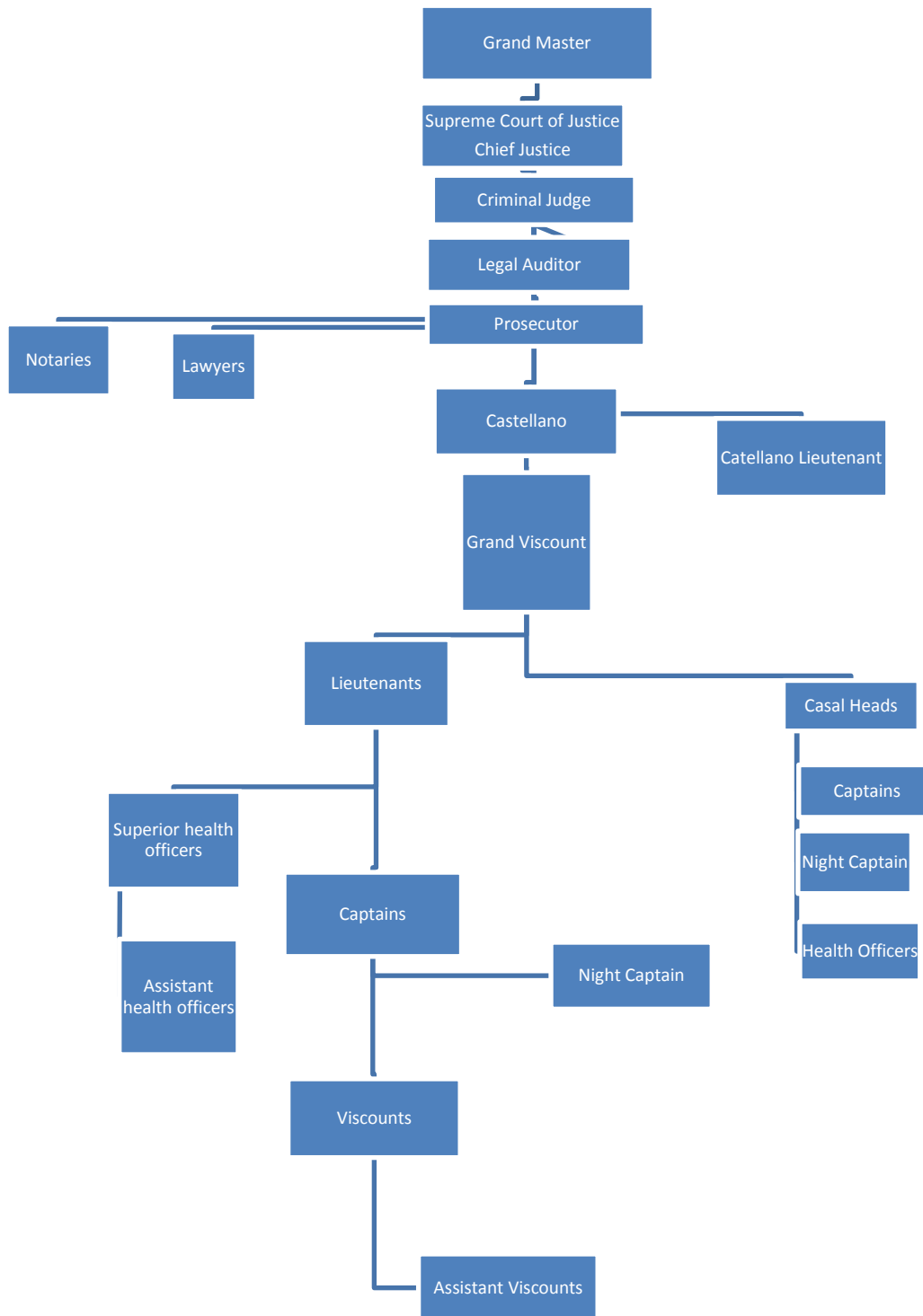


Figure 5.4: Organisational Structure of the Criminal Section of the *Magna Curia Castellaniae*



Figure. 5.5. View of the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* Building, Valletta. (in the red square)

Detail from a late 18th Century map entitled *Porto e Fortezze di Malta* by Sebastiano Ittar

Engraving on copper 78,5 x 53,4 mm

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Acknowledgement Giannantonio Scaglione.²⁰⁶

Punishment and Responses

The majority of males incarcerated for crimes linked to prostitution were *accasati*²⁰⁷ (married men with families). There appears to have been serious clamp downs on *accasati* during the first ten years of Grand Master Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca's reign (1741-1773). In 1742 sixteen men were incarcerated for crimes linked to prostitution, more than fifty percent were *accasati*. The second highest number of male incarcerations was in 1751 (13 incarcerations) when once again the majority were *accasati* caught with prostitutes. The most common form of punishment meted out to *accasati* who patronised prostitutes was the rope torture, unpaid work in public service or a 10 *oncie* fine. Grand Master Pinto reigned for thirty-two years. It

²⁰⁶ Scaglione, (2011), 33.

²⁰⁷ For a definition of *accasato* see http://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario_italiano/A/accasato.shtml

is possible that in later years he may have ran out of steam and his pro marriage and the family campaign against adulterers may have declined.²⁰⁸ Subsequent Grand Masters were consumed by the political challenges of their day and age and preserving marriages and families may have been neglected as other more salient issues took over.²⁰⁹ From 1785 onwards, the policing of adulterers and fornicators declined significantly.

The main causes of arrest of prostitutes were deviant and contraventional. Table 5.3 demonstrates that the absolute highest number of arrests were contraventions of banishment orders. This was particularly acute in the last two decades of the Order's rule when banishments from Valletta appear to have been systematically contravened. This coincided with the reign of Grand Master De Rohan Polduc when the Order faced its 'penultimate crisis'. At the end of the eighteenth century the Enlightenment instigated a chain of revolutions that brought change and erased medieval ideologies. France was the first to experience physical change in 1789. Liberal ideas that spread throughout France caused great turmoil. This had a significant effect on Malta. The Grand Master found himself caught in an age of change when the consolidation and integrity of the Order was crucial to survival.²¹⁰ Repeat contraventions indicated that incriminated prostitutes sensed that the Grand Master had other priorities and they may have taken advantage of this. The last prostitute to be banished from Valletta before the French took over was Maria Lentali who was accused of stealing items from Chevalier Bosredon's house.²¹¹ Ironically Chevalier Bosredon Ransijat was the Secretary to the Treasury of the Order deemed by some to have been one of the arch-traitors of the Order.²¹²

The second most common cause for arrest was physical and/or verbal violence. In 1752, Maria Michallef, who was pregnant, lost her baby when Grazia Fenech a *meretrice* struck her in the belly with her elbow. Fenech was incarcerated for 71 days.²¹³ In 1756, a certain Catherina Ferrandi was beaten up and wounded by Rosana Calleja a prostitute. Calleja spent twenty-seven days in prison, and was consequently sent to the *Casa delle Povere*

²⁰⁸ Carmel Testa, *The Life and times of Grand Master Pinto, 1741-1773*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 1989), 61.

²⁰⁹ For a detailed explanation of the Order's political crisis in the last years of its rule in Malta see Alain Blondy, 'Malte, enjeu diplomatique européen au XVIII^e siècle', in *Méditerranée, Mer Ouverte* Tome I: su XVI au XVIII^e siècle, Christiane Villain-gandossi, Louis Durteste and Salvino Busutill (eds.), (Aix-Marseille, Université de Provence, 1997), 109-121.

²¹⁰ See Matthias Ebejer, 'A Penultimate crisis: the Order of St John, Malta and the French Revolution', unpublished B.A. Honours dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2012.

²¹¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, f.93. (21 November 1797). The knights left Malta on 17 June 1798.

²¹² See for instance William Hardman, *A History of Malta During the Period of the French and British Occupations, 1798-1815*, (London, Longmans Green and Co, 1909), 70.

²¹³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 164. (11 November 1752).

Invalidi.²¹⁴ The third highest cause for arrest was for dishonesty. Dishonest prostitutes were likely to be liars and/or women accused of obscene behaviour. In March 1768, Angela Cauchi, a prostitute and her daughter Catherina Fenech were arrested in Valletta. Angela was arrested for contravening her exile to Gozo, Catherina was arrested for dishonesty because she gave law enforcement officers misleading information on her mother's whereabouts.²¹⁵ Table 5.3 demonstrates that incarcerated prostitutes were lawbreakers, troublemakers and/or nuisances.

In 1757 and again in 1794 no prostitutes appear to have been incarcerated. A possible reason why no arrests were recorded for 1757 is that in this year the old *Castellaniæ* building was demolished and rebuilt.²¹⁶ It could be that during this initial transitional phase policing operations were kept to bare minimum. In 1794 France was experiencing its reign of terror. This had a huge impact on the Order of St John.²¹⁷ It is possible that foreign affairs and national security during this period of time took precedence over policing mischievous prostitutes. The highest number of prostitutes recorded in the *Castellaniæ* prisons in a single year was in 1780 when twenty-seven prostitutes were incarcerated. The second and third highest numbers of incarcerations were registered in the previous and subsequent years (See Table 5.2). This coincided with the introduction of the new Malta regiment in September 1777 and an increased presence of soldiers in Valletta (See Table 5.1).²¹⁸

A quantitative study of prostitutes incarcerated in the *Castellaniæ* prisons from 1741-1798 revealed that over a span of fifty-seven years, 374 prostitutes ended up behind bars (See Table 5.3). Very few entries recorded in the prison registers mention that women were prescribed physical punishment. When it is stated, records simply say that she was released after enduring her punishment (*col patito*),²¹⁹ the form of punishment is rarely specified. Evidence emerging through a cross examination of sources, revealed that the most common forms of physical punishment were lashing (with a stick or a whip) and/or the rope torture.²²⁰ An entry posted in a cleric's diary on 23 May 1771 stipulated that the *Castellaniæ* punished an unnamed woman from the Mandraggio with the rope torture. This was the second time

²¹⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1754-1757, f. 105. (15 August 1756).

²¹⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.9. (10 March 1768).

²¹⁶ Victor Denaro, 'Houses in Merchants' Street Valletta', in *Melita Historica* II, 3 (1958), 159-161.

²¹⁷ Blondy, (1997), 109-121.

²¹⁸ J.M. Wismayer, *The History of the King's Own Malta Regiment, and the armed forces of the Order of St. John*, (Malta, Said Publishers, 1989), 50.

²¹⁹ For an example of physical torture bestowed on a prostitute see N.A.M. Libri dei Carcerati, 1795-1798, f.88. (3 November 1797).

²²⁰ For lashing see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 108. (5 October 1783)

that she suffered the rope as during the first quarter of the first round her body turned dark and she started to bleed (the rope torture normally lasted thirty minutes).²²¹

Military operations were integral to fortress Valletta. The bulk of the defence was carried out by the *militia urbana*, a non-uniformed military corps made-up of inhabitants who trained on Sundays and feast days and were expected to fight like full-time soldiers. In the eighteenth century Valletta's *militia urbana* consisted of eight groups commanded by a colonel. With exception to senior officials, militia soldiers were not salaried.²²² Apart from the *militia urbana*, Valletta had a mobile squad, *la Ronda del Maresciallo* spearheaded by a marshal (a knight).²²³ Its main task was to protect the city from invasions and rebellions.²²⁴ In the second half of the eighteenth century the *Ronda* patrolled the streets with four soldiers, a corporal officer, twelve free men (*franchi*) and a stable master.²²⁵ There was also a street commissioner *Commissario delle Strade*²²⁶ and squares were monitored by Majors known as *Maggiori di Piazza*.²²⁷ The *Libri dei Carcerati* show that besides looking out for invaders and rebels these military officers also kept an eye on prostitutes especially those who hit on soldiers. For instance, in 1773, *pubblica meretrice* Anna Cassar's arrest was requested (*ad istanza*) by the Marshal.²²⁸ In December 1779 Rosa Rizzo was arrested by the square Major for practising with soldiers.²²⁹

Following the priests' revolt in 1775,²³⁰ concerns regarding the loyalty of the Maltese people instigated Grand Master De Rohan to establish the first regular regiment as part of the armed forces of the island.²³¹ In 1777, 1,055 men were recruited from Avignon, Corsica and Marseilles.²³² These soldiers received a minimum salary.²³³ Their mission was to suppress

²²¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol, II, f. 123. (23 May 1771).

²²² Paul Chetcuti. 'Direct Employment of the Maltese with the Order of St John 1775-1798', unpublished B.A. Honours dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1968, 117. See also Wismayer, (1989), 7-50. The militia urbana were also responsible for the three cities and Floriana. Each troop was under the command of a knight. There was also a militia di campagna that was divided into six troops and was responsible for guarding 6 casals (Birkirkara, Qormi, Naxxar, Żebbug, Żejtun and Luqa).

²²³ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 208. (9 January 1773). The patrol included mounted police. On the militia in the eighteenth-century see Chetcuti. (1968), 117. See also Wismayer, (1989), 7-50.

²²⁴ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 205. (31 December 1772). On the militia in the eighteenth-century see Chetcuti, (1968), 117. See also Wismayer, (1989), 7-50.

²²⁵ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 208. (9 January 1773). The patrol included mounted police.

²²⁶ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.163. (5 May 1779).

²²⁷ For an example of a prostitute arrested by a *Maggiore di Piazza* See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 189. (15 December 1779). See also N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 203. (19 May 1780) and N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 240. (12 February 1781).

²²⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 224. (12 June 1773).

²²⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.189. (15 December 1779).

²³⁰ On the 1775 priests' rebellion see Borg-Muscat, (2002), 239-252.

²³¹ The soldiers of the militia forces were not paid. Only the regimental officers were given a minimum form of stipend.

²³² See Carasi, (2010), 12-14.

future revolts and support the city's military operations. Some of these men turned out to be trouble makers and their time in Valletta was short-lived, they were deported and Maltese soldiers were recruited in their place.²³⁴ It is possible that the presence of foreign salaried soldiers in the city attracted high numbers of prostitutes. This may have created disorder and may explain the sharp rise in incarcerations in 1779 and 1780 (See Table 5.1). It may also explain Carasi's claim on high numbers of prostitutes.²³⁵

Kathryn Norberg notes that the most common form of prostitute was the army camp follower. These prostitutes were the most feared and reviled because they were believed to pose a threat to the city's security by distracting soldiers from their task. Moreover they infected soldiers with venereal disease.²³⁶ Parisian prostitutes likewise plagued the French army.²³⁷ Notwithstanding the fact that Valletta was a fortress, Table 5.1 shows that with exception to 1779-1781, the number of prostitutes arrested for touting soldiers was low. It is possible that soldiers in the city were well protected by the *Ronda* and since the *militia urbana* were unsalaried they were not really interesting to prostitutes. This theory is supported through the fact that some soldiers appear to have offered prostitutes support and protection rather than money. In 1764, *publica donna* Madalena Mallia known as *Canonica* conspired with Pietro Vuasta, a soldier, in stealing money, an expensive blouse with gold buttons and other precious objects from Lorenza Fenech.²³⁸ In July 1777, Teresa Carbun a *publica meretrice* was having trouble with her neighbours. She threatened that she would tell her soldiers (who were her lovers (*amasi*)) to beat them up and kill them.²³⁹ In September 1777, prostitutes Anna Vella known as *Debba Baida* (white mare) and her daughter Teodora Galea who ran a shop in Valletta, incited soldiers who were their lovers to help them overpower the night captain and his officers. They spent nine days in jail and were thereafter prohibited from keeping shop.²⁴⁰

²³³ Dennis Castillo, *The Maltese Cross A Strategic History of Malta*, (Westport, Connecticut, London, Praeger Security International, 2006), 87. Wisniewski, (1989), 50.

²³⁴ Hoppen, (1993), 414, 415.

²³⁵ Carasi, (2010), 115, 116.

²³⁶ Norberg, (2013), 400.

²³⁷ Benabou. 324.

²³⁸ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1764-1767, f. 29. (20 July 1764).

²³⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.117. (13 September 1777).

²⁴⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 117. (13 September 1777).

Table 5.1: Prostitutes arrested for practising with soldiers 1741-1798.

Years	Number of Prostitutes
1741 – 1751	1 (lacuna 1743-1750)
1752 -1762	0 (lacuna 1757-1760)
1763-1773	5
1774-1785	21
1786-1798	0

The spread of venereal disease may have been one of the reasons why the Order took measures to control prostitutes who hit on soldiers. In 1779 the Grand Master ordered Giovanna Girot's arrest because he was informed that she infected a soldier with the *mal venereo*.²⁴¹ A month later in July 1779 she was rearrested for the same crime along with Regina Agius.²⁴² In 1779 seven prostitutes were incarcerated for infecting soldiers with venereal disease. One was sent to hospital for treatment, the rest were banished. In 1780 six prostitutes were arrested for hitting on soldiers, one was placed in the *Conservatorio* the rest were banished. An undated fragment of a loose folio that surfaced in the *Libro dei Carcerati* 1796-1798 revealed that women in Valletta were examined for venereal disease (See Figure 5.6). Examinations were carried out by professors (*Professori*). When this visit was conducted (presumably between 1796-1798) eight named women aged fifteen to twenty-six were diagnosed with the disease. Another ten had to be re-examined in six months.²⁴³ These women were not labelled but it is possible that some of them were prostitutes.

²⁴¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1779, f. 166. (8 June 1779). Giovanna Girot carcerata per ordine di S.A.S. perche si disse d'aver comunicato il mal venereo ad un soldato. 11 Giugno 1779 fù mandata nel Sacro Ospedale per curarsi.

²⁴² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1779, f. 169. (5 July 1779). Regina Agius carcerata per ordine dei S.A.S. perche fù accusata d'aver comunicato il mal venereo à soldati.

²⁴³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, loose leaf, f.106. (undated). '... mesi sei, qualora nelle visite de Professori da farsi di tempo in tempo si troveranno infette di tale morbo Natala Bilocca, Benvenuta Farrugia,

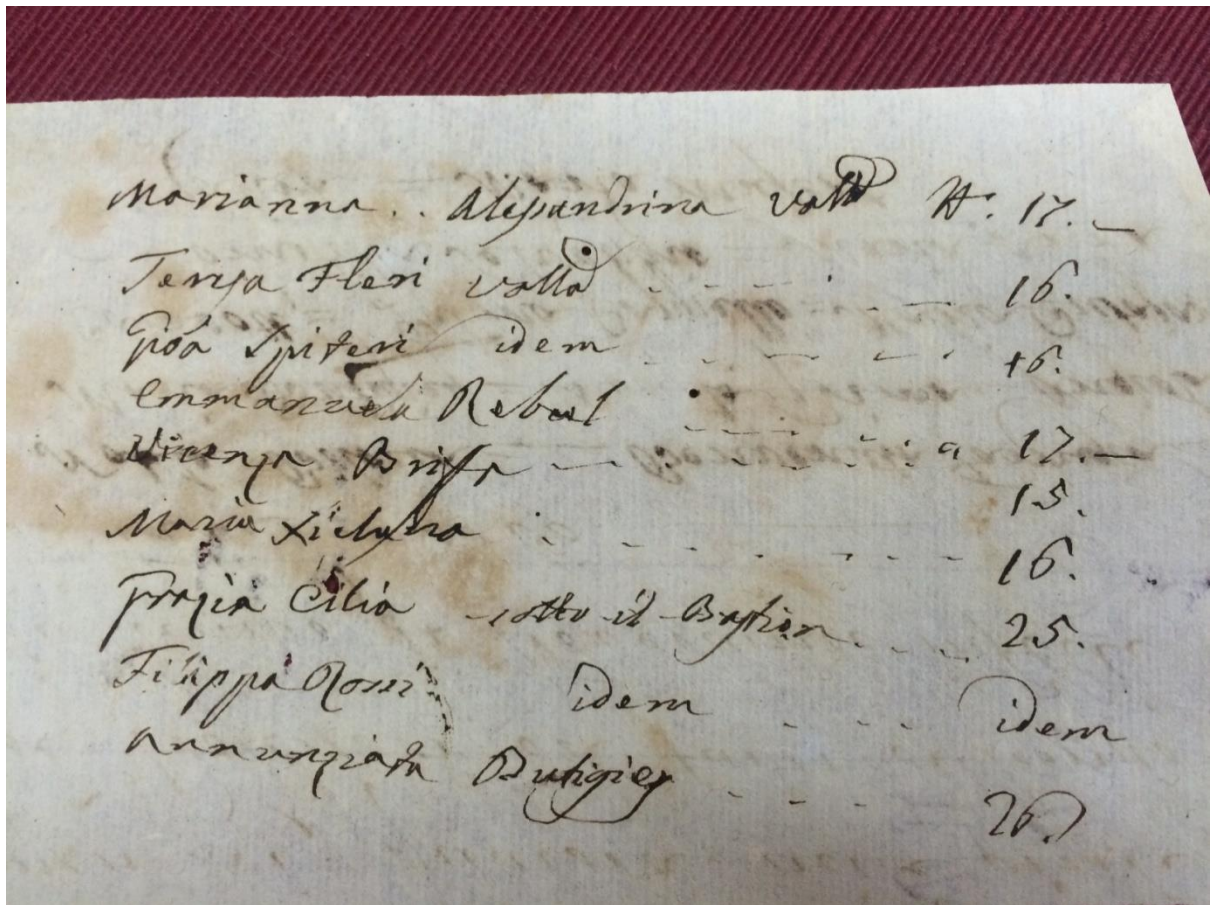


Figure 5.6 Excerpt from the *Libro dei Carcerati* 1796-1798 enlisting the names of some women in Valletta found to be infected with venereal disease.

Samuel K. Cohn Jr shows how in the early modern period, physicians and the laity blamed others for pandemics and blamed themselves for bouts of syphilis. He explains that from the last quarter of the sixteenth century onwards the threat of epidemics led to the expulsion of prostitutes and other undesirables from cities. Moral and physical street cleansing campaigns stemmed from progress in the field of medicine and a move from theological-Galenic orientations (God, the stars, climate etc.) to alien germs causation. Syphilis on the other hand was not blamed on outsiders but was perceived to be an internal problem.²⁴⁴ This view conforms to the way the Order of St John's dealt with prostitutes infected with venereal diseases in early modern Valletta. The Order took the necessary precautions in obliging women to undergo medical check-ups at regular intervals and sent

Maria Buttigieg, Modesta Grima, Angiola Carabott, Palma Cappello, Maria Cutajar, Domitilla Selvaggio, Maria Anna Zahra, Maria Muscat...'

²⁴⁴ Samuel K. Cohn Jr., 'Renaissance Emotions: Hate and disease in European Perspective', in *Emotions, Passions, and Power in Renaissance Italy*, Fabrizio Ricciardelli and Andrea Zorzi (eds.), (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 145-170.

arrested prostitutes infected with venereal disease to the hospital for treatment.²⁴⁵ As a last resort, infected prostitutes who violated court orders and persisted in practising and spreading the disease were banished. Banishment was the most common form of punishment prescribed for incorrigible recidivists.

From 1741-1798, 169 of 374 (c.45%) prosecuted prostitutes were banished, 53 (c.15%) were sent to the *Ospizio* or the *Conservatorio*. Detention in the *Ospizio* could also be changed to confinement in the woman's home village or banishment from Valletta and/or the harbour cities.²⁴⁶ The latter seems to indicate that being confined to living in a particular village or being banished from Valletta and/or the harbour cities was preferable to detention in the *Ospizio*. It may also have been advantageous for the Order of St John. At fifteen *oncie* per detainee per month keeping women in the *Ospizio* was a considerable expense on the Order.²⁴⁷ It is also possible that space inside the *Ospizio* and the *Conservatorio* was limited. Lu and Miethe suggest that banishment was advantageous because it was cheap it only entailed taking the prosecuted to a specific place. It was also highly symbolic because the spectacle of pronouncing banishment caused public degradation which contributed towards enhancing community solidarity. Moreover banishment was considered to be more efficient and humane than the death penalty or forced labour.²⁴⁸ Antonino Cutrera shows how in eighteenth-century Palermo, despite banishment, most prostitutes remained in the Cassaro (a popular area in the city where prostitutes used to hang out). He argues that banishment orders were rarely obeyed. Cutrera suggests that the authorities issued banishment orders in full knowledge that they would be disobeyed.²⁴⁹ Jason Philip Coys explains that in the sixteenth century, magistrates in Ulm were reluctant to follow up on banishment because they did not want the townsfolk to perceive them to be too stern or unsympathetic towards women.²⁵⁰

The *Libri dei Carcerati* 1741-1798 indicated that the Grand Master's and judges' decisions on the form of banishment were based on a case by case basis. There are clear indications that the severity of the crime called for further and longer distancing. Procuring, practising with non-Catholics and excessively disorderly or lewd behaviour were punished

²⁴⁵ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.180. (3 October 1779). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.187. (28 November 1779).

²⁴⁶ For detention in the *Ospizio* changed to confinement in a village see for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f.137. (8 March 1792). For detention in the *Ospizio* changed to banishment from Valletta and Floriana see N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 38 (6 July 1789).

²⁴⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 62. (26 September 1775).

²⁴⁸ Terance D. Miethe, Hong Lu, *Punishment: A Comparative Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 30, 31.

²⁴⁹ Cutrera, (1971), 184.

²⁵⁰ Jason Philip Coy, *Strangers and Misfits: Banishment Social Control and Authority in Early Modern Germany*, (Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2008), 44-46.

with exile to Gozo. General disorderliness was punished through banishment from one, two, three or all four harbour towns. A significant number were simply banished from Valletta. From 1741-1798, only seven, out of 169 banished prostitutes were exiled from the entire domain. It seems that this was a rare occurrence. A single entry dated 6 March 1743 mentioned the flogging and exile to Pantelleria of a certain Domenica Vella a procuress from Birkirkara.²⁵¹

Banishment was a harsh form of punishment.²⁵² On 5 October 1783, Maria a prostitute known as *il Baida* (the fair one), was incarcerated for returning from her exile in Gozo and contravening a court order to stay away from Valletta and Floriana. On 8 October 1783, her exile was renewed. On 13 October she turned up at the doors of the *Castellanix* prisons asking to be re-incarcerated. She said that she could not bear the constant molestations she was suffering in exile at the hands of youths. The Grand Master addressed her plea by changing her sentence to confinement in the town of Senglea. She was warned that if she was caught outside the confines of the city she would be punished with twenty-five strokes of a cane.²⁵³

Unlike early modern Memmingen and Paris where punishments prescribed on prostitutes were unremitting,²⁵⁴ punished prostitutes in Valletta frequently benefitted from the Grand Master's *bonus pater familias* usual clemency (*solita clemenza*).²⁵⁵ A multitude of prostitutes received a gracious decree (*grazioso decreto*) from the Grand Master.²⁵⁶ Others were graced (*furono aggratiati*). For instance on 7 June 1751 Maddalena Ellul was banished from Valletta, the three cities and Floriana. On 28 March 1752 the Grand Master bestowed upon her the grace of having her banishment withdrawn (*è stata aggratiata*).²⁵⁷ In punishing prostitutes judges endeavoured to perpetuate this ideology. A significant number of banishments appear to have been reduced or were pardoned. In 1773, Rosa Vitteni, a *publica meretrice* was exiled to Gozo but her exile was pardoned on condition that she did not reside in Valletta or Floriana.²⁵⁸ In 1795, Lucida Habejer was sent to Gozo, but on 12 March 1796 she was granted permission to spend fifteen days in Malta. On 2 April she was pardoned and

²⁵¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f. 186. (6 March 1743).

²⁵² Miethe, Lu, (2005), 30. The authors say that death and penal servitude at times awaited banished persons.

²⁵³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 108. (5 October 1783)

²⁵⁴ Rublack, (1999), 135. Bénabou, (1987), 62-65.

²⁵⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1741-1743, f. 20. (21 September 1741). '... Sua Altezza Serenissima Padrone usando della sua solita clemenza ordinate che tutti fossero scarcerati'.

²⁵⁶ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, f.98. (11 December 1797).

²⁵⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f. 74. (4 June 1751).

²⁵⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 241. (15 October 1773).

allowed to stay.²⁵⁹ Some prostitutes who were exiled to Gozo were pardoned because they unexpectedly found a husband. For instance on 12 March 1769, Maria Xiberras a ‘dishonest’ seventeen year old girl suspected of having had carnal commerce with Turks, was banished to the island of Gozo. In view of her betrothal to a Giuseppe Saliba she was pardoned.²⁶⁰ At the end of the eighteenth century Giovanna Caruana, a *publica meretrice*, was banished from Valletta and sent to the island of Gozo seven times. The eighth time she was caught, on 4 April 1792 she was pardoned, released from prison and freed (*scarcerata liberamente*).²⁶¹ A significant number of prostitutes who were banished to Gozo may have returned to Valletta and the harbour towns on fishing boats. In January 1753, Vincenzo Andarolo who was a galley rower was incarcerated for twenty-one days and condemned to work on the galley in shackles for knowingly (*conscientemente*) transporting Madalena Mallia (a prostitute who was exiled to Gozo) on a fishing boat back to Valletta.²⁶² The emphasis on ‘knowingly’ indicated that most prostitutes travelled back to Malta as stowaways. Little is known about what prostitutes exiled on Gozo did during their stay there. Some appear to have pursued sex work opportunities in Nadur. On 25 March 1768, Maria Portelli who was from Valletta, was incarcerated on her husband’s request. He accused her of compromising their fifteen year old daughter’s honour. Maria was incarcerated for 135 days and exiled to Gozo with a warning not to return without the Grand Master’s permission.²⁶³ On 19 November 1771 she was arrested in Valletta and accused of leading a dishonest life and banished once again to the island of Gozo.²⁶⁴ On 17 June 1772, she was incarcerated once again for having contravened her exile to Gozo, she was also charged with leading a dishonest life in Nadur (Gozo) along with Gratiulla Said and Alonsa Farrugia.²⁶⁵

Judicial clemency offered prosecuted prostitutes routes out of punishment through negotiation, indulgence or remissions. Similar legal customs that intertwined legal and religious thought were found in early modern Naples.²⁶⁶ Stephen Cummins shows how alternatives to punishment along with remissions were essential parts of the realities of early modern justice. The idea behind this was to instigate contrition. Remissions however also

²⁵⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, 241. (15 October 1773).

²⁶⁰ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 22. (21 July 1768). N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f. 54. (12 March 1769).

²⁶¹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f. 205. (14 September 1785), f. 237. (5 July 1786), f.264. (19 April 1787), N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795 ff. 56 (28 December 1789), 76 (17 June 1790), 101 (27 March 1791), 114(13 September 1791), 140 (4 April 1792).

²⁶² N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1750-1754, f.184. (22 January 1753).

²⁶³ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.11. (25 March 1768).

²⁶⁴ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.163. (19 November 1771)

²⁶⁵ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1768-1773, f.183. (17 June 1772)

²⁶⁶ Cummins, (2016), 258.

offered opportunities for abuse and contestation they rarely effectively encouraged adherence to laws.²⁶⁷ Similar to what was happening in Palermo and Naples, prostitutes banished from Valletta and other harbour towns did not stay away for long. Judges generally castigated contraventions with a repeat order. This led to a boomerang course of action with some Grand Masters and judges ultimately giving up and pardoning the culprit. Significant numbers of mischievous prostitutes who were banished challenged the strictures and structures that controlled them.

²⁶⁷ Cummins, (2016), 258, 264.

Table 5.2: Female Incarcerations of Prostitutes in the *Libri dei Carcerati* 1741-1798

Year	Incarcerated Prostitutes
1741	3
1742	7
1743	3
1750	3
1751	7
1752	3
1753	3
1754	1
1755	5
1756	5
1757	-
1760	3
1761	10
1762	2
1763	3
1764	6
1765	3
1766	7
1767	6
1768	10
1769	14
1770	13
1771	10
1772	11
1773	12
1774	4
1775	10
1776	4
1777	13
1778	11
1779	20
1780	27
1781	18
1782	12
1783	7
1784	10
1785	8
1786	11
1787	9
1788	7
1789	11
1790	7
1791	7
1792	2
1793	3
1794	-
1795	5
1796	6
1797	7
1798	4

Table 5.3: Principal Causes of arrest recorded in the *Libri dei Carcerati*, 1741-1798

Contravening Banishment Orders	82
Verbal/ Physical Violence	44
Anti Social or obscene behaviour	43
Procurement	40
Practising with soldiers	27
Practising with prohibited men	24
Theft	22
Practising in prohibited places	14
Practising with Turks	8
Coming to Valletta or Floriana to work as prostitutes	7
Infected with venereal disease	7
Being an adulterous prostitute	6
Organising disorderly parties	6
Resisting eviction orders	5
Loitering in the night time	5
Hosting prostitutes in houses in Valletta	4
Practising with thieves and bandits	3
Escaping from the <i>Casa della Carità</i>	3
Murder	1
To testify in a Murder Case	1
Unspecified	22
TOTAL	374

Conclusion

Moral perspectives and sanctions on the evil traits of prostitutes appear to have been mostly propagated by Catholic doctrine and supported by certain families who at times roped in the Grand Master's help. Prostitutes who were policed by relatives, the community and the *Ministri* were mostly lawbreakers or mischievous. Prostitutes did not end up behind bars because of their status, insidious policing or because of the intolerant attitudes of the civic authorities. They were incarcerated because they defied parental and spousal control or were lawbreakers; they ignored court warnings and court orders, rejected attempts to reform and challenged authority. Prostitutes who were prosecuted were offenders and not victims. The relatively low number of prostitutes who ended up in prison indicated that the majority were not mischievous and therefore prostitutes were not a major preoccupation for the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ*.

Disciplinary action prescribed on prosecuted prostitutes varied. Some punishments were corrective, others were exclusionary. Corrective measures included sound offs, warnings and internment in the *Conservatorio*. Exclusionary forms of punishment were ultimate punishments reserved for excessively mischievous prostitutes. This included eviction, detention in the *Ospizio* or banishment. Detention in the *Ospizio*, eviction and banishment were punitive forms of punishment that followed age old traditions seeking to clear the weeds from society. Exclusionary penalties were stern however they were often commuted and/or aborted. Some punishments were contested through supplications. Grand Masters 'graciously' responded to supplications with 'usual clemency'. This enabled them to further their *bonus pater familias* role in not simply collaborating with families in preventing wayward girls from falling into prostitution but also responding positively to remorseful prostitutes. Some mischievous prostitutes challenged the authorities through insubordination. Some repeatedly contravened banishment and/or attempted to escape from prison. These women were a thorn in the judiciary's side. They were not inclined to reform or abide by court orders and they were not easily uprooted. This form of disciplinary action was unsuccessful yet the Grand Master and the *Castellaniæ* judges persisted in maintaining the same formula.

Incoherency between vigilant neighbours who collaborated with efficient *Ministri* and a *bonus pater familias* oriented judiciary with high tendencies to commute penalties, defeated the purpose of policing and encouraged recidivism. The Order's adherence to archaic laws and archaic methods of policing and its disinclination to experiment with new ideas curtailed change and inhibited progress. Some prostitutes entangled in the regulatory net, knew the

way out. The loopholes in the system had long been identified. Grand Masters who were not fully focused on local affairs offered additional opportunities that certain types of prostitutes sensed and exploited. This is particularly evident in the last decades of the Order's rule when the Enlightenment rocked the foundations of the Order and the Grand Master struggled to maintain his grip on society. Disorderly prostitutes during this period of time were particularly flagrant and notably defiant. This chapter showed that early modern prostitutes in Valletta who ended up in court books were accused of, or had committed crimes. The entrepreneurship of these prostitutes was deviant. Histories of prostitution based on court books are histories of mischievous, law breaking prostitutes. They are unlikely to produce a correct reflection of the realities of prostitution and may have overshadowed significant non deviant entrepreneurial pursuits.

Chapter 6

A Geography of Prostitution

Introduction

Hierarchical values, patriarchy and religion are traditionally believed to have imposed constraints and exclusions on early modern prostitutes. Most historians consider prostitutes to be integral to the margins of society and the underground world of gamblers, vagrants, beggars and thieves.¹ Others argue that prostitutes resisted marginalisation or were somewhat integrated.² Such debates on boundaries purport the notion of otherness.³ Recent developments in historiography propose a broader scholarship on marginality and an evaluation of the lives and thoughts of the marginalised persons who were seemingly lost in the past. Instead of insisting on binary inclusion or exclusion approaches, this way forward suggests engaging with a spectrum of social experiences.⁴ This chapter seeks to contribute to this scholarly strand of writing by looking at the capacity of prostitutes to circumvent impositions aimed at keeping them at arm's length. It argues that notwithstanding the regulated physical separations of chaste men and prostitutes, and honourable and dishonourable women, prohibited social and geographical spaces were not inaccessible to prostitutes.

Geographical boundaries imposed by the civic authorities really and truly targeted courtesans who owned or rented houses in the rich areas and patronised the elite. Courtesans were elite prostitutes who catered for men of high social standing.⁵ These prostitutes (possibly with the collaboration of their elite patrons) appear to have been quick to devise ways to camouflage their activities. Such laws banning prostitutes from rich zones within the Convent city were unlikely to have had much meaning for prostitutes who were not well-off. The latter would not have afforded to buy or rent houses in these areas. The point of commonality between courtesans whose physical residential presence in the city's rich areas

¹ See for instance Perry, (1980), 212-234. Griffiths, (2008), 21. Van de Pol, (2011), 52-26.

² See for instance Lucia Ferrante, 'Pro mercede carnali. Il giusto prezzo rivendicato in tribunale', in *Memorie*, xvii, (1986), 42-58. Benabou, (1987), 307, 317-318. Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 85-94.

³ Elizabeth S. Cohen, 'Women on the Margins', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman and Katherine A. Melver (eds.), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2013), 317, 318.

⁴ E.S. Cohen, (2013), 317, 318..

⁵ Bonnie G. Smith, *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Women in World History: Vol I*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 496.

was officially excluded and other types of prostitutes, whose economic limitations constrained them to live outside the rich areas, was their dynamism in devising creative ways how to maintain their clients and profitability. This chapter investigates how and in what ways different types of prostitutes navigated their way around regulated and lived spaces. German sociologist and philosopher Max Weber suggests that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun.⁶ Clifford Geertz shows how cultural meaning can be drawn from these webs.⁷ This chapter seeks to investigate entrepreneurial pursuits by examining some webs of significance spun by early modern prostitutes in the city of Valletta.

The Rich Areas

Valletta can best be typified as a Renaissance fortress city, sited on a ridge jutting out between two harbours, criss-crossed by straight parallel streets as on a checkerboard. The streets lead to four points of the compass (four of the streets still carry their original names Tramontana (North Street), Mezzodi (South Street), Levante (East Street) and Ponente (West Street)).⁸ The central panel was ambitiously laid out with ecclesiastical buildings and imposing houses populated by Hospitallers. In an article on a rare eighteenth-century map of Valletta by Sebastiano Ittar housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Giannantonio Scaglione shows that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the underlining strategic military aspect of the city remained unchanged.⁹ Ittar's map is framed by six views that offered windows onto the eighteenth-century elite urban and civic dimensions of the city of Valletta and its main harbour (See Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3).

Though largely utilitarian, buildings in the elite urban zone were also highly decorative. In the early seventeenth century the new style of Baroque which arose in Italy and France and spread through Roman Catholic countries, swept through Valletta. Baroque monumentality in the city's rich areas culminated in the mid-eighteenth century with the creation of imposing square buildings with wide staircases and triumphal motifs carved in stone.¹⁰ Similar to the architectural work of buildings in other prosperous European cities, the early modern architecture of Valletta's rich areas faced the challenges of a society which was

⁶ Quoted in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York, Basic Books, 1973), 5.

⁷ Geertz, (1973), 5.

⁸ Peter Vassallo, 'Valletta (meta) Fictionalized Historiographically', in *Sites of Exchange: European Crossroads and Faultlines*, Maurizio Ascari, Adriana Corrado (eds.), Amsterdam, New York, Rodopi, 2006), 211.

⁹ Scaglione, (2011), 18. Scaglione explains that apart from the suburb of Floriana that registered an increase, the other towns around the harbour do not appear to have experienced any major urban developments.

¹⁰ Denis De Lucca, *Carapечchia: Master of Baroque Architecture in Early Eighteenth Century Malta*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 1999), 110-140.

growing more populous, mobile, enterprising, competitive and affluent.¹¹ It symbolised prestige, power, and wealth. Barons (*baroni*), counts (*conti*) and citizens (*cittadini*),¹² took the cue and built houses that mimicked the buildings of knights and blended with their immediate surroundings. According to historical anthropologist Peter Burke, public buildings offered a back drop to ritualised daily interactions. They were an integral part of the theatrical drama of everyday life.¹³

Ittar's views are an idealistic representation of 'a very happy domain'. The images do not include views of the less affluent areas of the city. They reflected the image of Valletta that the Order of St John wanted to portray to outsiders in the eighteenth century: a '*felicissimo dominio*' from where no one in her/his right frame of mind, not even a convict, would want to escape.¹⁴ Valletta was the seat of authority that articulated systems of belief.¹⁵ Derek Keene shows that the cultural identities of cities and their regions were expressed through boundary marks, monuments, iconography and various other forms of cultural expression. As seats of authority impetus was given to movable and immovable culture through the invocation of religion, deities, saints and heroes. These according to Keene eventually became some of the recognised cultural markers of the city for outsiders.¹⁶ An anonymous late sixteenth-century Polish traveller revealed that Valletta possessed an array of important relics of saints. When he arrived in Valletta in 1595, a priest showed him the intact (*freschissima, come se fosse stata appena tagliata dal resto del corpo*) entire palm of the right hand (*palma dextram integram*) of St John the Baptist and a piece of his nose (*pezzetto di naso di quell Santo*), the entire foot of Sancti Lazari Quadriduani,¹⁷ a finger of St Mary Magdalene and part of the head of St Ursula. Despite being rather confused as he had already seen the head of St Ursula in Colonia (Cologne) and the palm of John the Baptist in Venice, he kissed all the relics with great reverence.¹⁸

¹¹ Wolfgang Braunfels, *Urban Design in Western Europe, Regime and Architecture, 900-1900*, Kenneth Northcott (trans.), (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3.

¹² See Camillo Spreti's description of these categories in N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, ff. 6-11. (1764).

¹³ Peter Burke, *Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 7-14.

¹⁴ See N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f. 137. (8 March 1792). This description of the domain appears in the incarceration of Maria Cachia a prostitute who was accused of offering refuge to Giuseppe Salento a convict who intended to escape from this very happy country (*fuggire da questo felicissimo dominio*).

¹⁵ c.f. Derek Keene, 'Cities and cultural exchange' in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* Vol. II, Donatella Calabi and Stephen Turk Christensen (eds.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁶ Keene, (2006), 4.

¹⁷ St Lazarus of the Four Days (Quadriduani) also known as Lazarus of Bethany.

¹⁸ Maćzak, (1994), 336. ...me la fece baciare con le mie indegne labbra, cosa che anch'io peccatore, ritenni la più grande benedizione di Dio mai capitatami nel corso di tutta la mia vita... On the holy relics on display in early modern Valletta see also Freller, (2009), 325-329. On the relics of the Order and their importance to the Knights see E. Buttigieg, (2011), 108-110.

Such trophies of the city's religious orientation complemented its military outlook: a bulwark of Christianity against the Ottoman threat.¹⁹ In 1780-1782, an anonymous French man writing under the pseudonym Carasi²⁰ spent two years in the service of the Regiment of Malta. He described Valletta's fortifications as 'so complicated and extensive that one is reminded of a labyrinth'.²¹ In a letter addressed to his mother dated 13 April 1781, Carl August Ehrensvärd (1745-1800) wrote that he was very excited to visit a small but very famous nation that was the only place where a military religious Order could still be of some use. He described Valletta as a small, beautiful city inhabited by religious men that also had a small fleet and many Catholic ceremonies.²² Besides fortifications, Valletta's military prowess was also reflected in its armoury and war trophies displayed on the facades of prominent buildings.²³ Dennis de Lucca aptly describes the outsiders' early modern perception of Valletta as 'a new 'City of God' from where the knights resisted the Muslims'.²⁴



Figure 6.1: Procession in front of the Conventual Church of the Order of St John, Valletta. Detail from a late 18th Century map entitled *Porto e Fortezze di Malta* by Sebastiano Ittar Engraving on copper 78,5 x 53,4 mm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Acknowledgement: Giannantonio Scaglione.²⁵

¹⁹ Martha Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), 172.

²⁰ Carasi, (2010), 8, 10. Freller says that Carasi is a pseudonym. Ferdinand de Hellwald indicates that Carasi was a certain V. Baron and Alain Blondy says that Carasi is a namesake for Matthieu César Baron.

²¹ Carasi, (2010), 7, 77, 78.

²² Von Numers, (1985), 7.

²³ For a description of Valletta as a symbol of Christian entitlement see Brogini, (2006), 205-226, 519-524. On the fortifications of Valletta see for instance Stephen C. Spiteri *Fortress of the Cross: Hospitaller Military Architecture (1136-1798)*, (Malta, Heritage Interpretation Services, 1994). On the military ornaments on the facades of buildings in Valletta see Cynthia de Giorgio, *The Image of Triumph and the Knights of Malta*, (Malta, Printex Ltd., 2003). On the Palace Armoury see Stephen Spiteri, *Armoury of the Knights*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2003).

²⁴ De Lucca, (2013), 9.

²⁵ Scaglione, (2011), 31.



Figure 6.2: A Festival in front of the Grand Master's Palace, Valletta
 Detail from a late 18th Century map entitled *Porto e Fortezze di Malta* by Sebastiano Ittar
 Engraving on copper 78,5 x 53,4 mm
 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Acknowledgement: Giannantonio Scaglione²⁶



Figure 6.3: People engaged in different activities in front of the library in Valletta, adjacent to the Grand Master's Palace.
 Detail from a late 18th Century map entitled *Porto e Fortezze di Malta* by Sebastiano Ittar.
 Engraving on copper 78,5 x 53,4 mm
 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Acknowledgement: Giannantonio Scaglione²⁷

²⁶ Scaglione, (2011), 31.

²⁷ Scaglione, (2011), 32.

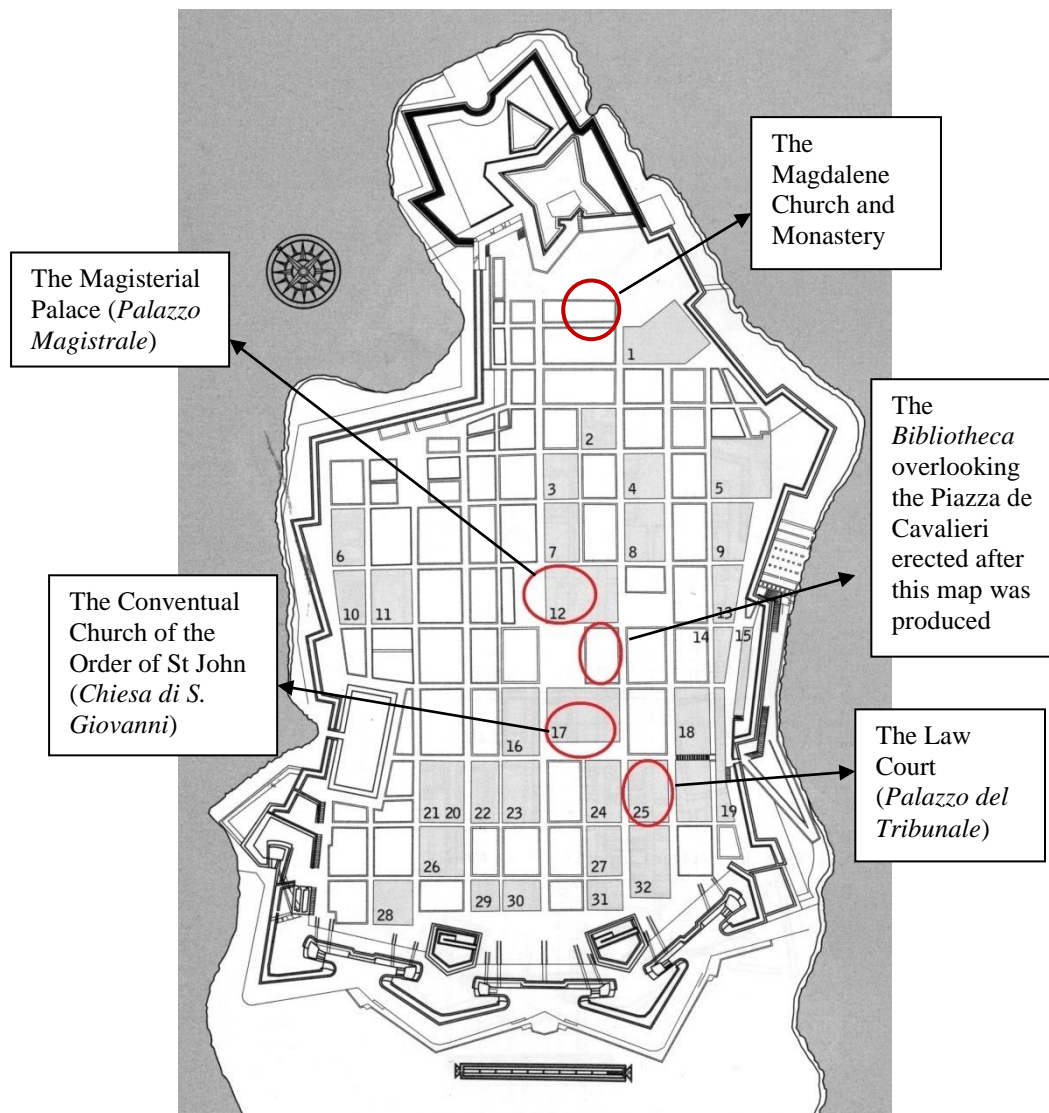


Figure 6.4: Map showing the locations of the *Chiesa di S. Giovanni*, the *Palazzo Magistrale*, the *Piazza detta de Cavalieri*, the *Palazzo del Tribunale* in the elite area and the Magdalene Monastery and Church outside the elite area.

Computer reproduction of a drawing of Valletta by Giovanni Battista Vertova (1592-1647) kept in the Castle of Costa di Mezzœ indicating the location of principal buildings and squares in the city of Valletta.²⁸

Acknowledgement: Denis de Lucca.²⁹

²⁸ In this map the Magdalene Monastery described as *Abbatia delle Ripentiti* is shown in its original location (no.13). On 16 February 1609 the *Abbatia delle Ripentiti* moved to a new building located behind the Grand Hospital (No. 1 on the map as indicated). This indicates that Vertova's map was based on a pre-1609 plan of Valletta.

²⁹ De Lucca, (2001), 58, 59.

Courtesans in Regulated Areas

Some people recognized early modern Valletta as a city of sin.³⁰ Human beings, like buildings, spaces and objects have a physical presence in the urban environment.³¹ In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in principal cities across Italy, wealthy courtesans known as honest courtesans (*cortigiane oneste*) had a strong human presence.³² Elizabeth S. Cohen shows that Rome's 'honest Courtesans'³³ were traditionally believed to be a product of a city dominated by a culture of religious men.³⁴ She compared honest courtesans to monumental buildings, symbols and ornaments that provided a theatrical backdrop to the daily dramas of the Roman people. They were there to be seen, touched, experienced and admired but also censored, criticised and exploited.³⁵ Margaret Rosenthal argues that honest courtesans in Venice were largely individual ambitious social climbers who endeavoured to achieve recognition for their intellectual capabilities and bring social change. They were women who used their charm, wit and talent to take an active role in male dominated political, intellectual or literary circles.³⁶ M. Rosenthal's theory is what geographers of sexuality would describe as the political contestation of institutionalised sexualised imagined geographies.³⁷ In this case the elite Venetian Renaissance moral economy expressed as an imagined geography centring on males, positioned courtesans as a moral threat.³⁸

M. Rosenthal notes that in sixteenth-century Venice, the authorities faced difficulties in trying to provide legal definitions aimed at differentiating a patrician woman from an honest courtesan. It was likewise challenging for them to distinguish between a courtesan and a *meretrice*. The inability to create clear divisions between courtesans, women who were involved in non marital sexual affairs (*meretrici*) and honourable women constantly plagued

³⁰ For Rome see for instance Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her* Vol. I, (New York, Vintage Books, 1998), 397. Rome was referred to as the Scarlet woman of the Book of Revelation, the Whore of Babylon and the mother of whores. For Malta see for instance Carasi, (2010), 115. Carasi says that every woman in Valletta was a Messalina and every young man a Ganymede. See also Claire Eliane Engel, *Knights of Malta*, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), 67. Engel quotes the Count de Caylus who said that Valletta might have been nicknamed Gomorrha Parva.

³¹ E. S. Cohen, (1998), 392. Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 242, 243.

³² Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 242.

³³ M. F. Rosenthal, (1992), 6. Rosenthal says that the term honest courtesan (*cortigiane oneste*) was never legally defined by the Venetian senate. She describes it as a paradoxical term that accounts for a courtesans' appropriation of the courtier's strategies for self-advancement. Honest courtesans entered a public world and offered social and intellectual stimuli in return for patronage. They were sophisticated, played music, sang, and composed poetry.

³⁴ E. S. Cohen, (1998), 392-409.

³⁵ E. S. Cohen, (1998), 392-409.

³⁶ M. F. Rosenthal, (1992), 6, 67, 58, 59.

³⁷ Gavin Brown, Kath Browne, Jason Lim, 'Introduction, or Why Have a Book on Geographies of Sexualities?' in *Geographies of Sexualities: Theory, Practices and Politics*, Kath Browne, Jason Lim, Gavin Brown (eds.), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2009), 4.

³⁸ Brown, Browne, Lim (2009), 4.

the Venetian authorities. This grey area in the law enabled honest courtesans to capitalise on ambivalence and move to and fro from the domestic sphere to the public spheres of Venetian life.³⁹ The combination of the status and glamour of patrician women combined with the lure of courtesanship offered a window opening for some women to interact constructively in public or political circles.⁴⁰ The idea of the individual quest of trading sex for power also emerged in the studies of historians like Guido Ruggiero and Lucia Ferrante.⁴¹ Traditionally documents in archives and visitors' accounts placed more emphasis on shocking aspects. Beneath the surface of reports of sins, incidents and disruptions lay regular, peaceful, sustained and mundane patterns of everyday life. Renaissance Italian courtesans were an integral, albeit intractable, part of the fabric of society.⁴² The overly excessive were censured. Vivid images of Italian Renaissance courtesans openly defying conventional norms of behaviour and writings on their illegitimate uses of power provided a high-visibility form of censorship that attracted public attention and generated controversy. It is possible that studies on censored Italian Renaissance courtesans have deflected interest to what they conceal.

Archival documents in Malta are virtually silent on courtesans. With exception to Flaminia Valenti's portrait (see Figure 4.2) they appear to have left no early modern depictions. Little is known about the way they looked and unlike Italian Renaissance courtesans they do not appear to have made any significant contributions to early modern literary, artistic and/or musical material. This does not mean that they did not form part of the daily dramas of Valletta's social life. Swedish traveller, Carl August Ehrensvärd, who was in Valletta in 1781, said that previous visitors saw pompous courtesans parading their beauty along the main roads, blatantly touting innocent strangers, even uninterested ones.⁴³ The aforementioned 1631 law discussed in Chapter 4: 'Regulating Prostitution' revealed that up to this time some courtesans were visibly living in houses in the rich areas of Valletta.⁴⁴ Ehrensvärd's statement indicates that some may have maintained their presence in the elite area despite being banned. Some Grand Masters and knights were reputed to have had long standing intimate relationships with courtesans. These women were generally defined as

³⁹ M. Rosenthal, (1992), 67, 68.

⁴⁰ M. Rosenthal, (1992), 58, 59.

⁴¹ See studies by Ferrante, (1987), 989-1016. Ruggiero, (1993). Guido Ruggiero, 'The Abbot's Concubine: Lies, Literature and Power at the end of the Renaissance', in *Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, E. Kittell and T. Madden (ed.), (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999), 166-180.

⁴² Bayer, (2008), 46.

⁴³ Von Numers, (1985), 11.

⁴⁴ A.O.M. 110, f. 104v. 1630 (Liber Conciliorum). Commissiones per far eseguire l'ordinatione circa il non dover habitare cortigiane in certe strade di questa Città Valletta.

‘friends’.⁴⁵ These ‘friends’ were not covert prostitutes. People close to the Grand Master knew that such ‘friends’ were acquiring material gain through the sexual services they rendered, but most opted for a laissez-faire passive approach. Criticising the Grand Master could have negative consequences. In February 1773, the mother of an unnamed conventual deacon accused the newly elected Aragonese Grand Master Francisco Ximenez de Texada (1773-1775) of being mischievous (*discolo*). She was promptly sent to the monastery of the friars of Saint Teresa in Bormla to wait on all their needs.⁴⁶

It is possible that the virtual silence of archival sources on courtesans may be due to the fact that most successfully maintained foolproof guises. The fragments that emerged are likely to pertain to women who were censored possibly because of some form of excessiveness on their behalf, or on behalf of their patron. Back in the sixteenth century, the founder of the city of Valletta Grand Master Jean de Valette (1557-1568) shared his life with a certain Catherine Grecque who allegedly bore him at least two ‘historically certified illegitimate children’.⁴⁷ A royal decree issued in March 1568 by King Charles IX (1550-1574) of France legitimising one of de Valette’s illegitimate sons revealed that Catherine Grecque was from Rhodes and she was not bound by the sacrament of marriage.⁴⁸ In the seventeenth century, Flaminia Valenti was known to be Grand Master Antoine de Paule’s (c.1551-1636) intimate friend. Tradition has it that she lived in a house annexed to the gardens of the Grand Master’s palace in Attard. She used to gain access to her patron through a covert doorway within the common boundary wall.⁴⁹ Valenti’s origins are shrouded in mystery. The presence of two identical portraits, one labelled Flaminia Valenti now in San Anton Palace, Attard and another labelled Margarita d’Aragona now in the Carmelite Priory in Mdina, might shed some light on this matter. It is possible that despite a two hundred year difference between the said ladies, the artist who was commissioned to paint the portraits painted identical portraits because the ancestry of both ladies could be traced back to the Kingdom of Aragon. It is possible that Flaminia’s ancestors may have hailed from Valencia hence the surname Valenti.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Giovanni Bonello, ‘The Misdeeds of the Grand Masters’ reported by Noel Grima in *The Malta Independent*, (5 February 2012), 9, 10.

⁴⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f.111. (February 1773). La madre di un Diacono conventuale l’ accusò al Gran Maestro ch’era discolo – il Gran Maestro lo mandò a S.Teresa con i frati, attendere con essi per tutto.

⁴⁷ Giovanni Bonello, ‘The Love Children of Grand Master Jean de Valette’ in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 26 May, 2013 and 2 June 2013.

⁴⁸ Bonello, (2013).

⁴⁹ Claude Gaffiero, ‘Grand Master’s Mistress’, in *Fashion & Beauty*, Malta, (1982), 36.

⁵⁰ cf. Marqués de Lozoya, ‘*El Reino de Aragon, el Principado de Cataluña, el Reino de Valencia y el Reino de Mallorca, constituyen una confederación de Estados*’, in *Historia de España*, Vol. II, Salvat, (ed.) (Barcelona,

Alexander Bonnici suggests that Grand Master Antoine de Paule's ability to treat Inquisitors well enabled him to pursue his relationship with Flaminia Valenti and avoid criticisms. In 1634, two years before the Grand Master passed away Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) appointed Fabio Chigi (1634-1639)⁵¹ as Inquisitor and Apostolic Delegate in Malta. Chigi was a vociferous critic of the Grand Master's *modus operandi* and his bond with Flaminia.⁵² Following his initial outbursts, however, he decided that in matters concerning the knights it was preferable to take a neutral stance.⁵³ In 1636 when the Grand Master passed away, Valenti felt the urge to repent and become a Magdalene nun. Her monasticism was strongly resisted by Inquisitor Chigi. The following extract from a letter he sent to Cardinal Barberini in Rome is well worth reproducing:

‘that character Flaminia [Valenti], who aspires admission in the cloister for Repentants, is the same [person] who was repeatedly admitted at the time of the deceased Grand Master, with whom she prostituted’.⁵⁴

Chigi's correspondence goes on to say that following the death of Grand Master de Paule, Valenti tried her luck with the subsequent Grand Master Jean-Baptiste Lascaris de Castellar (1636-1657), but was unsuccessful.⁵⁵ Prior to taking vows in 1637, Valenti had already been in the Magdalene monastery on five other occasions. Her conversations inside the monastery, according to Chigi, had caused great harm.⁵⁶ Chigi defined Flaminia Valenti as a character, a person, a *meretrice* and a prostitute. He also described her as an artificial, highly spirited woman who blatantly conversed with the late Grand Master even in the presence of his confessor.⁵⁷ This statement indicates that it was likely that she was censored precisely because she was overly flagrant. In the same year when Chigi's letter was sent, with a dowry worth 18,000 *scudi* described as acquired through immoral business (*acquistati dal mal*

Ariel, 1952), , 60. The city of Valencia along with the city of Barcelona, were the leading cultural, administrative and economic centres of the Crown of Aragon.

⁵¹ Fabio Chigi became Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667).

⁵² Bonnici, (1990), 263-267.

⁵³ Bonnici, (1990), 263-267.

⁵⁴ Vincent Borg, *Fabio Chigi Apostolic Delegate in Malta (1634-1639)*, (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1967), 243. Letter from the Inquisitor Chigi to Cardinal Barberini dated 9 January 1637. (Vatican Library: Fondo Chigi, B.1.7, f.302; Barberini Latini 6681, f.188). Quella tale Flaminia, che desidera di entrare nelle Convertite, è l'istessa che più volte si entrò al tempo del defonto G.M. del quale era meretrice...

⁵⁵ Borg, (1967), 244. ... perchè mi pareva, che ella volesse solamente conversare per ambizione, e vantarsi di dominare questo G.M. con l'ipocrisia, come dominava il defonto con la sensualità;...

⁵⁶ See Borg, (1967), 243 fn. 4. ...facendo grandissimi danni con la sua mala conversatione.

⁵⁷ See Borg, (1967), 244. ...perché è di spiriti superbi, et artificiosi, co' quali mostrando fintamente quando io venni in Malta di volersi far monaca conversava alla scoperta col G.M. defonto, anco alla presenza del confessore Bartolotti...

affaire), Flaminia Valenti joined the Magdalene nuns and was thereafter known as Sister Dorothea. Her late companion's peers were clearly more influential than the Inquisitor.⁵⁸ Throughout her monastic life she lived luxuriously and enjoyed many privileges.⁵⁹ With the money she earned from her relationship with the said Grand Master, Valenti could have afforded to live a very comfortable lay life yet she became a cloistered nun. Her story indicates that both during the Grand Master's magistracy and following his demise, her position may at times have been untenable. After his death it was convenient for her to make a quick transition to monasticism.⁶⁰ As to the question on whether such female friends of Grand Masters were perceived to be prostitutes or not, Inquisitor Chigi's letter is clear. For those who had no vested interest in the Order, such female 'friends' of Grand Masters were openly recognized as prostitutes.

Grand Master Perellos y Roccaful (1697-1720) allegedly had a relationship with a certain French lady known as Madame Mutett. Madame Mutett is described as an old friend.⁶¹ In an anonymous Venetian account dated 1716 Grand Master Perellos is portrayed as a womanizer. He allegedly put his old lover Dama Florinda aside and flirted with younger women. He, however, continued to take good care of Florinda and her family.⁶² Robert Attard and Romina Aquilina surmise that Florinda was Madame Mutett and speculate that a certain Madalena Mutett who married Raimondo Grioli in the parish of Porto Salvo in 1729 may have been 'Perellos's Madame Mutett or a relative such as a sister or an illegitimate daughter'.⁶³ In the 1727 *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo, Madalena di Mutet was enlisted as a *publica meretrice*. In 1727 she was twenty-five years old and living alone in a house on the *strada dei Francesi*. She is also described as not having maintained the precept of yearly confession and communion during Paschaltide.⁶⁴ She is only described as a *publica meretrice* in 1727. It is possible that in view of her engagement to Grioli she transitioned from *publica meretrice* to the status of an honourable woman. This therefore rules out the possibility of Madalena being the Grand Master's Madame Mutet.

There are clear indications that the Grand Masters' intimate female friends were kept in residences outside the regulated zone (See Figure 4.1). Up to the second half of the

⁵⁸ C. Muscat, (2013), 103. Cardinal Barberini (also Barberino) was the nephew of Pope Urban VIII, a close acquaintance of Grand Master Antoine de Paule.

⁵⁹ C. Muscat, (2013), 103-104.

⁶⁰ cf. Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 117.

⁶¹ Robert Attard, Romina Azzopardi, *Daily Life in Eighteenth-Century Malta*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2011), 126, 127.

⁶² Mallia-Milanes, (1988), 86. It is not known whether Dama Florinda was actually the said Madame Mutet.

⁶³ R. Attard, R. Azzopardi, (2011), 127.

⁶⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1727, f. 25. (1727).

eighteenth century the Magdalene monastery in Valletta appeared to have been a popular place for some Grand Masters to accommodate their intimate female friends. This monastery was located outside the regulated zone (See Figure 6.4). On 7 January 1758, Sister Paulucci passed away in the Magdalene monastery. Paulucci was Grand Master Manuel Pinto de Fonseca's (1741-1773) 'childhood friend'. He assisted her generously throughout her life and paid for all her expenses.⁶⁵ In the monastery she took the name of Sister Melania Dionisija Paulucci. Sister Melania became the abbess of the said monastery on 25 June 1737.⁶⁶ Grand Master Pinto was allegedly also known to have had intimate relationships with women outside the Magdalene monastery up to his dying hour. When the Grand Master passed away in 1773, Pierre-Jean-Louis-Ovide Doublet, a French politician and writer who spent much of his life serving the Knights of Malta wrote:

'But if on various occasions Grand Master Pinto merited praise, this is certainly not sufficient to absolve him for all his serious wrongdoings:

For having kept women up to his death, that surprised him in the act, at the age of ninety, witness to the most scandalous form of libertinism with shameless females, setting a bad example to different ranking members of the Order and paving the way for excessiveness that caused several honest Maltese persons who had the misfortune of espousing beautiful girls who had been coveted by rich and dishonest knights, to leave the country.'⁶⁷

Grand Master De Rohan likewise was reputed to have had a passionate love story with his 'niece' Marie.⁶⁸ Albert Ganado offers supplementary information on the said Marie. Her full name was Marie de Rohan-Montbazon she was the Grand Master's young cousin (not his niece). Marie, who lived in Valletta, was the daughter of the Prince de Guémeneé and great-niece of Prince Camille de Rohan-Montauban, one of the Grand Master's leading

⁶⁵N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol.II, f. 105. (26 February 1771). See also C. Muscat, (2013), 94, 95, 183, 185, 188, 201, 226, 239, 244.

⁶⁶C. Muscat, (2013), 226. The Grand Master died in 1773.

⁶⁷Pierre-Jean-Louis-Ovide Doublet, *Memoires Historiques sur l'Invasion et l'Occupation de Malte*, (Paris, Librairie de Firmin-Didot, 1883), 5. Mais si dans ces diverses occasions le grand maître Pinto a merite des eloges, cela ne saurait le faire absoudre des torts graves qu'on a eu a lui reprocher: 1. d'avoir donne jusqu'a la mort, qui le surprit en flagrant delit a l'age de quatre-vingt-dix ans, l'exemple du libertinage le plus scandaleux avec des femmes sans pudeur, exemple qui ne fut que trop imite par une quantite de membres de l'Ordre de tout grade, et qui fut porte a un tel exces que plusieurs honnetes Maltais furent indignement exiles du pays, parce qu'ils avaient eu le malheur d'epouser de jolies femmes convoitees par des chevaliers riches et dehontes. Original French text appears without any accents.

⁶⁸Von Numers, (1985), 13.

supporters. Despite the forty year age gap and the fact that they behaved in a dignified and discrete manner, Ganado says that the Grand Master's affair with Marie was well-known.⁶⁹ The last Grand Master to rule over Malta, Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch (1797-1799) too had a close female friend. Her name was Natale Farrugia and she used to live in the Grand Master's country house.⁷⁰ According to a Malta genealogical website Natale Farrugia bore Ferdinand von Hompesch three children.⁷¹ Other Grand Masters were reputed to have had women in their lives.⁷² With exception to Natale Farrugia who is said to have been Maltese, all other 'friends' of Grand Masters appear to have been foreign.

In Rome, honest courtesans were largely outsiders to the community in which they worked this is evidenced through place-name surnames.⁷³ Tessa Storey suggests that the fact that they were outsiders demonstrated that these women were likely to have been economically vulnerable and lacking support networks that were vital to women in the early modern period. These women may have reached Rome on merchandise caravans travelling between major cities.⁷⁴ All surnames of the aforementioned female friends of Grand Masters with the exception of Natale Farrugia, likewise indicate foreign provenance. The Grand Masters' friends and other foreign women who befriended knights may have similarly been women who lacked economic and familial support and like most early modern and modern visitors may have travelled to Malta on merchant trails and merchant ships.⁷⁵

For prostitutes operating in the upper-class social circles in Valletta, being identified as female 'friends' or possibly even female 'relatives' was an important element in legitimising their access to the Grand Master and high ranking knights. In Counter-Reformation Rome, famous courtesans were frequently targeted and banished from the city

⁶⁹ Albert Ganado, 'The Dismantling of de Rohan's monument in the Conventual Church of St John', in *Treasures of Malta*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2008), 55. A necklace that the Grand Master had given her, studded with golden eight-pointed crosses is now in St John's Gate Clerkenwell, England.

⁷⁰ Ciappara, (1988), 83. Natale Farrugia's association with Ferdinand Von Hompesch features in archiepiscopal correspondence. In Wolfgang Löehr's study on over one hundred letters exchanged between Ferdinand von Hompesch and his family now housed in the archives of the Hompesch family in Jaroslavice, Natale Farrugia is not mentioned. See Wolfgang Löehr, 'Dawl Ġdid fuq il-Hajja tal-Gran-Mastru Ferdinand von Hompesch', Carmen Borg (Trans.), in *Symposia Melitensia x* (2015).

⁷¹ maltagenealogy.com retrieved on 7 January 2015. See Farrugia Family entry numbers: 1.2.1.1.1.2: Natalie Farrugia Mistress to Ferdinand von Hompesch zu Bolheim (1744-1805). Last Grand Master of Malta with issue. 1.2.1.1.1.2.1: (*illegitimate*) Antonio Farrugia von Hompesch, (1775- 1838), 'Priest', died at Palermo, Sicily. 1.2.1.1.1.2.2: (*illegitimate*) Maria Teresa Ursula Farrugia von Hompesch, (1778-, married 1797 Birgu to Gioacchino They. 1.2.1.1.1.2.3:(*illegitimate*) Christos Farrugia von Hompesch, (1781- 1866), monk died at Luqa, Malta.

⁷² Bonello, (2002), 20.

⁷³ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 125-127.

⁷⁴ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 125, 126.

⁷⁵ On early modern modes of travelling to Malta see Chapter 2: 'Sources, Myths and Realities' section Confronting Early Modern Travel Narratives.

because of their ‘wages of sin’.⁷⁶ It is possible that by presenting themselves as ‘friends’ some courtesans in Valletta may have protected themselves from being targeted. A neutral identity may also have given some intimate female ‘friends’ of knights access to patrician circles. The presence of different types of abstract women who worked as prostitutes emerges in the writings of the knight Camillo Spreti and various eighteenth-century visitors like for instance the aforementioned Carasi.⁷⁷ The enigmatic Carasi appeared to have had a secret relationship with one such woman. Whilst he was on guard duty he flirted with a beautiful woman who was the mistress of a French knight. The two ended up having a covert relationship. During his visits he used to teach her French. Instead of paying her for her services she used to pay him.⁷⁸ Though one questions the extent of truth in Carasi’s stories, the idea that some female friends of knights may have invested some of the money they were earning to better themselves is not impossible.

High-class prostitutes like the aforementioned friends of Grand Masters and anonymous ones like Carasi’s female ‘pupil’ were the few that filtered through the archives the majority undoubtedly maintain their cached identity. In 1764, Camillo Spreti said that local courtesans hailed from low ranking noble families.⁷⁹ This was confirmed by Carl August Ehrensvärd in 1781.⁸⁰ Such families were in-between the upper classes and the poorer people. Their intermediary position may have enabled them to know things or influence things in ways that were unapparent. It may also have enabled them to identify niches in dominant social circles where they could operate. Investing their earnings wisely, like for instance learning French, may have provided better networking opportunities and a safety-net in case things went wrong. Brown, Browne and Lim show how regulated sexualised spaces were challenged and negotiated.⁸¹ In early modern Valletta, from 1631 onwards, when a law excluding courtesans from residing in this area came into force,⁸² the central elite area (as indicated in Figure 4.1) became a regulated sexualised space. This was officially reserved for chaste men. This space was nonetheless challenged and negotiated by courtesans in different ways. Adopting ambivalent identities and investing in their education were two important strategies that may have enabled some early modern courtesans in Valletta to challenge and

⁷⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 81.

⁷⁷ For Spreti’s description see N.L.M. 1202, f. 11-14. (1764). For visitors who mention guised prostitution see for instance C.S. Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, (London, J. Debrett, 1800), 40. Patrick Brydone, *Travels in Sicily and Malta*, (Aberdeen, George Clark and Son, 1848), 123.

⁷⁸ Carasi, (2010), 211, 212.

⁷⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, f. 8, 9. (1764).

⁸⁰ Von Numers, (1985), 11.

⁸¹ Brown, Browne, Lim, (2009), 1-5.

⁸² See Chapter 4: ‘Regulating Prostitution’ section Legislators and Prosecutors.

negotiate regulated sexualised space. In 1528, Francisco Delicado aptly described prostitutes as trans-social division women. Most of Valletta's early modern courtesans may very well have been ambivalent ubiquitous trans-social women. Varying degrees of ambivalence may also have been part of the survival kit of common prostitutes.

The Poor Areas

Similar to the Calle Sierpes and Los Olmos and Los Naranjos squares in early modern Seville,⁸³ the Schiavonia in the Ortaccio and the Vicolo del Grillo in Counter Reformation Rome,⁸⁴ the market places at Pont-Neuf, Place Maubert and the Saint-Denis quarters in eighteenth-century Paris,⁸⁵ and the Jonkerstraat and the Ridderstraat in eighteenth-century Amsterdam,⁸⁶ certain areas in Valletta were places of refuge for 'an underworld that retained an identity separate from the dominant culture of the city'.⁸⁷ These areas were very rarely described by early modern and modern visitors. In Thomas Freller's book on visitors' perceptions of the city of Valletta such areas do not feature.⁸⁸

As a restricted peninsula entirely surrounded by fortifications Valletta's topography was physically constrained and its land area could not expand. Valletta's military, administrative and residential developments were regulated by a code administered by the *Officio delle Case*.⁸⁹ Nonetheless between 1575 and 1600, people started to move into a partially excavated area intended as a naval galley pen. This was known as the Mandraggio.⁹⁰ The development of this area did not conform to the grid-iron plan of Valletta.⁹¹ Those unable to buy housing, for the most part low-income people (Spreti's *gente ordinaria*) escaped the checkerboard and rented tenements in multifamily buildings or invaded empty lots in the urban peripheries.⁹² Alison Hoppen says that such developments continued to grow

⁸³ Perry, (1980), 12.

⁸⁴ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 89, 90.

⁸⁵ Benabou, (1987), 195.

⁸⁶ Van de Pol, (2011), 64-66.

⁸⁷ Perry, (1980), 12.

⁸⁸ Freller, (2009), 321-365,

⁸⁹ See Mervick Spiteri, 'Social relations in Valletta: preliminary studies of property disputes recorded in the Officium Commissariorum Domorum' in *Arkivju*, vi, (2015), 3-14.

⁹⁰ Denis A. Darmanin, 'Origin and development of Valletta's Mandraggio' in *Sunday Times of Malta* 21 June 2015. The name Mandraggio is said to have originated from the word mandar which refers to the layer of dirt that settles in the hull of galleys. The Valletta Mandraggio on the Marsamxett harbour side of the city was located on the inner harbour between St Andrew's Bastion and San Salvatore Curtain. Supplementary stones for the building of fortifications and houses had to be quarried from this area. The project was abandoned because of the poor quality of the stone, difficulties in quarrying, the space was too small to accommodate the Orders' fleet and the location was exposed to strong winds.

⁹¹ Denis A. Darmanin, 'The Valletta Mandraggio or Mandragg' retrieved on 24 January 2016 from http://issuu.com/button_guru/docs/the_valletta_mandraggio_or_mandragg.

⁹² See Spreti's description of these categories in N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, ff. 10, 11. (1764).

in times of peace, when the authorities appear to have relaxed their regulations on the erection of buildings near fortifications. Dwellings started to appear in archways and corners extending right up to the walls. These labyrinths created on the fringes of the city were composed of narrow, dark alleys lined with irregularly built clusters of small houses with flat roofs.⁹³ Living conditions in these areas were ‘tight’.⁹⁴

The population of the Mandraggio varied over time. In c.1670 the onset of the plague instigated a door-by-door census of Valletta, commissioned by the state. There were 12,064 inhabitants in Valletta divided in 2690 families. Cavaliere D’Averna, a certain Giorgio Bareo who was a secular person and Mario Metallo a clerk, were responsible for the census of the Mandraggio. There were 246 families and a total of 942 persons living in the Mandraggio in the 1670s.⁹⁵ In 1727, 966 people lived there; by 1737 this fell to 844.⁹⁶ The Mandraggio hosted relatively high numbers of *publiche meretrici*.⁹⁷ In 1727 there were 107 *publiche meretrici* in Porto Salvo, 27 (25%) lived in and around the Mandraggio. Ten years later, in 1737 out of 100 *publiche meretrici*, 39 (29%) lived in the Mandraggio. In 1762, there were 114 *publiche meretrici* in Porto Salvo and 31 lived in and around the Mandraggio. Carasi offered a vivid yet disparaging description of this less visible area of Valletta:

‘There is a quarter in Valletta which I have visited only once and which I do not intend to visit again. This is called la Mandrache (Mandraggio) and it is the veritable sewer of the whole city. Here live the poor people in dirt, filth, without straw for their bed, without bread to fight their hunger, with hardly any clothes to cover their bodies.’⁹⁸

The people who set-up house inside the Mandraggio were mainly workers and opportunists who came to Valletta when it was turned into a bastion against the Ottoman Empire and hence experienced a building boom of fortifications.⁹⁹ Carasi’s metaphorical description of the Mandraggio as a ‘veritable sewer’ may not have been purely arbitrary. One

⁹³ Hoppen, (1993), 411. For a late nineteenth- early twentieth-century description of the Mandraggio see Attilio Critien, *The Mandraggio*, (Malta, St Joseph’s Institute, 1938).

⁹⁴ C. Cassar, (2000), 18, 19.

⁹⁵ A.O.M. 6402 A, f.291. Ordini Politici per la presentatione de Sani Cap II (c.1670).

⁹⁶ Denis A.Darmanin, ‘Residents, reputation, religion and rebuilding Valetta’s Mandraggio’ in *Sunday Times of Malta* 28 June 2015.

⁹⁷ See Figure 4.9. Zones where *publiche meretrici* in the Parish of Porto Salvo lived in 1738.

⁹⁸ Carasi, (2010), 135.

⁹⁹ Darmanin, (2015).

of the streets in the Mandraggio was called *id-Dranaġġ* (the Sewer).¹⁰⁰ In the eighteenth-century, the Parisian sewers were associated with the radical revolutionary Jacobin Mountain Group known as the Montagnards.¹⁰¹ These notions were adopted by the Girondin group¹⁰² to vilify and attack the Montagnards. The most prominent leader of the Montagnards was Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793) who was a French journalist and a political leader, an advocate of extreme revolutionary views and measures and a strong advocate of the poor. Marat allegedly spent long periods of time hiding from his opponents in the sewers of Paris and in basements. His unkempt appearance and severe chronic skin disease were perceived to reflect the sewer men (the downtrodden people) that he so ardently fought for.¹⁰³ It is possible that Carasi's description of the Mandraggio as a 'veritable sewer' may have been adopted from contemporary popular Girondin discourse and may indicate Carasi's affiliations to this group. This may shed some more light on the true identity of the mysterious Carasi.¹⁰⁴

Apart from notions of rebellion, sewers were also used to connote filth and danger (both dirt and filth are mentioned in Carasi's description). In his study on the body of sewer men in late eighteenth-century Paris, Donald Reid enlists a multitude of hazards connected to these underground labyrinths. Work in the sewers was hazardous because of the high risk of accident, it was insecure and strenuous, spaces were cramped, conditions were unhygienic, tunnels were infested with poisonous insects and heavy rainfall could lead to sudden underground torrents that caused death.¹⁰⁵ The dangers sewers posed to labourers were adopted by the French medical doctor and health official Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet (1790-1836) to emphasise the dangers of prostitution.¹⁰⁶ Mary Douglas suggests that notions of dirt were often used to evoke moral panic and create cultural classifications. She explains that discourse concerning dirt was twofold: it sought to draw attention to something not being in the right place and in-so-doing emphasised its threat to the larger moral order.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Darmanin, (2015).

¹⁰¹ Donald Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, Harvard University Press, 1991), 19.

¹⁰² See J.F. Boshier, *The French Revolution*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 185-191. The Girondin group was also known as Brissotin after their leading spokesman Jacques-Pierre Brissot. They were a loose grouping of republican politicians mostly lawyers, intellectuals and journalists, businessmen, merchants, industrialists and financiers. The group played a leading role in the French Revolution.

¹⁰³ Reid, (1991), 19.

¹⁰⁴ See Introduction by Thomas Freller in Carasi, (2010), 10, 11.

¹⁰⁵ Reid, (1991), 149-168.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1989), 8-33. Bernheimer's offers a detailed analysis on Parent-Duchâtelet's adoption of the hazards of sewers to symbolise the hazards prostitution posed to morality.

¹⁰⁷ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* Vol. II, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 95-114.



Figure 6.5: 18thC map of Valletta indicating the location of the Mandraggio (red circle). In this map the Mandraggio appears as a secluded area on the inner part of Marsamxett harbour. It was meant to shelter ships during storms or attacks but was never completed.
P. Mortier, *Valletta ou Valette Ville Forte, de L'Isle de Malte*, Amsterdam 1730
400 x 505mm
Acknowledgement: The Sunday Times of Malta 21 June 2015

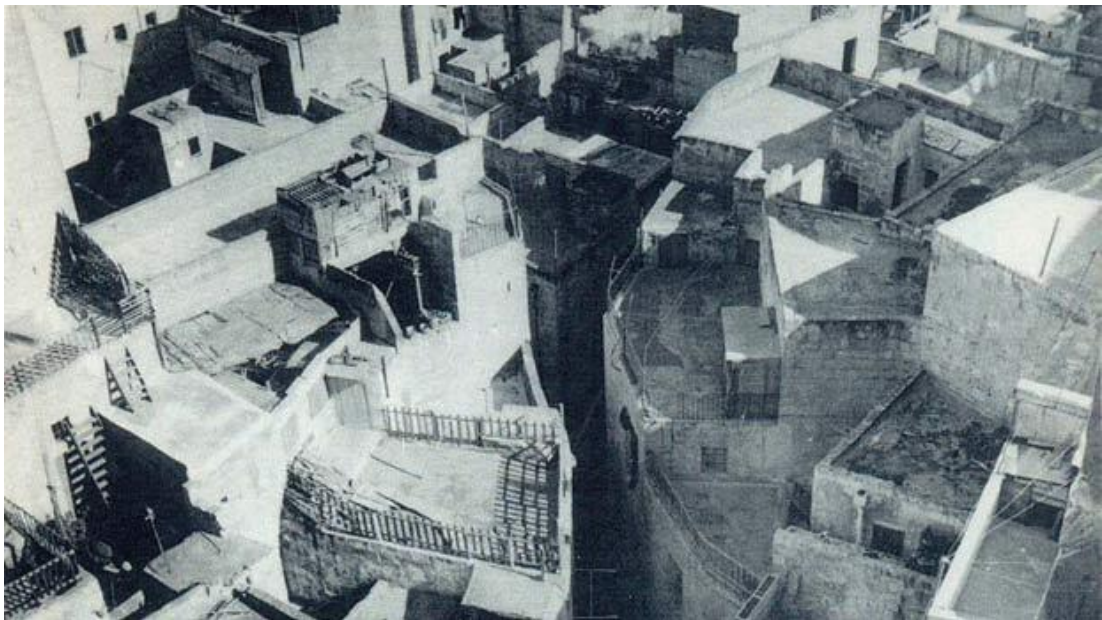


Figure 6.6 Pre-1939 photograph of the Mandraggio still showing labyrinths composed of clusters of small houses in narrow streets and alleys.

Acknowledgement: Dennis Darmanin

Carasi's description of the Mandraggio was infused with underlying messages aimed at adding impetus to his critical perception of the Order of St John. It was his way of emphasising that the Mandraggio was out of place in a Convent city. The constituents of this area were impure and their presence symbolised the corruption that according to the author infiltrated the Order. Douglas's theories on the culture of filth are also applicable to Frà Camillo Spreti's *Descrizione dell'Isola di Malta* published in 1764. Spreti warnings to young novices in Valletta to beware of *femminaccie* (bad women) who thronged the streets of Valletta in the night time wrapped in their mantles may have been his way of drawing attention to corruption that threatened to overturn the Order.¹⁰⁸ Some of Spreti's night-time *femminaccie* may have been from the Mandraggio and other fringe areas. Similar ideas on the presence of *femminaccie* in the streets at night time emerge through various court depositions. In 1701 Clemens Muscat said that in the night-time (*di notte tempo*) Francesco Napolitano (an adulterer) was in Clara de Fiore's house, with another man known as Cicarello. Clara was described as an impudent woman (*donna impudica*). The door was open and she was seen conversing and playing the viola.¹⁰⁹ After having danced, the three men then walked off to *the strada delle forbici* in the Due Balle area playing drums with Clara tagging along.¹¹⁰ This description shows that some low-class prostitutes in early modern Valletta similar to high-class Italian Renaissance courtesans were capable of playing musical instruments. In 1740, Benedetta Scarpato was likewise described as a woman who was known to stroll around the streets in the night-time spending money and having fun with men.¹¹¹

In his study on youth 1560-1640, Paul Griffiths shows how the night-time was used as a matter of routine to portray danger.¹¹² It encompassed notions of obscurity, lewdness, lurking evil and lawlessness. This provided a paradox to day time that projected notions of clarity and safety, a time when pious and civil citizens circulated on the streets.¹¹³ Noel Buttigieg's study on the people of an urban night culture in Malta supports Griffith's theories.¹¹⁴ He suggests that females in dark streets without male escorts were perceived to be

¹⁰⁸N.L.M. 1202, f. 11-14. (1764). Guardatevi la notte particolarmente da quelle Femminaccie tutte rinchiuse nel loro manto, le quali empiendo tutte le strade, vanno faciando l'abbominoso mestiere di Ruffiane; importunando la gente che passa, coprendo con il preteso di cercare l'elemosina il loro Peccato (f.13).

¹⁰⁹ N.A.M. Processi Box 278, Loose Leaf n.p. (1701). '... e dentro teneva conversazione e Giocolare sonando La Viola...'

¹¹⁰ N.A.M. Processi Box 278, Loose Leaf n.p. (1701)

¹¹¹ N.A.M. 92/04 Processi Box 405, Bundle n.p. (1740) Honorata Cassar Testimonium. men (...e che di notte si porta à spassiare con uomini che la vengano chiamare per andar à scialare...)

¹¹² Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996), 78, 79.

¹¹³ Griffiths, (1996), 78, 79.

¹¹⁴ N. Buttigieg, (2010), 59-69.

prostitutes or witches.¹¹⁵ He suggests that night-time was largely associated with the lower ranks of an urban populace.¹¹⁶ The theory on prostitutes being integral to night-time and darkness is well rooted in the bible. In his study on biblical words, Stephen D. Renn explains that darkness symbolised the context in which the prostitute plied her immoral trade.¹¹⁷ The presence of women in the streets in the night-time may also have been perceived to be out of place. The inappropriate presence of women on the streets in the night time was not the only restriction imposed on the freedom of early modern women.

In her study on women's place in nineteenth-century England, Doreen Massey shows how changes in economic organisation interacted with a particular view of women's place to produce a rigidly hierarchical and patriarchal society and distinct gender areas.¹¹⁸ She explains how in the coal-mining areas in Victorian England, the shared dangers at work resulted in male solidarity, masculinity and virility. It also instigated the creation of male spaces like clubs and pubs.¹¹⁹ Women were excluded from male work and social spaces and were constrained to labour in the domestic sphere.¹²⁰ In the cotton towns of the north-west England on the other hand, women's paid labour outside the home was a norm.¹²¹ In this area most women worked in factories, this offered them independence and led to female trade unionists that in the early twentieth-century gave rise to the local female suffrage movements.¹²² In Hackney women worked from home. In this case women were perceived as a threat because of their financial independence but they did not threaten male jobs therefore they did not disrupt male dominance.¹²³ It is possible that perceptions on female labour in early modern Valletta were akin to the latter.

Ideas on early modern female labour in Malta vary. Yosanne Vella argues that women were known to do jobs traditionally attributed to males. They ran taverns, inns and shops,¹²⁴ they also worked as pedlars, millers, tobacconists,¹²⁵ and significant numbers earned money by working in cotton production and agriculture.¹²⁶ Frans Ciappara explains that some

¹¹⁵ N. Buttigieg, (2010), 60.

¹¹⁶ N. Buttigieg, (2010), 60.

¹¹⁷ Stephen D. Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, (Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 115.

¹¹⁸ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1994), 193.

¹¹⁹ Massey, (1994), 193.

¹²⁰ Massey, (1994), 193-197.

¹²¹ Massey, (1994), 194-195.

¹²² Massey, (1994), 196, 197.

¹²³ Massey, (1994), 197-199.

¹²⁴ Y. Vella, (1999), 5.

¹²⁵ See Y. Vella, (1999), 7. See also Giovanni Bonello, 'Tobacco in Malta at the time of the Knights', in *Histories of Malta* Vol. IX, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2008), 133-138.

¹²⁶ Y. Vella, (1999), 4, 5.

women laboured in construction, surfacing roofs.¹²⁷ Numerous early modern men worked at sea as *buonavoglie* (labourers on the knight's galleys), sailors or corsairs.¹²⁸ This work, similar to work in the coal fields was exclusive to males and conditions were harsh.¹²⁹ It was nonetheless different because unlike the coal field labourers who returned home in the evening, seamen were absent from home for long periods of time. Some never returned. Some early modern women in Valletta were thus obliged to provide money to sustain themselves and their children and perform jobs that were normally done by men (over and above domestic work). Some women were home-workers, others like pedlars or those who worked in construction or in the tobacco industry worked away from home. It is possible that in certain social circles, female wage labour pursuits outside the domestic sphere may not have been as threatening as we are made to believe. Perceptions on women's work in early modern Valletta were likely to have been fluid. In upper class society perceptions may have contained elements that were observed by Massey in the coal mining districts. This justifies Camillo Spreti's frustration with high numbers of *femminaccie* thronging the streets. He perceived them to be potential threats to morality, domesticity, femininity and general female subordination. Perceptions in low-class social circles, on the other hand, may have been different. They may have encompassed more elements of Massey's Victorian cotton areas and Hackney where women's work was more nuanced and the threat was not perceived to be so acute. In low-class communities wage-earning women including prostitutes may have given rise to some social changes and may also have disrupted established ways.¹³⁰

Mapping Prostitution in the Parish of Porto Salvo

Prostitution is traditionally believed to be poverty driven. In his study on prostitution in eighteenth-century London, Tony Henderson shows that only a few areas were free of prostitution but the most concentrated areas were the poor areas.¹³¹ He suggests that prostitutes tended to gravitate in areas that were notoriously poor and reputed to be places where criminality was rife.¹³² Erica-Marie Benabou's findings concur, she notes that prostitution in eighteenth-century Paris was well diffused but concentrated numbers existed

¹²⁷ Ciappara, (2001), 5.

¹²⁸ A. Bonnici, (1993), 327-330.

¹²⁹ Joseph F. Grima, 'The Rowers on the Order's Galleys c.1600-1650', in *Melita Historica* xiii, 2, (2001), 113-126.

¹³⁰ Massey, (1994), 200, 201.

¹³¹ Henderson, (1999), 57, 58.

¹³² Henderson, (1999), 57, 58.

on the right bank of the river Seine beyond the boulevards..¹³³ Tessa Storey's study produced similar results. The Ortaccio that from 1570 onwards was the area allotted to prostitutes was the principal living area for the poorest prostitutes.¹³⁴ Storey suggests that the Ortaccio was not a red-light district.¹³⁵ It was an area where subordinate people from all walks of life mingled.¹³⁶ She explains that the relationship between prostitutes and non prostitutes in the Ortaccio was generally peaceful, and neighbourly.¹³⁷ In early modern Valletta the Mandraggio area (Zones 7, 10) and the Due Balle area (Zones 2, 4, and 6) (see Figure 6.7) appear to have been areas where concentrated numbers of prostitutes lived. These areas similar to the Ortaccio in Rome were mixed areas but social relationships in these zones cannot be described as neighbourly or peaceful.¹³⁸ Prostitutes living in these zones were not necessarily confined to these areas for life. Chapter 3: 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation', of this dissertation showed that some prostitutes quickly made enough money to move out of these low-lying areas along the Marsamxett harbour littoral into better dwellings in the city located in streets on higher ground.

Though similar to Rome in being a city of religious men, Valletta was nonetheless a fraction of the size of Rome. In Rome the port was far from the city centre and zones where high numbers of prostitutes lived were cut-off from the city centre. Valletta was a harbour town and all transverse streets led directly to the main harbour. The small size of the city meant that excluding prostitutes from a zone was hardly effective as the most remote areas in the city could not have been more than a ten minute walk from the prohibited area. The *Status Animarum* records of Porto Salvo 1726-1762 were instrumental in shedding light on which areas within the boundaries of this parish attracted the highest number of prostitutes. Interpreting these records is challenging. During this period of time streets had no official names.¹³⁹ The parish priests of Porto Salvo described certain localities by an appellation or a prominent landmark. These references were normally accompanied by a brief description indicating the location of the area. A comparative study between these descriptions enabled the identification of areas in the parish of Porto Salvo where *publiche meretrici* resided. This was confronted with an approximation of the number of people living in the entire area. This

¹³³ Benabou, (1987), 199.

¹³⁴ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 75. See Map I on page 80. See Chapter 4: 'Regulating Prostitution' section Legislation and the Legal System.

¹³⁵ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 87.

¹³⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 90.

¹³⁷ Storey, *Carnal Commerce* (2008), 91.

¹³⁸ See Chapter 3: 'Attitudes, Action and Negotiation' section Testimonies and the Insider's Point of View and section Notions of Honour and Identity.

¹³⁹ Fiorini, (1986), 48.

confrontation contributed towards an understanding of their proportionate physical presence in the community. Mapping for this study was based on the 1738 records when the parish numbered 10,316 souls and 104 women were labelled *publiche meretrici*. The 1738 records were compiled by the aforementioned Father Giacinto Maggi.¹⁴⁰ A decision to use the 1738 *Status Animarum* records to map the residence of *publiche meretrici* was based on clarity; the handwriting is neat and legible and this register appears to be quite detailed in comparison to previous and subsequent records. In 1738, Father Maggi was at the initial stages of his pastoral leadership, he may have been particularly meticulous when compiling this record because he wanted to prove his worthiness and impress the Bishop. The 1738 *Status Animarum* of Porto Salvo also largely reflects previous and subsequent trends.

Data emerging from this study revealed that the central and upper parts of Valletta pertaining to the Parish of Porto Salvo were not areas where *publiche meretrici* resided. *Publiche meretrici* mostly lived far north of the main entrance to the city in the west, up to the lower end of Valletta, near Fort St Elmo in the east. This area follows the Marsamxett harbour littoral. Figure 6.7 illustrates ten distinct zones in the parish of Porto Salvo where *publiche meretrici* lived.¹⁴¹ The zones in Figure 6.7 have been numbered according to the sequence in which they appeared in the 1738 *Status Animarum* records. The numbering system therefore reflects the systematised manner in which the census was compiled.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ See Chapter 2: ‘Sources, Myths and Realities’ subheading Primary Archival Sources..

¹⁴¹ Unlike the *Status Animarum* records of the parish of San Paolo that were divided into numbered and named quarters (*quartieri*), in the parish of Porto Salvo records, areas were named but not numbered or generally referred to as quarters. In a few singular instances the parish priest of Porto Salvo referred to an area as a quarter for instance ‘nel quartiere per Passegiatore’ (A.P.S. *Status Animarum* 1749, f.65v). In this dissertation the term ‘zones’ was adopted to differentiate between areas referred to as quarters and others that are not.

¹⁴² See Figure 6.7.

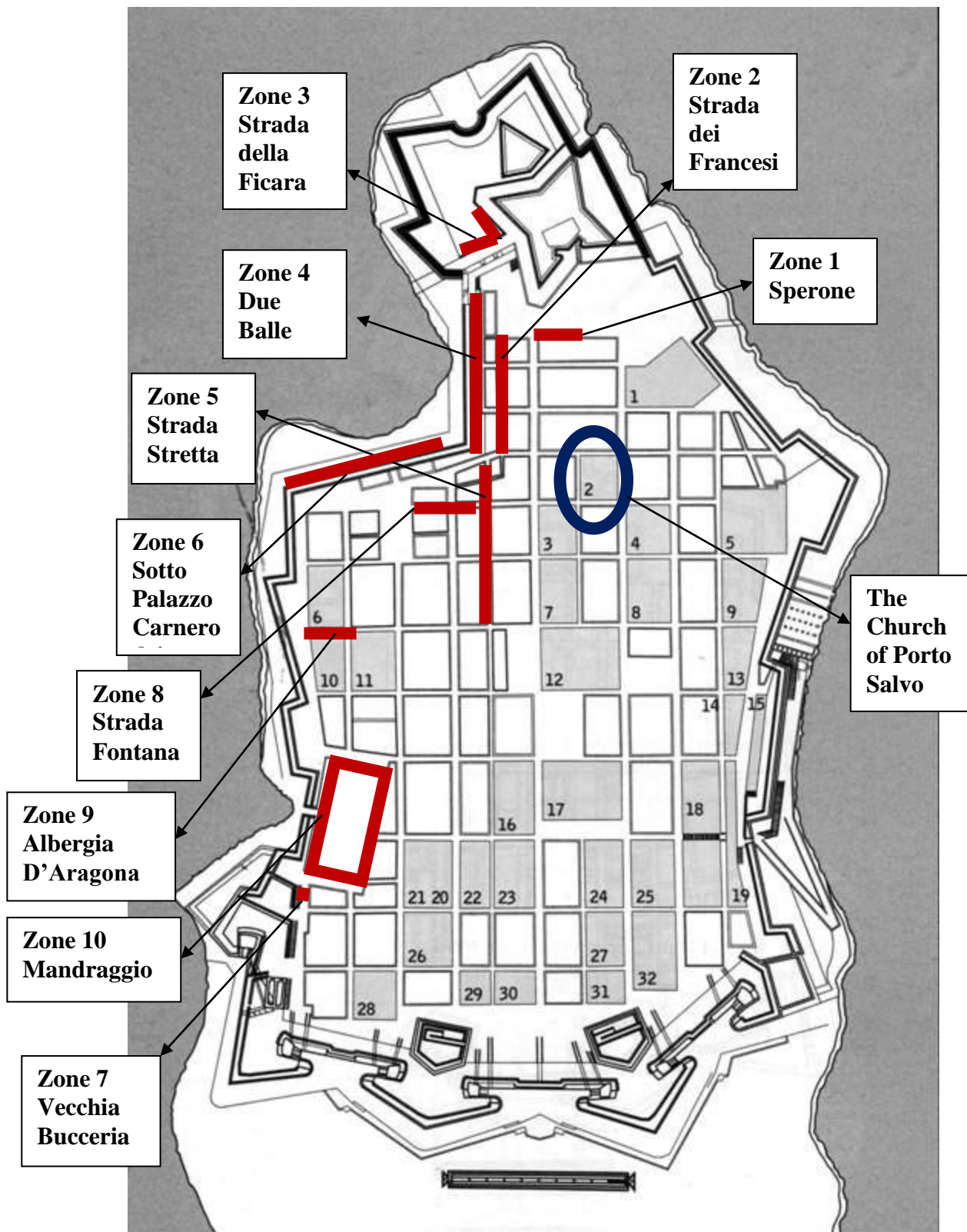


Figure 6.7. Zones where *publiche meretrici* in the Parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta lived in 1738. (Areas are marked in red)

Computer reproduction of a drawing of Valletta by Giovanni Battista Vertova (1592-1647).

Acknowledgement Denis de Lucca.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ De Lucca, (2001), 58, 59.

The first zone that the priest visited was the lower-end of the street from the spur of Fort St Elmo leading up to the Main Gate of the fort.¹⁴⁴ This street is still referred to as Spur Street.¹⁴⁵ In 1738, four *publiche meretrici* lived in houses at the lower-end of this street.¹⁴⁶ The second zone was referred to as the French street (*strada dei Francesi*).¹⁴⁷ The 1738 records described the home visits in this street as starting from the houses of the bastions (*le case del bastione*) this bastion was known as the French Curtain. The priest then proceeded towards houses located along the steps (*nella scala*) and walked up the French street.¹⁴⁸ This street was likely to have been called the French street because it ran parallel to the French Curtain. In 1738, three *publiche meretrici* were living in houses on the bastions, one was living in a house along the steps and six were living in houses located on the lower part of the street. The third zone was an area referred to as *strada della Ficara*. This area was described as the street underneath Fort St Elmo (*strada sotto S.Elmo*).¹⁴⁹ The starting point of the house visits in this street was at the far end (*dal fondo*) where three *publiche meretrici* lived.¹⁵⁰ This appears to have been a remote area in the city. The fourth zone was composed of a number of streets facing a place or monument known as *le due balle*.¹⁵¹ In 1738, nineteen *publiche meretrici* were living in this zone.¹⁵² Seventeen were living independently; one was a single mother who had an eight year old son living with her, while twenty-five year old Paola Sant is described as in Gozo. It is possible that she was in exile. She was, however, still listed as occupying a tenement with eighteen-year old Agostino Muscat who was described as having departed (*partito*).

Zone five was called the narrow street (*strada stretta*).¹⁵³ It is still called by the same name.¹⁵⁴ This is the longest and narrowest street in Valletta that runs along the northwest longitudinal axis of the city. The street is described as having several transverse streets

¹⁴⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum – 1738, f. 6v. Dallo sperone di S. Elmo sino alla Porta Reale toccando sempre le strade mezze del braccio destro principiando dalla porta detta di Pateito.

¹⁴⁵ Fiorini, (1986), 49.

¹⁴⁶ Fiorini, (1986), 49.

¹⁴⁷ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.34v. Principia la strada delli Francesi dale Case del Bastione.

¹⁴⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f. 34v, 35.

¹⁴⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.40. Strada sotto S. Elmo detta della Ficara principiando dal fondo. The significance of this appellation is elusive. Ficarra is a small Sicilian town near Messina originally built by the Arabs. Its original name was Fakhar meaning glorious. It is possible that Fakhar (glorious) referred to the 'glorious' role Fort St Elmo played during the 1565 siege. Cf. Robert T. Alaimo, *Vesper Bells*, retrieved on 11 June 2015 from <http://vesperbells.tripod.com/>.

¹⁵⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f. 40.

¹⁵¹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.40v. Strada affaccio le due Balle.

¹⁵² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.40v-f.43.

¹⁵³ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.43. Strada Stretta.

¹⁵⁴ See Cini, (2013), 7. Schofield, Morrissey, (2013), 15, 33. During the British period (1800-1964) Strait Street was a popular entertainment district for British Royal Navy personnel and the armed forces. The lower end of Strait Street known as The Gut was reputed to be a place where prostitutes operated.

branching off it. In 1738, three *meretrici* were living at the lower part of *strada stretta*. The sixth zone was an area described as under the bastions of the Due Balle under Palazzo Carnero.¹⁵⁵ This area is likely to have referred to the shoreline along a section of Valletta's fortifications known as the French Curtain. The priest possibly walked down through a covered walk way (the Jew's Sally Port that runs along one corner of Palazzo Carnero) to access some form of tenements located under the *due balle* bastions. In 1738, seventeen *publiche meretrici* were living in this zone. Thirteen were living alone and four were single mothers who had young children under the age of seven living with them.

In his study on the social aspect of bastions Stephen C. Spiteri suggests that spaces inside bastions like barrel-vaults and casemates were given to the poor people as housing.¹⁵⁶ Evidence of prostitutes living and/or practising in casemates in the eighteenth-century Status Animarum records of Porto Salvo and in the eighteenth-century Libri dei Carcerati abound. In 1778, Maria known as ta' Gheima a *pubblica meretrice* was caught practising in a ravelin.¹⁵⁷ In the same year Generosa Magro also a *pubblica meretrice* was caught practising with soldiers in the Floriana fortifications.¹⁵⁸ In 1779 *puttane* Maria Guarena known as Lubrumbeira, Maria Busutill known as Basca and Angela Borg known as La Carcarisa were caught practising in small rooms within the space of a vault (*troglio*) at Porta della Bombe in Floriana.¹⁵⁹ In the Status Animarum records of Porto Salvo there are clear indications that some *publiche meretrici* were living in the casemates of fortifications and also in the vicinity of the sentry posts (small domed structures at the salients of the bastions where soldiers stood guard) on the Marsamxett harbour side. This was particularly notable in the immediate area surrounding Fort St Elmo.

The French curtain walls overlooking the shoredo not appear to have casemates. The lower part of the wall is a natural rock formation and the upper part is a stone wall. This is the area that the priest reached after passing through the Jew's Sally Port. Some people including

¹⁵⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.47v. Sotto il bastione delle due Balle sotto il palazzo di Carnero. Regarding Palazzo Carnero see Michael Ellul, 'Carlo Gimach 1651-1730- Architect and Poet', in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 1986), 20-22. The Carnero palace belonged to Portuguese Bali Frà Caspar Carniero. It was built on the site of the afore-mentioned old lime-kiln and overlooks the entrance to Marsamxett harbour. On Carneiro's death it formed part of his inheritance in favour of the Order. In 1784 it was purchased for the newly instituted Anglo-Bavarian langue. It is still known as the Auberge de Baviere.

¹⁵⁶ Stephen C. Spiteri, 'Civilian use of Military Spaces in Hospitaller Malta', in *ARX-Online Journal of Military Architecture*, vii (2009), 46-49.

¹⁵⁷ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.139. (20 July 1778).

¹⁵⁸ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.141. (3 August 1778).

¹⁵⁹ N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.186. (22 November 1779). '...nelle stanziole delli trogli della Porta delle Bombe). The author is grateful to Dr. Stephen C. Spiteri who suggested that the trogli were not in the walls of the fortification but in the gate itself. Either in its two rooms forming the corpo di guardia or in the underground gallery beneath the gate which led to its sally port opening down into the ditch outside the gate.

prostitutes living under the *due balle* bastions (the French Curtain) may have lodged in makeshift houses erected along the length of this wall (see Figure 6.8). A row of makeshift houses used by some of Valletta's residents are still present along this wall. There were indeed families living in houses outside bastion walls in 1644. This emerges through the aforementioned deliberations on the threat of siege issued by the Council of the Order to the Venerable War Commission. One of the deliberations was for the removal of houses in the harbour that obstructed the Senglea front.¹⁶⁰ Similar houses may have lined the Valletta shore on the Marsamxett harbour side. A law prohibiting people from erecting non-stone constructions less than a canon shot distance from fortification walls that featured in Grand Master Manuel de Vilhena's *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali* seems to confirm that in the eighteenth-century some of Valletta's residents were indeed living in make-shift houses close to walls.¹⁶¹



Figure 6.8: Makeshift houses in 2016 lining the French Curtain (in the red box).

¹⁶⁰ A.O.M. 6553, f.55. (7 March 1644). See Chapter 4: 'Regulating Prostitution' section Legislators and Prosecutors.

¹⁶¹ *Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali*, (Malta, Giovanne Andrea Benvenuto, 1724), 128.



Figure 6.9: The Jew's Sally Port.

Houses under the Due Balle bastions were located on the far left hand side (not seen in the picture). Above the walls on the right hand side of the picture one can see the top part of Palazzo Carnero (present-day Auberge de Baviere).

Acknowledgement: Frank Vincentz

Zone seven was referred to as the Old Abattoir Street (*la strada della Bucceria Vecchia*).¹⁶² Through his study of local maps and old plans Malcolm Borg explains that the old abattoir was located under Marsamxett Gate.¹⁶³ Four *pubbliche meretrici* lived in this zone. The eighth zone was *strada della Fontana* that has been identified as present-day St Christopher Street.¹⁶⁴ In 1738 eleven *pubbliche meretrici* were living in this street and its side streets.¹⁶⁵ The ninth zone was located near the Church of Our Lady of Pilar,¹⁶⁶ and the Auberge d' Aragon.¹⁶⁷ Seven *pubbliche meretrici* lived in a narrow street in the steps (*strada stretta nella scala*) leading from Palazzo Carnero to the street of the Church of Our Lady of Pilar and two were living close to the Auberge d' Aragon (*vicino l'Albergia d' Aragona*).¹⁶⁸

Zone ten was the afore-mentioned Mandraggio. Notwithstanding the fact that it was closer to the parish church than the seventh zone this area was always the last area that the parish priests of Porto Salvo visited.¹⁶⁹ It is possible that this was intentional. The task may have been somewhat distasteful to clerics who may have faced difficulties in registering the constituents of this area. In 1738, there were twenty-four *pubbliche meretrici* living in this zone. Seven lived in an area known as the tomb (*la Tomba*),¹⁷⁰ five were living in the street under the Bailiff (*la strada sotto il Ballio*).¹⁷¹ This revealed the presence of a bailiff in the Mandraggio who may have been responsible for law and order in the area. The bailiff's house was close to the *Tomba*, near the last street leading to the bastions.¹⁷² Nine *pubbliche meretrici* were described as living along the stairs that were once located at the principal entrance of the Mandraggio (*nella Porta delle Scale*).¹⁷³ Another was living in the second courtyard (*secondo cortile*)¹⁷⁴ and the last two were living by the third access point of the

¹⁶² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.61v. Si principia la strada della Bucceria Vecchia.

¹⁶³ Malcolm Borg, Samantha Fabry, *Valletta Action Plan: Integrated Cultural Heritage Management Plan*, (Heritage Enterprise Consultancy, 2009), 17.

¹⁶⁴ M.Borg, S. Fabry, (2009), x.

¹⁶⁵ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.64-f.70. Si principia la prima strada mezza della Fontana.

¹⁶⁶ cf. De Lucca, (1999), 134. The Church of Our Lady of Pilar belonged to the Langue of Aragon.

¹⁶⁷ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.74v. Si principia la strada del Pilar vicino il Palazzo di Carnero – Strada Stretta nella scala.

¹⁶⁸ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.74-76v.

¹⁶⁹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.78v-94v.

¹⁷⁰ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.78v. Ultima strada mezza per andare nella Tomba. The Tomba access point was on present-day St Lucia Street. This was one of the two secondary narrow stairways that led to the Mandraggio. See Darmanin, (2015).

¹⁷¹ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.84v. Si principia la strada sotto il Ballio.

¹⁷² A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.78v-f.84v.

¹⁷³ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.86v. Nella porta della scala. For the exact location of the stairs see Darmanin, (2015). The principal entrance to the Mandraggio was from the stairs once located at the lower part of present-day St John Street.

¹⁷⁴ A.P.S. Status Animarum 1738, f.92. 2° Cortile. See Darmanin, (2015). The wide part of the Mandraggio was known as il Cortile as it resembled a large courtyard. Since this is indicated as the second courtyard it is assumed that it was smaller and off the central part of the Mandraggio.

Mandraggio.¹⁷⁵ Seven *pubbliche meretrici* in the Mandraggio appear to have been living alone and sixteen were sharing their accommodation with relatives and/or other people.

The emerging pattern indicates that in 1738 there were two particular areas in the city where concentrated numbers of prostitutes resided. The most concentrated area was an agglomeration comprising zone 2 (*strada dei Francesi*), zone 4 (*le strade affaccio le due balle*) and zone 6 (*sotto il bastione delle due balle*). Together these closely connected zones housed forty-six *pubbliche meretrici*. The Mandraggio hosted the second highest number of *pubbliche meretrici* (24). The 1738 *Status Animarum* records show that there were more or less 1,000 persons living in these respective areas. It is therefore likely that the presence of prostitutes was more significant in the *due balle* area than in the Mandraggio. In consideration of the fact that both areas were densely populated the number of prostitutes was in reality insignificant. One can, however, surmise that in 1738 men looking for prostitutes in Valletta were likely to have made their way to the *due balle* area or the Mandraggio.

Judith Walkowitz suggests that prostitutes tended to implant themselves in areas where male customers could be found.¹⁷⁶ The upper and lower *due balle* area and the lower part of the *strada dei Francesi* were located just outside the walls of Fort St Elmo. There was a garrison stationed in Fort St Elmo and soldiers constantly patrolling the bastions. These were controlled by the Venerable Congregation of War under the command of the Marshall of the Order. Chapter 5: 'Lawbreakers, Deviants and Troublemakers' (section Punishment and Responses) showed how prostitutes frequently touted soldiers on duty in Fort St Elmo. The establishment of Grand Master De Rohan's Regiment of Malta in September 1777 with 1,000 mostly foreign recruits¹⁷⁷ may have attracted more prostitutes to these zones during this period of time.

The Mandraggio in zone 10 was relatively close to the German Auberge and eleven *pubbliche meretrici* resided close to the Auberge d'Aragon in zone 9. This revealed that some *pubbliche meretrici* lived very close to two out of the eight Auberges: the Aragonese and the German.¹⁷⁸ In this area Aragonese and German knights and their male servants constantly moved back and forth. Besides soldiers, knights and their male servants, there were also

¹⁷⁵A.P.S. *Status Animarum* 1738, f.94. 2^o porta. This is likely to be referring to the second narrow stairway that provided a secondary gate to the Mandraggio that was located on St Mark Street.see Darmanin, (2015).

¹⁷⁶Walkowitz, (1980), 25.

¹⁷⁷ William Zammit, 'De Rohan's Reggimento di Malta a source of religious unorthodoxy in late eighteenth-century Malta' in *Sacra Militia*, iv (2005), 41-51. Denis Castillo, *The Maltese Cross: A Strategic History of Malta*, (London, Praeger Security International, 2006), 87. In the eighteenth century the garrison of Malta amounted to 450 knights, 300 cavalry, 400 gunners, 1200 fusiliers, 12,750 Maltese militia and 2,400 naval personnel.

¹⁷⁸ See Figure 6.7 (Zone 9). Palazzo Carnero became the Anglo-Bavarian Auberge in 1784.

significant numbers of seamen, corsairs, and merchants confined to a quarantine station located on Manuel Island (an islet in Marsamxett harbour) facing the Mandraggio. This is where merchants and corsairs unloaded their wares for the requisite forty day period.¹⁷⁹ In the second half of the seventeenth century thirty percent of all shipping entering quarantine quarters consisted of corsairing ships.¹⁸⁰

In 1755, Ignatius Saverio Mifsud recorded in his diary that two prostitutes broke quarantine rules. They were caught in the night-time in the *Lazaretto* practising with infected corsairs. The women were arrested, shackled and taken to the *Magna Curia Castellaniæ* to be placed in quarantine detention. Mifsud said that this crime had never happened before.¹⁸¹ It was, however, not the last incident. In 1765 the Grand Master issued a decree specifying that prostitutes who approached sailors or other travellers on vessels in quarantine waters would be punished by being permanently banished from the entire domain. Ordinary women (presumably not *puttane* or *publiche donne*) would be exiled from the cities of Valletta, Birgu and Senglea for five years.¹⁸² The enactment of this proclamation indicated that in the second half of the eighteenth century, before the Regiment of Malta was created, some prostitutes were struggling. Practising with potentially infected clients demonstrates despair. It is possible that during this period of time the demand for prostitutes was low alternatively there may have been a surplus of prostitutes.

Similar to the Jonkerstraat and the Ridderstraat in early modern Amsterdam, rents for properties in areas in and around Drury Lane in early modern London were low.¹⁸³ Van de Pol describes dwellings where prostitutes in early modern Amsterdam lived as ‘no larger than a basement or one-room apartment’.¹⁸⁴ An idea on the types of properties prostitutes occupied and the rents they paid in Valletta in some of the zones illustrated in Figure 6.7 can be drawn from the eighteenth-century accounts ledger of the Magdalene monastery. The long list of houses that were transferred to the Magdalene nuns through the one fifth tax imposition on the goods of deceased prostitutes showed that significant numbers of prostitutes invested in

¹⁷⁹ Paul Cassar, ‘A tour of the Lazzaretto Buildings’ in *Melita Historica* vol.ix, 4 (1987), 369-380. The lazaretto was located on Manoel Island in the Marsamxett harbour. It was a complex of buildings and cemeteries with an extensive frontage towards the sea facing Valletta across Marsamxett harbour. The original requisite period for merchandise to be kept in the Lazaretto was forty days.

¹⁸⁰ Fontenay, (1994), 101. The corso peaked in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and included the active participation of Maltese seamen. Between 1654-1694, 497 privateering vessels carried the Order’s flag.

¹⁸¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 11, f. 588. (1755). Furono in Lazzaretto colti in flagrante due donne puttane che si erano di notte tempo portate rompendo la quarantena, praticando con i Corsali infetti; furono arrestate con catene per consegnarsi poi alla Curia, finita la contumacia, delitto mai sentito occorso in Malta.

¹⁸² N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, f.173. (1765)

¹⁸³ Van De Pol, (2011), 65. Henderson, (1999), 52.

¹⁸⁴ Van de Pol, (2011), 65.

property.¹⁸⁵ The Magdalene nuns rented some of these properties to families and individuals including *pubbliche meretrici*.¹⁸⁶ These ledgers also revealed that in the aforementioned ten zones rentals were indeed cheaper than in other areas in Valletta. In 1714, Margarita Cavalier known as la Turturella paid 16 *scudi* a year to the Magdalene monastery for a house indicated as Casa N° 13 in *strada dei Francesi*.¹⁸⁷ Whereas in the same year the Magdalene nuns rented house N° 49 in *strada del Seniscalco* (not a street where *pubbliche meretrici* lived) to Rosa Bamboce at 30 *scudi* per year.¹⁸⁸ In December 1789, a first floor maisonette (*mezzanino nel Mandraggio sopra un'altro*) in the Mandraggio was rented to Maria Bartolo at 10 *tari* per month (10 *scudi* per annum).¹⁸⁹ A ground floor maisonette (*mezzanino sotto la casa*) in the *strada del Seniscalco* was rented to Fortunato Galasso at 30 *scudi* per annum.¹⁹⁰ On average rentals for houses in the ten zones were fifty percent less than houses in other areas in Valletta. The types of houses occupied by *pubbliche meretrici* in these areas varied. Some lived in basements or single rooms while others were living in maisonettes and/or houses. For instance in February 1714, Maria Muscat was renting a room (*una camera*) for 6 *scudi* per annum in zone one.¹⁹¹ In 1789, Maria Zigla was renting a small house N°.66 in the *strada dei Francesi* (zone two) at 12 *scudi* per year.¹⁹² In the Mandraggio most *pubbliche meretrici* were living in shared accommodation, in zone 4 (*due balle*) and in zone six (*sotto il bastione delle due balle*) the majority were living in independent tenements. It is possible that rents for shared accommodation in the Mandraggio and single occupancy in the *due balle* were less expensive and those living in the makeshift houses underneath the French curtain were not paying rent. These zones were likely to have been areas where female migrants who travelled to Valletta and worked as prostitutes lodged. Residence in these areas may have been perceived to be temporary: a stepping stone to a better life.

Conclusion

Valletta in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was in principle not a city that was easily accessible to prostitutes. It was a Convent city dominated by chaste religious men, courtesans

¹⁸⁵ C. Muscat, (2013), 140-151.

¹⁸⁶ C. Muscat, (2013), 140-151.

¹⁸⁷ A.O.M. 145 Treas. Series A (2), f. 191. Libro Esigenziale del stabili censi emphiteonici e Rollali e altro attinenti al Ven Monistero di Santa Maria Maddalena. Don Matteo Hagius 1714.

¹⁸⁸ A.O.M. 145 Treas. Series A (2), f. 263. Libro Esigenziale del stabili censi emphiteonici e Rollali e altro attinenti al Ven Monistero di Santa Maria Maddalena. Don Matteo Hagius 1714.

¹⁸⁹ A.O.M. 144 Treas. Series A (1782-1794), f.208. Santa Maria Maddalena Libro Maestri C.

¹⁹⁰ A.O.M. 144 Treas. Series A (1782-1794), f.186. Santa Maria Maddalena Libro Maestri C.

¹⁹¹ A.O.M. 145 Treas. Series A (2), f. 195. Libro Esigenziale del stabili censi emphiteonici e Rollali e altro attinenti al Ven Monistero di Santa Maria Maddalena. Don Matteo Hagius 1714.

¹⁹² A.O.M. 144 Treas. Series A (1782-1794), f.182. Santa Maria Maddalena Libro Maestri C.

were legally not allowed to reside in three-quarters part of the city and going by unnoticed was not easy because of the city's limited geographical dimensions, compactness and face-to-face interactions. Nonetheless the intimate presence of Flaminia Valenti, Madame Mutett, Marie de Rohan-Montbazon and Natale Farrugia in the lives of Grand Masters after the introduction of the 1631 law indicates that some courtesans had the know-how to implant themselves even in the highest echelons of male religious political terrain. Fragments of these women's life stories that emerged in the archives and in visitors' accounts may point to excessiveness or weaknesses in their lives or their patron's lives. Beneath the surface of these chronicles lie everyday patterns of routine chaste life and also patterns of regular and sustained courtesan relationships in elite male circles. The latter never hit the gossip circles because these women were probably clever at maintaining ambivalent identities and peaceful relations. Notwithstanding patriarchy and male economic and political dominance, chaste male terrain was navigable to these entrepreneurial high-class prostitutes.

From residential positions, adjacent to Fort St Elmo and the Aragonese and German Auberges and in close proximity to the quarantine station some *publiche meretrici* spun webs of significance that enabled them to battle on with their lives. The streets and neighbourhoods along the Marsamxett littoral, where high numbers of *publiche meretrici* in the Parish of Porto Salvo lived, were mixed. In these communities dishonourable women and honourable women lived side by side and mingled. Similar to Counter-Reformation Rome, this may have offered some *publiche meretrici* an opportunity to minimise their 'otherness' and capitalise on the interplay between honourable and dishonourable houses. These areas were difficult areas to live in and were likely to have been stepping stones to a better future. This view is buttressed through the fact that *publiche meretrici* rarely featured in *Status Animarum* for more than one consecutive year. Notwithstanding religious and civic segregation sex work for some *publiche meretrici* in early modern Valletta was viable. Similar to courtesans some *publiche meretrici* were social and economic climbers who changed their strategies according to the opportunities that arose. They were transverse figures who moved residence according to circumstance. Never being firmly assimilated or rooted in any zone or in any group enabled them to assimilate in diverse circles and in diverse circumstances. Fluidity, agency and the ability to grab opportunities were essential to success. It formed part of the multifarious entrepreneurial survival kit that enabled them to thrive.

General Conclusion

Through her study on the prison registers of Saint-Martin, Erica-Marie Benabou created a *carte d'identité* of prostitutes in eighteenth-century Paris.¹ There is no *carte d'identité* of Valletta's seventeenth and eighteenth century prostitutes. Traditionally historians have always placed more emphasis on the negative aspect of prostitution and not on its positive derivations. There is some justification for this view. *Littérature scandaleuse*,² politico-religious accusatory campaigns, patriarchal moralising and records of religious or charitable institutions and court records, which represent the main remaining body of evidence on early modern prostitution, are fundamentally negative. One, however, has to bear in mind that even nowadays what generates news, concerns, and information on prostitution in the media are above all reports on criminal activities, incidents and disruptions and not the vicissitudes of law-abiding entrepreneurial women who work as prostitutes and discretely get on with their business and everyday life.

Terms used to refer to prostitutes, social attitudes, enforcement policies, perceptions on prostitutes, the social profiles of prostitutes, their prevalence, their success, their behaviour and their entrepreneurship underwent change over time. Prostitution in Valletta between 1630-1798 did change, even if in a gradual manner. Prostitutes adapted to social, religious, political and economic change with a general cumulative accretion of cultural traits. Time played a deep and often paradoxical role in shaping the social character of prostitution in early modern Valletta. As discussed in chapter six 'A Geography of Prostitution', prostitution ranged in the degrees of both formalisation and specialisation with which it was conducted. Prostitution was also affected by the success of the port over time. Chapter two 'Sources, Myths and Realities' suggested that the busiest periods for prostitutes were when the port was very active. Institutions and regulations are traditionally believed to have shaped prostitution. The stories of Ursula Gatt, Catherina Valenti, Flaminia Valenti and Maria Fiocari however show that these prostitutes employed different interactional strategies and negotiated and adjusted institutional codes. Finally, the maximisation of earnings instigated constant accelerated innovations. This was an essential component in their survival kit.

This dissertation embarked on a scholarly journey questioning, interpreting and weighing different sources in search of the reality and everyday life of some early modern

¹ Benabou, (1987), 267-270.

² On *littérature scandaleuse* as a highly popular eighteenth-century literary trope see Engel, (1963), 181-185. See also Daniel K. Gullo, *Melitensia*, (Collegeville, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, 2014), 4.

women in Valletta who overtly offered sexual services for material gain. Some of the protagonists of this study are figures that feature prominently in narrative, literary and philosophical tracts, while others filtered through in the small print. To date these figures went virtually unnoticed. Though they may have come from, belonged to and even been active in different realities, these figures were nonetheless entrepreneurs rather than undesirables, remote invaders of the city, lost women, misfits and/or disorderly. Throughout this study there has been a heavy emphasis on agency and the overarching norms and methods of regulation that produced rational strategic responses and the fact that some women in early modern Valletta did well through prostitution.

Early modern ideas claiming that the city was a '*gomorrha parva*' and that every woman was a Messalina that continue to resonate in modern histories of prostitution are problematic.³ In the eighteenth century, when the number of inhabitants in the city hovered around 16,000, around 130 women were socially identified as prostitutes.⁴ This indicated that numbers of prostitutes in early modern Valletta were significantly lower than contemporary Paris and Rome. Modern arguments on prostitutes being victims of circumstance, exploited, stigmatised, segregated and discriminated, perpetuate the concept of otherness and hide from us the realities of some hardworking entrepreneurial women who pursued independent sustainable living by regularly or occasionally offering sexual services for material gain. Similar to other types of entrepreneurial service providers, prostitutes struggled for access and control of the urban quality of life. There were, as always, losers who were women who went astray and failed to create meaningful contact with the city, but there were winners too. This dissertation argues that since the 1800s, histories of prostitution traditionally focus on the former. In principle, it is the latter, the winners, that merit the limelight. They were the strong women who engaged in a risky business whose personal tales of triumph and adversity make compelling reading. Neither the choice to leave home, nor the choice of destination, or the decision to earn money through prostitution came unexpectedly. Valletta's cosmopolitanism, its elite edifices, the vessels entering and leaving the harbour as well as its rich residents, kindled admiration. The fascination of an alluring new world, a tempting world, a world of greatly lessened familial restraints, a world of intriguing perils but above all, a world of commercial potentialities had a captivating lure attracting both male and female migrants. A chain of boats connected the Valletta south waterfront quays to the three cities of Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua and the hinterland country villages. The North

³ Engel, (1963), 66, 67. Carasi, (2010), 115.

⁴ See Chapter 2: 'Sources, Myths and Realities' Table 2.3.

quays linked the city to the wintering harbour and the *Lazaretto* quarantine station.⁵ Other sea channels linked Valletta to more distant harbours and anchorages as in Xlendi, Marsalforn and Comino.⁶ The city was also linked to Sicily and other ports around the Mediterranean. Its waterfront was a jagged row of porous quays from where all sorts of people slipped in and out of the city on a daily basis.

Some day labourers, mostly travelling from the three cities, were women seeking to offer sexual services for material gain. These women drifted in and out of the city looking for opportunities practising in chance places like for instance in dark alleys or on boats. They went virtually unnoticed, almost invisible and barely poke their heads out in the sources. Others were migrant women who were largely in their twenties, predominantly hailing from the country villages and the southern part of neighbouring Sicily who established themselves in the city equipped with little else than a dream to change their lives. These women took the initiative of organising and managing their journey. They assumed the risks of leaving familiar surroundings and faced sanctions. Their initiatives were purpose-infused and inevitably entailed high degrees of temerity and ambition. Some wove their way into the congested geographical enclaves of the city where people from different backgrounds endured an awkward coexistence within compact multifamily tenements. Others who could not afford to rent or buy housing lived in makeshift houses outside the walls of the city. The housing scenario clearly offered a unique context in which newcomers could quickly find a home in the city, as well as opportunities which drew them into short or long-term settlement and identification with the city. Spurred by the fact that prostitution earned more or less four times more than domestic work, or because it was perceived to offer an easier life than other forms of female labour, or possibly even experimentation, a thrill, or simply to be able to receive nice gifts or afford some luxury items, some women engaged in the business. Some practised occasionally and/or covertly, earning some extra money on the side. Others practised overtly and assumed the responsibilities of being labelled *donne publiche* by the church, the state and society. This study revealed significant disparities between the way the church, the state and society perceived *donne publiche*.

From 1631-1798, the Catholic Church in Malta persisted in perpetuating post-Tridentine austerity measures against unmarried and uncloistered women. Prostitutes bore the

⁵Gambin, '(2004), 159, 164. The South quays overlook the Grand Harbour. The North quays overlook Marsamxett harbour.

⁶ cf. Gambin, (2003), 37, 38.

brunt of this campaign.⁷ Similar to ancient Roman traditions pertaining to the third and second centuries B.C.E., the main concern of the Catholic Church was to draw a firm line between honourable and dishonourable women.⁸ In Rome and in other major cities in Italy, by the end of the sixteenth century, the tradition of distinguishing *donne publiche* in *Status Animarum* records subsided.⁹ In Malta, in certain parishes the practice was maintained up to the end of the eighteenth-century. Clerical attitudes towards prostitutes were rarely coherent or constant. Some adhered to post-Tridentine ideology and refused to hear the confessions of prostitutes, they punished people who communicated with them during Lent, gave them unceremonious burials and prohibited them from being buried in sacred ground. Others prescribed high levels of penance and re-integrated prostitutes into the church flock. Some clerics perceived significant donations towards their church and monastery, as well as the propensity to charity, to provide the right antidote for prostitution and re-integration into their congregation. Church austerity and seclusion were not irrevocable. They could be counteracted, resisted and negotiated. Prostitutes, who like Catherina Mifsud faced unyielding clerics, were likely to have perceived negative responses to their pleas to be irrational and in total discord with the remissive ideology inherent to confession. This is evident through the fact that it did not deter them from carrying on with their occupation. Intolerant and/or abusive clerical attitudes towards subordinate women were debated, questioned and criticised. This is supported through an anti-clerical sonnet that was making the rounds in 1759 and was recorded in the eighteenth-century diary of a priest (see Appendix 1).¹⁰

Conversely notwithstanding the fact that the civic authorities (that is, the Order of St John) were religious, they do not appear to have perceived *donne publiche* to be *personæ non gratæ*. Valletta's civic authorities considered early modern prostitutes to be part of a motley group of useless service providers that included hairdressers, glove-makers, ointment and perfume producers, dancers and tavern keepers. These occupations were considered to be superfluous and harmful but not evil or criminal.¹¹ Prostitutes were entrusted with the responsibility of fostering state foundlings, they enjoyed civil rights to initiate court proceedings against wrongdoers, they were also deemed to have the credibility to place a deposition in court and to have the appropriate knowledge to adjudicate female honourable

⁷ cf. Dabhoiwala, (2012), 10.

⁸ Beard, (2008), 236.

⁹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, (2008), 240, 241.

¹⁰ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 13, f.134, 135. (1759). '...da un anonimo critic fatto e sfacciatamente pubblicato il suddetto sonnetto qui registrato per motive di zigo'.

¹¹ A.O.M. 6402, f.284. (c1670) *Diverse Scritture*.

behaviour. They were treated on equal level as tailors, servants of knights and sailors.¹² As long as prostitutes were not disorderly, the civic authorities adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards them. Ruggiero and Rosenthal suggest that in sixteenth-century Venice a laissez-faire attitude stemmed from the fact that they were possibly perceived to be women deprived of other financial opportunities to survive.¹³ This study suggests that in early modern Valletta prostitution did not resemble a crime or an anomaly; it was a normal feature of social life. Locating the cause in political and economic structures may constrain our understanding of the practice. Unlike early modern Amsterdam, London, Paris, Memmingen and Augsburg where prostitutes were heavily policed, in seventeenth-century Valletta it was male adulterers and non-Catholics who practised with prostitutes who were largely targeted by laws and the police.¹⁴ In the eighteenth-century one observes a shift from male adulterers to female adulteresses, loose women and prostitutes. Draconian laws were enacted, however, this study suggests that they were rarely implemented and largely served as deterrents. Timely and efficient arrests suggest that law enforcers (collectively known as *Ministri*) may have had a network of spies in the city. The fact that most women spent significantly more time at home than men, indicated that most spies may have been female.

Husbands, parents and all sorts of relatives facing issues with incorrigible female dependents who engaged in prostitution often supplicated the Grand Master to lock them up in the Floriana *Conservatorio* or the *Ospizio*. Interment in the institute was at the supplicant's expense. The fairly high costs involved indicated that such requests came from well-off families. Supplicating the Grand Master's help to discipline errant dependents was not exclusive to females. This study showed that sons and husbands were also disciplined in this way. The Grand Masters' direct involvement in resolving family matters enabled them to affirm their *bonus pater familias* role. Besides responding favourably to family supplications, Grand Masters also took care of sick prostitutes by hospitalising them and took the underage children of negligent or disorderly prostitutes under their responsibility. They acceded to requests placed by residents to evict prostitutes who had a bad influence on their sons and daughters. The Grand Masters' fatherly, stern, yet fair and reasonable outlook also emerged in their legal *modus operandi*. Faithful adherence to archaic forms of punishments like public humiliation, flogging, the rack and frequent banishments to Gozo were the main forms of

¹²See N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier, Catherina Mifsud Testimonium.

¹³ Ruggiero, (1989), 1-15, 146-168, 153. Margaret F. Rosenthal, 'Venetian Women Writers and their Discontents', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early modern Europe*, James Grantham Turner (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 116.

¹⁴ Van de Pol (2011), Henderson (1999), Benabou (1987), Rublack (1999), Roper (1985).

punishments prescribed on procuresses and mischievous prostitutes. Matters appear to have escalated following the establishment of Grand Master de Rohan's *Reggimento di Malta* in 1776. Higher incarcerations of prostitutes and excessive disciplinary measures indicated that chaos may have reigned during this period of time. Under normal circumstances remissions were common. Significant attempts were made to reform disorderly prostitutes by sending them back home or giving them a second chance. Recidivists were ultimately banished and they were mercilessly mocked by youths. Some supplicated the Grand Master's clemency and had their sentence changed to a softer one. The fact that most banished prostitutes returned to Valletta within a short span of time indicated that the Order's methods of control were failing. Reluctance to reform medieval legal strictures and structures to face new challenges offered disorderly prostitutes substantial leeway.

Social perceptions on prostitutes were different to the outlook of the church and the state. Prostitutes in early modern Valletta were not socially perceived to be a separate group of women. Most were single mothers, widows, spinsters or women whose husbands departed on a sea journey. Some of these women worked as maids, laundresses, weavers, dealers in second hand goods, tavern keepers or inn keepers. At times, when the opportunity arose, some may have offered sexual services for material gain. Others earned a living exclusively through prostitution. In 1701, during her court interrogation, Catherina Mifsud was open about her occupation. She had no qualms in stating that she was a *donna publica*. Being affiliated to this group does not appear to have shamed her. For some men, possibly chaste, elite, married or non-Catholic men, being seen with a prostitute was to be avoided. Other men, possibly subordinate Catholic bachelors, do not appear to have been unduly perturbed in disclosing information about their visits to prostitutes in court or with friends. Prostitutes were at times depicted as liars, deceivers, betrayers and/or fraudulent women. These claims mainly emerge in court proceedings. They are uttered by plaintiffs seeking retribution for damages or defendants seeking to prove their innocence. In certain instances, one is made to believe that husbands were justified in killing their wives if they covertly engaged in prostitution. In reality this was not true. Husbands who committed honour uxoricide sought refuge in churches. Ecclesiastic sanctuary was a kind of self-inflicted prison sentence and Michel'Angelo Sammut endured five long years before giving himself up to the authorities.¹⁵ Giuseppe Scarpato, on the other hand, confided that he preferred to abandon his wife rather

¹⁵ N.A.M. Processi. Box 378, f.18. (16 January 1737), Bundle De Uxorcidio Michel'Angelo Sammut.

than spend the rest of his days rotting away in a church.¹⁶ Murdering one's wife carried serious legal consequences regardless of whether the wife was offering her sexual services for material gain or not. Some husbands appear to have been complacent about the fact that their wives were prostitutes and seem to have been happy to collaborate and share the profits.¹⁷

The substantial achievements of certain prostitutes in the seventeenth century indicate that this may have been the golden age of prostitution in Valletta. This study suggests that similar to other forms of trading, prostitution was tied to the port's vitality. Flaminia Valenti donated 18,000 *scudi* to the Magdalene monastery and also left a substantial inheritance to the *Casetta* (hospital for females). Catherina Valenti financed her son's jurisprudence studies in Palermo and founded a tutelary patronage for the Church of San Paolo Apostolo worth 7,000 *scudi*. Ursula Gatt sponsored various artistic works inside the church of St Augustine and the Carmelite Church. In her detailed will she distributed property, goods, investments and 6,500 *scudi* earned through prostitution to relatives, churches and monasteries. Maria Fioccare left a substantial amount of money to the Confraternità della Carità of San Paolo Apostolo and also established a legate for poor, good-looking prostitutes to join the Magdalene sisters. Catherina Mifsud, on the other hand, moved house three times within a span of two years. She moved from the old abattoir area into the Mandraggio and consequently to a more upmarket street near the Auberge d'Aragon. All these women were active in Valletta from the 1620s to the early 1700s. Lower numbers of prostitutes in the parish of Porto Salvo and novel reports on desperate actions like practising with men in the quarantine station, in prison or in hospital confirm that in the eighteenth century the dynamism of the port altered.

The accounts of the Magdalene Nuns, who were beneficiaries of one fifth of the inheritance of all prostitutes, offered ample proof of the fact that the potential to make money was nonetheless present throughout the early modern period. The earthly possessions of prostitutes ranged from a few items to great fortunes. A significant number of prostitutes tried to settle their dues before death or attempted to get away with paying less. This showed resourcefulness and determination. These women worked hard for their money. They took risks, made sacrifices, invested wisely and they justifiably wanted to enjoy the fruit of their labour and use it to pave their way to heaven in the way they believed to be best. They also

¹⁶ N.A.M. Processi. Box 405, n.p. (8 August 1740). Testimonium Benedicta Scarpato.

¹⁷ See for instance N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.64. (3 October 1775) and N.A.M. 92/04 Box 278, Bundle n.p. (30 May 1701). Testimonium Maria Zammit.

aspired to facilitate the lives of the loved ones they were leaving behind. They were not inclined to bow their head to church/state tax impositions on their hard earned wealth. These women knew how to negotiate, they were entrepreneurs endowed with intricate skills and the ability to make and manage money. They were women who got what they wanted.

In 1528, Francisco Delicado, a Spanish writer, embarked on an ambitious attempt to compile a list of the different types of *puttana* that existed.¹⁸ He started by saying that ‘in the entire city of Rome it was impossible to find a man who knew how many different types of cloaked or uncloaked *puttane* existed’.¹⁹ He recorded seventy-two different types of prostitutes. A few of Delicado’s *puttane* featured in this dissertation. He said that there are prostitutes who were beleaguered, defeated but not overcome, those who rise and fall. Some are loyal, yet blamed by everyone. Others are determined and strong-willed, and are immortal.²⁰ Delicado’s descriptions resonate in Catherina Mifsud’s defiant words uttered on 19 October 1701: ‘*io sono Donna Publica, e così campo*’; ‘I am a *donna publica* and that is how I battle through life’. This dissertation showed that learning how prostitutes battled through life offers a dynamic approach to the history of prostitution, but also opens an alternative perspective onto early modern Valletta, one that partially speaks of stories from the point of view of some of the makeshift houses underneath the fortifications rather than the windows of the auberges. This work has also sought to steer the history of prostitution firmly away from bad historical fiction. Moreover, it offers an opportunity to understand how real people operated within the boundaries of conventions of a world whose differences from ours can be discerned and portrayed through a focus on entrepreneurship.

¹⁸ Francisco Delicado, *Retrato de la Lozana Andaluza*, (140, 141) quoted in Gianni Ferracuti, *Mediterranea 14–L’Amor Scortese*, (Trieste, Università di Tries, 2013), 255.

¹⁹ Delicado, (2013), 255.

²⁰ Delicado, (2013), 255. See full transcription in General Conclusion Appendix 11.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sonnet by an anonymous writer transcribed by Ignazio Saverio Mifsud.

Fosse Zelo ò Passion non vi so dire
Ad una ad una furono visitate
Le donne del Mandaraggio, e interrogate
Da lor mariti con tremendo ardire
Crebbe assai più il dubbio mio in udire
Le Bagasce pro forma in un chiamate
E con detti amichevoli esplorate
Fù certo punto, che non osò ridere
Zelo non credo mai, perche imprudente
L'Episcopato infamò: Non fù passion
Perche di male non commise niente
Il dubbio è di difficile soluzione
Dirò ciò che mi detta la mia mente
L'Autor di tutto questo è un Gran Caprone.²¹

²¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 13, f.134, 135. (1759).

Appendix 2

Table 2.1: Terminology with connotation linked to prostitutes.

Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Puttane</i>	Common Prostitutes	Pragmatiche di diversi Serenissimi Principi di Malta. A.I.M. Crim. Vol. 1B case 39, f. 411 (1579).). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, ff. 324, 325. (1653). N.L.M. Lib. Ms 738 f. 222 (1653), N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210 f. 66. (1660). AOM. 6405, ff. 21, 22, 32, 43v (c1720). A.I.M. AC 563, f.1.(1782).
<i>Impudica Muliere/ Donne impudiche</i>	Impudent Woman	A.O.M. 100, f.292v. (c.1600) N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, f. 178. (1643)
<i>Troia</i>	Harlot/ Whore	A.A.M. Revelationes Doc 38, Box 1/15 Loose leaf (June 1623)
<i>Cortiggana</i>	Courtesan	A.O.M. 110, f. 104v. (29 July 1631), A.A.M. Revelationes 1630-1639/4, Box V5, Loose leaf in bundle (1632-1639), N.L.M. Lib. Ms. f. 173 (1772).
<i>Cagna donna corteggiana</i>	Bitchy courtesan	A.I.M. Crim. Proc., 51B, fol. 653 (August 1635).
<i>Donna di partito/ femmine di partito</i>	A woman for whom an one can make an offer. ²²	A.I.M. Proc. 129, f. 194v. A.I.M. Proc. 129, f.194v. N.L.M Lib. Ms. 439, f.325. (1643).
<i>Donna publica</i> ²³	Public woman	A.O.M. 6553, f. 58. (1644). A.A.M. Status Animarum I, Vol.I Porto Salvo (1667). Many instances in the N.A.M. <i>Libri dei Carcerati</i> 1741-1798.
<i>Donne di vita disonesta/ Donne inoneste/</i>	Women who lead a dishonest life	NLM. Lib. Ms. 1210, f.65, 66. (1653) N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 1. (1702). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210, f. 66. (1658). N.A.M. <i>Libro dei Carcerati</i> 1781-1788, f.264. (14 April 1787)
<i>Delinquenti [che] si troveranno in flagrante</i>	Deviants caught in flagrancy	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210, f. 99. (1660)
<i>Donna di poca concentia</i>	Immoral woman	A.A.M. Revelationes ST. AO2A Loose Leaf in Bundle 1687-1688 (27 April 1687) Cont'd.
<i>Femmina Peccatrice</i>	Female Sinner	N.L.M 751, f. 203 (c.1700)
<i>Publicana</i>	Public woman	N.A.M. Box 409, 92/04 n.p. Contram Giovanni Hagius (30 May 1701) Cont'd.

²²Edward Goldberg, *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press Inc., 2011), 243. Goldberg says that *donna di partito* is often translated as ‘party girl’; a more precise translation would be ‘woman for whom you can make an offer’ or ‘a woman with whom an arrangement can be made’.

²³ C. Cassar, (2000), 133. Public women similar to *publiche meretrici* were prostitutes. *Accademia della Crusca, Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* Vol V, (Padova, Tipografia della Minerva, 1829), 602.

Table 2.1 Cont'd. Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Donna Leggera</i>	Vague Woman	N.A.M. 92/04 loose leaf n.p. (1701)
<i>Meretrice</i>	A woman involved in non-marital sexual affairs	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1067, f. 1. (1703). Several instances.
<i>Meretrice Puttana</i>	A woman involved in non-marital sexual affairs for material gain	A.O.M. 6405 D, ff. 8, 8v (c1704) Diverse Scritture.
<i>Vergognosa</i>	Shameful woman	AOM. 6405, f. 21. (c1720)
<i>Donna alle sfacettagine de lupanari</i>	Shameless brothel woman	AOM. 6405, f.57. (c1720)
<i>Donna che non si possono correggere dei loro trascorsi</i>	Incorrigible woman	A.O.M. 627 f.242 (1721).
<i>Donna di mal nome</i>	Woman of ill-repute	<i>Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali</i> , f.7. (1724).A.I.M. Proc. 130, f. 114 (c1771), N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati, 164. (1773-1781).
<i>Donna Sospette</i>	Suspicious woman	<i>Leggi e Costituzioni Prammaticali</i> , f.7. (1724)
<i>Donna Mondana</i>	Worldly Woman	N.A.M. NA 92/04, Box 409, Bundle (1741). Testimonium Maria Pirotti
<i>Maladonna</i>	Harmful Woman	N.A.M. Box 409, NA 92/04, Loose Leaf. n.p. (1741)
<i>Publica Meretrice</i>	Prostitute	A.P.S. Status Animarum, f.3. (1745) Several instances.
<i>Vendaveccie</i>	Vetch seller (vetch is a plant used to feed farm animals)	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119. (c.1750)
<i>Prostituta</i>	Prostitute	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119 (c.1750)
<i>Femmina discola</i>	Mischievous female	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119. (c.1750)
<i>Mal maritata</i>	Woman in a broken marriage	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119. (c.1750)
<i>Femmina Sfrontate</i>	Brazen female	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119v. (c.1750)
<i>Bagascia</i>	Whore	NLM. Lib. Ms. 13, f.134, 135. (1759). A.I.M. Crim, vol. 20A case 92, ff 262v-265v. Several instances in trials (slander)
<i>Donna di mal partito</i>	Woman of wrongdoings	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1760-1763, f.72. (18 August 1761)
<i>Donne di cattivo affare</i>	Women engaged in mischievous business	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, f.12. (1764)
<i>Ruffiana</i>	Procuress ²⁴	NLM Lib. Ms. 1202, f. 13. (1764) Cont'd.

²⁴ Procuresses were often ex-prostitutes. In court records a male procurer was commonly referred to as a puttaniere. See for instance N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, f.8. (12 November 1701).

Table 2.1 Cont'd Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Fraschetta</i>	Flirt	A.I.M. AC 541, f.27v. (1770)
<i>Fornicatrice</i>	Fornicator	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146, Vol. II, f. 120. (1771) Cont'd.
Table 2.1 Cont'd. Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Donna di poca fama</i>	Woman of ill repute	A.O.M. 638, f. 218. (1771)
<i>Donna Marciera</i>	Rotten woman	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol.II, f.137. (1771)
<i>Zitella guappa</i>	Braggart spinster	A.O.M. 638, f. 218. (1771)
<i>Donna libertina/ Donna libera/ librara</i>	Licentious woman	Giovanni Francesco Abela/ Giovanni Antonio Ciantar, <i>Malta Illustrata...</i> , Vol. I, (Malta, Stamperia del Palazzo, 1772), 52. N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f.182. (18 March 1772)
<i>Amante</i>	Lover	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol II, 122. (1771), A.O.M. 1146 Vol.II ff. 139. 140. (1774).
<i>Amasia</i>	Lover	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.92. (18 September 1776). Several instances.
<i>Spuria</i>	Deceitful woman	A.I.M.. Corr. 101, f. 180. (29 April 1786).
<i>Donna del mondo</i>	Worldly woman	Quoted in Frans Ciappara, <i>Society and the Inquisition</i> , (Malta, PEG Publishing, 2000), 171.

Appendix 3

Table 2.2: Terminology with connotation linked to prostitution

Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Atto venereo</i>	Venereal act	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210, f.67. (1658). N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f.102. (1681).
<i>Relazioni carnali</i>	Carnal relationships	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1210 f.67. (1658)
<i>Meretricio</i>	Non-marital sexual affairs	A.O.M 6402, Diverse Scritture A, f. 284. (c1670)
<i>Pubblico commercio delle Meretrici</i>	The public commerce of fornicators	A.O.M 6402, Diverse Scritture A, f. 284. (c1670)
<i>Delitti della carne</i>	Criminal carnal acts	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, ff.101, 102: Titolo 25 Prammatiche Caraffa, (1681).
<i>Puttanesimo</i>	Prostitution	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1408, f. 101v. (1681) Leggi e Costituzione Pragmaticali
<i>Scandalo pubblico</i>	Public scandal	A.A.M. Revelaciones, ST. AO2A Loose Leaf in Bundle (1687-1688)
<i>Amoreggiamenti</i>	Love affairs	N.A.M. Box 279, Loose leaf n.p. (1701).
<i>Commercio Scandaloso</i>	Scandalous commerce	N.A.M. 279 Bundle n.p. (1701).
<i>Impudico uso del corpo</i>	Shameless use of the body	N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1067, f.1v. (1702)
<i>Bestiale Sporchezze</i>	Foul acts	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.13v. Diverse Scritture (c.1704)
<i>Impiegi Dannevoli</i>	Harmful Jobs	A.O.M 6405 D, f.13v. Diverse Scitture (c.1704)
<i>Libertinaggio</i>	Licentiousness	A.O.M 6405 D, f.20. Diverse Scitture (c.1704). A.O.M. 1146 Vol. II, f. 69.
<i>Mal mestiere</i>	Harmful profession	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.21. Diverse Scritture (c.1704)
<i>Discoli perversioni</i>	Mischievous perversions	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.20. Diverse Scritture (c.1704)
<i>Male arti</i>	Harmful craft	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.43v. Diverse Scritture. (c.1704)
<i>Mendicità alla libera</i>	Unrestrained mendacity	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.57. Diverse Scritture. (c.1704)
<i>Occupazioni disoneste</i>	Dishonest Occupations	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.9. Diverse Scritture. (c.1704) Cont'd

Table 2.2 Cont'd. Descriptor	Translation	Source
<i>Mestiere di poltroni</i>	Armchair business	A.O.M. 6405 D, f.57. Diverse Scritture (c.1704)
<i>Peccato di fornicazione</i>	Sin of fornication	N.L.M. Lib. Ms 1146 (I), f. 710 (1738)
<i>Fare l'impertinenze</i>	Impertinent acts	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1146 Vol. II, f.760. (1740)
<i>Sfrontatezza</i>	Impudence	N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 751, f.119. (c.1750)
<i>Gioventù millantata</i>	Youthful Immodesty	Fabrizio Cagliola, <i>Le Disavventure Marinaresche</i> , (Malta, Palazzo e Stamperia di S.A.S, 1764), 98.
<i>Intrigo di donne</i>	Female intrigue	N.L.M. lib. Ms. 1146 II, f.62. (1771).
<i>Fragilità</i>	Fragility	N.L.M. lib. Ms. 1146 II, f.130. (1771).
<i>Commercio</i>	An affair	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.107. (21 April 1777).
<i>Mondano Pericolo</i>	Worldly Danger	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.152. (3 December 1778).
<i>Vivere Disonestamente</i>	Living Dishonestly	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.159. (13 March 1779).
<i>Affari</i>	Affairs	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f. 189. (15 December 1779).
<i>Trattare</i>	To deal	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1773-1781, f.87. (11 April 1783)
<i>Disonestà con guadagno</i>	A remunerated dishonest act	Diritto Municipale Malta, f.182. (1784)
<i>Disonestà</i>	Dishonesty	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1788, f.190. (25 March 1785)
<i>Praticare</i>	To practise	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1781-1786, f. 218. (9 February 1786). Several instances.
<i>Meretricato</i>	A sexual non-marital affair	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1788-1795, f.38. (1 July 1789)
<i>Commercio Carnale</i>	A sexual non-marital affair	N.A.M. Libro dei Carcerati 1796-1798, f. 17. (7 May 1796). Other instances.

Appendix 4: Deposition made by Catherina Mifsud

1. Fuit monita pro ut in eo et Subiunxit fui citata da Angelo Dalli otto giorni sono in circa.
2. Quod non
3. Io sono Donna Publica, e così campo
4. Quod non
5. Quod non
6. Mi prostai à Piedi del Confessore per adempir il Precetto Paschale, bensì non mi fù permesso di ricevere la Santissima Eucaristia.
7. Io da sei anni à questa parte ho abitato in questa Città Valletta e sù li Principi stetti sulla contrada della Bucerria Vecchia e doppo due anni ebbi in affitto da Rosa moglie d'Eugenio Borg una stantiola per sei tari al mese, posta sotto la sua Medesima Casa sita à capo e sopra il Mandraggio, e non ci restai più che quindici giorni in che e di là mi portai ad abitare nella strada vicin' al Venerabile Albergo d'Aragona ove dimorai sette mesi e di la andai ad abitar' in un'altra strada sotto il medesimo Albergo dove al presente mi dimoro.
8. Conosco ad Aloysetta Borg nominata in Interrogatorio con occasione che io l'hò vista alli serviti di Casa della medesima Rosa quando, abitando io in detta stantiola sono stata per due volte in casa sua, del resto io non sò di che età sia.
9. Conosco di vista e di Passaggio al Producente Gaspare mà non sò che tre anni sono Abitava in Casa del Signor Risbe, ne di là in poi dove avesse abitato anzi lo stimavo forestiere.
10. nescire
11. nescire
12. io in ordine à questo che mi si dimanda in quest'Interrogatorio altro non sò perche ben puoco tempo stetti vicina d'abitatione alla detta Rosa all'ora servita dal Interdetta Aloysetta nella Medesima Casa, se non che in un giorno di quelli che ci stetti ad abitar in detta Stantiola in una sera trà le due Ave Marie dovendo io far'uscire da detta mia Stantiola un Uomo che si trovava da me e non volendo nell'uscire essere visto da Persona alcuna io sono stata necessitata di star alla Porta mia ad effetto d'osservare il tempo, e punto opportune che lo potessi far'uscire senz'esser visto, nel qual tempo che stavo alla Porta all'effetto sudetto m'occorse di vedere che la detta Aloysetta fermata nella cantoniera, della Casa di detta Sua Padrona dove abitava stava parlando

con un Uomo stracambiato, che io non hò potuto conoscere, e finito il discorso che fù molto breve ditto Uomo hà tirato il suo Camino alla strada del bastione, e detta Aloysetta si ritirò in detta Casa ²⁵

²⁵ N.A.M. NA 92/04 Box 278, ff. 18-18v. (19 October 1701) Bundle petitionem Gasparis Mascolier.

Appendix 5: *Sonetto* composed by Camillo Spreti in 1764.

Sonetto

Disprezzo di Natura, orror d'Averno
Sterminio dè Mortali, avanzo infame
Dell'uom primier, fol d'impudiche brame
Non mai Sazio Inventor degno d'Inferno;
Te rifiuta Satana giù nell'inferno
Di sua cieca Magion, tronco lo Stame
Il Mondo vuol dè giorni tuoi, di trame
Carichi Sol degno d'un odio eterno.
Alle Città porti ruina, e ai Regni,
Rubi alle Genti d'Innocenza il fiore,
Con pretesi ingannevoli, ed indegni
Modestia a tutto il volto tuo pur offre
Ma alberghi un rio velen'entro del core
Che toglie Anime al Cielo, e il Ciel ti Soffre?²⁶

²⁶ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 1202, 14. (1764).

Appendix 6: Inventory of a bedroom in Ursula Gatt's house.

...un letto di ferro esistente nella Camera inferior di detto luogo di case, due mattarazzi pieni di lana, una moschettiera di filo à dente, una cutra, e tornialetto di damasco di Malta, un paro di brazzoletti d'oro con Lugno del gran bestia fatti à gradicola, una mezza tozzina di Sedie di vacchetta benuiste all'herede, due tavole di noce con due scrittori sopra, due specchi et una guardarobba di legname Bianca tinta esistenti in detta Camera inferior di detto luogo di case, sei quadric di quelli vi sono in detta Camera, et un quadro con l'effigie di nostra Signora de dolori con cornice dorata benuisti all'herede universal, una faldetta nuova di broccato di set color torchino e giallo un giuppone di broccato color torchino con merletti d'oro benuisto a detta Elisabetta sua Sorella, una mezza dozzina di Camisie femenine tre d'orletta e tre d'olanda, due para di lenzuoli tre dobletti l'uno raccamato con filo è l'altri due senza guarnitione...²⁷

²⁷ N.A.V. R182 Gaspare Domenico Chircop, f.188. (27 October 1701). Also in N.L.M. Lib. MS. 1067, f. 78v. (1701)

Appendix 7: Excerpt from the minutes of meeting of the Council of the Order recording a unanimous vote excluding courtesans from the main thoroughfares of Valletta.

Item li Rol II Sedici d'unanime voto e concorde opinione ordinano che in questo Sacro Convento della Città Valletta nelle strade principali dette di San Giacomo, di San Giorgio ò sia Reale e quella di San Gio[vanni]: e nelle due Vanelle fra poste l'una, ch'è all'incontro della Porta Maggiore della Chiesa Conventuale e siegue sotto al Palazzo, e l'altra che passa sotto la Cancelleria ne meno nelle strade traverse cominciando dalla frontiera della Città, sin à quella che passa tra la Casa che fù de quello Comm. Morreal a la Chiesa di Porto Salvo no vi possino habitare donne Cortiggiane, ancorche havevero Case proprie Rimettendone l'esecutore al Gran Maestro e Venerato Consiglio sotto le pene, ed altri buoni ordinazioni che loro parerà di dare.²⁸

²⁸ A.O.M. 1655, f.101. Ordinationes Capituli Generalis 1631.

Appendix: 8: *Proibizione delle vesti donne*. (Prohibitions on Female Dress)

Dominio è arrivato ad eccesso grande, che siamo costretti a darne opportuni, remedi, poichè non ostante le pragmatiche proibitive de nostri predecessori da noi confermate e renovate, tuttavia si continua alla superfluità del vestire adesso più che mai. Per tanto volendo noi evitare a tanto disordine e provvedere alla publica utilità del Dominio, con eprimere la temerità, insolenza, e presunzione di molte donne, di nuovo statueremo, ordiniamo, e commandiamo che per l'avvenire nessuna persona secolare di questo nostro Dominio possono portare, ò di fare soprà di se, nè in publico, nè in privato in qualisivoglia tempo sorte alcuna di vestimenti, eccetto guanti, scufie, e pianelle, che non siano tessute, cucite, lavorate, intagliate, recamate, guarnite, ò in qualunque altro modo ornate con oro, e con argento finato, ò tirato cosi vero, come falso, nè con perle ò alter gioe, nè meno con panteli, ò altra foggia di vetri, cristalli, tortiaciole di qualunque metallo intendo ogni specie di broccati, e filate d'oro, e d'argento eccettuato il grippone di broccato, ò broccatino, quale si permette che si possa portare semplice, senz'altra guarnizione; che delli bottoni.²⁹

²⁹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 439, ff. 225, 226. (c.1640). See also N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 738, f. 222. (1640-1666). Pragmatiche Lascaris e Cottoner.

Appendix 9: *Bando Puttane* (A proclamation targeting prostitutes)

A proclamation stipulating that prostitutes were prohibited from wearing mantles and lace and travelling in the city in a carriage. It also stipulates that over and above ordinary taxes prostitutes who wore silk and fine fabrics had to make an additional monthly payment for the right to wear fine clothes.

Principiando dalla puttane prohibirli portare manto sopra spalle, et à merletto, et andare in calescio e carrozze per la Città, del che vi sono pragmatiche prohibitive. È come si suppone la capitazione, e taglia sopra le puttane, aggiungere oltre le ordinarie taglie sopra le puttane, che vestono sete, e panni fini, debbono pagare un tanto al mese per diritto d'abiti.³⁰

³⁰A.O.M. 6405, f.32. (c.1720).

Appendix 10: Excerpt of the job description of the post of a Viscount and the post of a Lieutenant.

De Vicecomte et eius Locutenente

Guardare la terra de nocte da mali Uomini. Visitare li ponti, e quelli far'acconciare e non lassare andare dà poi la terza campana alcuna persona senza lume per la terra, e trovandoli possi pigliar la sua pena d'aspri 12, e trovando quelli essere persone sospette li presenti al luogotenente et non lo trovando in casa, lo metta al Ceppo sino à la mattina, et quello poi presentare al Castellano. Per rimuovere molti inconvenienti, che possino nascere, Renovando lo statuto antique ordiniamo che lo Visconte, ò suo luogotenente trovando la notte Uomini ,ò donne con habito dissimulato, che quello habito sia del Visconte et trovando, che siano persone sospette le presenti al luogotenente del Castellano.

Adherendo a le institutione antique statuimo che lo Visconte ò suo luogotenente possi pigliare aspri 12 da cadauno Uomo infame ò donne bagasce ò tavernari, che troverà la porta loro aperta dà poi la terza campana, et trovandosi in questo dicto Visconte ò suo Luogotenente in qualche fraude sia privato di suo officio et paghi la parte lesa lo duplo habi per ogni comandamento aspri tre e dinari quattro, et per ogni executione Civile el suo luogotenente aspri cinque et lui el duplo...³¹

³¹ N.L.M. Lib. Ms. 740, ff.8-9v. (c.1601-c1622).

Appendix 11: Francisco Delicado's compilation of different types of *puttane* (1528)

Lasciatemi finire, che forse a Roma non potreste trovare un uomo che conosca meglio, quanti tipi di puttane esistono, con o senza scialle. Guardate, ci sono puttane graziose, più che belle, e puttane che sono puttane ancor prima che ragazze. Ci sono puttane appassionate, puttane spazzolate, imbellettate, puttane innobilite, reputate, riprovate. Ci sono puttane mozarabi di Zocodover,³² puttane dei fossati. Ci sono puttane da capo-ronda, puttane ursine³³ puttane guelfe, ghibelline, puttane angioine, puttane di Rapallo, rapatine.³⁴ Ci sono puttane della semina, puttane di gemma sifilitica, notturne, diurne, puttane di taglia e misura enorme. Ci sono puttane sisternate, raffazzonate, puttane combattute, vinte e non esaurite, puttane devote e accusate da Oriente a Ponente e Settentrione, puttane convertite, pentite, puttane vecchie, lavandaie insistenti, che hanno sempre quindici anni come Elema; puttane prima della loro madre e dopo la loro zia, puttane che salgono e che scendono, puttane con verginità e senza, puttane della domenica, puttane che osservano il sabato finchè non si sono sfregate col sapone, puttane feriali, puttane di candela, puttane reformate, puttane saccheggiate, travestite, istruite, streghe di Tessaglia, e cattive puttane. Puttane avidi, puttane segrete e pubbliche, puttane pensionate, puttane sposate, stimate, puttane beate e beate puttane, puttane giovani, puttane vecchie e vecchie puttane da paga e prendi. Puttane mezzane e mezzane puttane, puttane moderne, con le palle, immortali, e altre che si ritirano a viver bene in bordello segreti e postriboli decorosi che cambiano completamente il loro mestiere.³⁵

³² Main square of Toledo.

³³ Supporters of the Orsini family.

³⁴ Alluding to the punishment of shaving their hair.

³⁵ Delicado, (2013), 255.

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(Birks study on Roman law offers a detailed explanation on the exacta diligentia (exceptional reliability) required of the bonus paterfamilias).

Black, Christopher F., *Early Modern Italy*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2001).
(This book concentrates on religious society in Counter Reformation Italy and assesses the nature and extent of church reform demands).

Blouet, Brian 'Town Planning in Malta, 1530-1798', in *The Town Planning Review*, vol. xxxv, 3, (1964).
(A study of the urban morphology of many Maltese towns and villages).

Blouet, Brian, *The Story of Malta*, (Malta, Progress Press Co. Ltd., 1993).
(A historical geographical study on the landscape of Malta during the rule of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, 1530-1798).

Blondy, Alain, 'Malte, enjeu diplomatique européen au XVIII^e siècle', in *Méditerranée, Mer Ouverte* Tome I: su XVI au XVIII siècle, Christiane Villain-gandossi, Louis Durteste and Salvino Busuttil (eds)., (Aix-Marseille, Université de Provence, 1997).
(In this article Blondy traces the Order of St John's seventeenth-century dependence on its' commercial links with France. In the eighteenth century this shifted to diplomatic dependence. The political crisis that the Order faced at the end of the eighteenth century was a consequence of the French revolution. These developments made an impact on the business of prostitution in Valletta).

Bolles, Lynn, 'Women's Work in the Third World' in *Conformity and Conflict*, James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy (eds)., *Conformity and Conflict*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1994).
(In third-world countries, a hidden work force of women, make money as vendors, small importers domestics, and a variety of other jobs that allow them the freedom to survive).

Bonello, Lianne, 'Legalising Prostitution as a Job Description Comparing Malta with the Netherlands', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation Institute of Criminology, University of Malta 2014).
(This dissertation focuses on the sociological, economical and criminological impacts that introducing prostitution as a legitimate job description in Malta would generate. This study was useful in revealing modern ideas on how some people show lack of empathy towards prostitutes and the victimisation faced in their line of work, at times stating that prostitutes are often not victims but perpetrators).

Borg, Alistair Paul, 'Migration and Mobility in Early Modern Malta: The Harbour-City of Valletta as a Case Study 1557-1650', (Unpublished M.A. degree Dissertation, Department of History, The University of Malta, 2003).
(Borg examines historical demography through parish registers. This was useful in revealing ideas on family origins).

Borg, Vincent, *Fabio Chigi Apostolic Delegate in Malta (1634-1639)*, (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1967).
(Borg's study on official correspondence exchanged between Fabio Chigi 1634-1639), Apostolic Delegate in Malta, and Francesco Barberini (1597-1679), Cardinal nephew revealed Chigi's views on the presence of Flaminia Valenti in the life of Grand Master Antoine de Paule).

Bonanno, Anthony, *Malta Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2005).
(An illustrated documentary of Malta in ancient history).

Bonazzi, Francesco, *Elenco dei Cavalieri del S.M. Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme*, (Miltonkeynes, Bibliobazaar, 2010).
(A list of names of Italian knights who enrolled in the Italian langue from the institution of the Order to 7 September 1860).

Bonnici, Alexander, *L'Inkiżizzjoni ta' Malta*, Vol. I, (Malta, Reliġjon u Hajja, 1990).
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(A three volume detailed history and critical analysis of the social, political and judicial role of the Roman Inquisition in Malta from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries).

Bonnici, Alexander, 'Maltese Society under the Hospitallers' in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993).
(A cursory look at Early Modern social life in Malta through the archives of the Inquisition. This article includes information on common Maltese men and women that were useful to the purpose of this study).

Bonnici, Alexander, *Medieval and Roman Inquisition in Malta*, (Malta, Reliġjon u Hajja, 1998).
(A detailed study of the history of the regional pro-inquisitors of the Medieval Inquisition 1433-1561, and the Inquisitors and Apostolic Delegates 1561-1798).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Laws vs Fashion: The Maltese Saga' in *Costume in Malta – A History of Fabric, Form & Fashion*, Nicholas de Piro, Vicki Ann Cremona (eds.), (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 1998).
(An overview of laws enacted by the Order of St John which attempted to control clothing, curtail extravagance, and promote morality and public security from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Feasting and Fasting at the time of the Knights' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. I, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2000).
(A historical exploration of the culinary traditions of the Knights of St John with a brief discussion on food idioms in the Maltese language).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'How a Stranger saw the Maltese Legal Profession in 1780' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. I, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2000).
(An appraisal of Giandonato Rogadeo's 1780 critical views of the Maltese legal profession).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Notes for a history of time-keeping in Malta', in *Histories of Malta* Vol.II, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2001).
(A historical overview of time-keeping in Malta from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century and its interaction with the Maltese language. This offered information on how certain regulations imposed on prostitutes and procuresses were tied to bell ringing).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Law vs Fashion – The Maltese Saga', in *Histories of Malta* Vol. II, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2001).

(An overview of laws enacted by the Order of St John which attempted to control clothing, curtail extravagance, and promote morality and public security from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Knights and Courtesans' in *Histories of Malta* Vol.III, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2002).

(A cursory overview on 'loose women' in Hospitaller Malta as seen through the eyes of various Early Modern visitors and Inquisitors. This article also includes some information on how the Order treated venereal disease and regulations enacted in an attempt to control prostitution).

Bonello, Giovanni, '500 Years of Inns and Taverns in Malta' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. VI, (Malta, Patrimonju Publishing, 2005).

(An overview of the history of inns and taverns from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century that includes substantial illustrations and brief information on some taverns and inns in Early Modern Valletta).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Fra Giorgio Correa' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. VI, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2005).

(An analysis of the 1577 murder of Frà Correa and how the Order punished criminal knights. Bonello showed how the actions of the Magna Curia della Castellaniæ were entirely dictated by Grand Masters).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Dun Gaetano Mannarino – False and Deceitful Idol' in *Histories of Malta* Vol. X, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2009).

(An appraisal of the life and actions of Dun Mannarino negating prevalent Modern heroic perceptions).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'The Love Children of Grand Master Jean de Valette' Part I in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 26 May, 2013, Part II, 'Murder of Grand Master de Valette's love-daughter, Isabella Bounaccorsi' in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 2 June 2013.

(The discovery of a document of legitimisation issued by King Charles IX in favour of Barthèlemy, illegitimate son of Grand Master de Valette shed new light on de Valette's relationship with Catherine Grecque. Bonello also revealed information on the murder of Jean de Valette's daughter Isabella. He suggests that what the Order really resented was not so much the breach of the vow of chastity, as the publicity and scandal attached to it).

Bonello, Giovanni, 'Caterina Scappi and her Revolutionary Hospital for Women who were incurable' in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 23 August 2015.

(This article offered useful information on the Casetta, a seventeenth-century female hospital).

Borch, Michel-Jean, *Lettres sur la Sicile et sur L'île de Malthe* Tome II, (Turin, Freres Reycends, 1782).

(A critical appraisal of Patrick Brydone's 1773 *A Tour through Sicily and Malta*. This book offers information on the customs of upper class Maltese women).

Borg, Carmen, 'Dawl Ġdid fuq il-Hajja tal-Gran-Mastru Ferdinand von Hompesch', in *Symposia Melitensia* x (2015). Translated from an essay by Löehr, Wolfgang.
(The letters discovered by Dr Löehr in the archives of the Hompesch family in Jaroslavice confirm the underhanded plots that were going on against Grand Master Hompesch. They also provide details about his character and private life and that of members of his family).

Borg, Malcolm, Fabry, Samantha, *Valletta Action Plan: Integrated Cultural Heritage Management Plan*, (Heritage Enterprise Consultancy, 2009).
(This article offered some historical information on the poorer areas in Valletta).

Borg, Vincent, 'The Diocesan Priests in the Maltese Islands 1551-1950' in *Bulletin tal-Arċidjoċesi u Liturġija tal-Kelma*, xxxii, (1965).
(A cursory look at the changing role of Diocesan clergy and their contribution to Maltese society).

Borg-Muscat, David, 'Absolutism and the Power of Social Control in Malta: 1775-1825', (Unpublished M.A. degree thesis, Department of History, University of Malta, 1999).
(This dissertation was useful in shedding light on modes of punishment in the last twenty-three years of the Order's rule. It examines absolutism vis-à-vis social control. Borg-Muscat argues that inflicting suffering on condemned criminals was the defining element of early modern sovereign power, of absolutism. In Europe, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century non-physical modes of punishment replaced physical modes. This affected absolutist sovereign power).

Borg Muscat, David, 'Prison Life in Malta in the 18th Century Valletta's Gran Prigione', in *Storja* (2001).
(An attempt at understanding the exact role of the *Gran Prigione* within the structures of power built up in early modern Malta by the Order of St John).

Borg-Muscat, David, 'Reassessing the September 1775 Rebellion: A Case of Lay Participation or a 'Rising of the Priests'?' in *Melita Historica*, xiii (2002).
(Borg-Muscat shows how the rebellion and subsequent *Relazione* produced unforeseeable consequences in Rome).

Bosher, J.F., *The French Revolution*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989).
(Bosher suggests that the French revolution was not an inevitable expression of French political and economic dissatisfactions but a consequence of the stresses in the social and political order of the ancient regime and elite ideas circulating in salons and in journals).

Bosio, Giacomo, *Dell'istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, Vol.III, (Rome, 1594).
(An important source of information related to the history of the Knights of St John, from its origin to the time of the author's termination of the chronicle in 1570. This revealed that in 1565 before the great siege, Grand Master Jean de Valette expelled prostitutes from Malta).

Bosworth, Edmund, *An Intrepid Scot*, (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006).
(Articles containing insights on various specific sections of William Lithgow's 1632 travel book, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations of Ninteene*

Years Travayles from Scotland to the most Kingdoms in Europe, Asia and Affrica. Lithgow was highly critical of the loose morals of the Knights of St John).

Boulton, Jeremy, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

(A social and economic study of a London suburban parish in the seventeenth century which sheds light on various aspects of urban social history).

Bowsky, William M., *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287-1355*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1981).

(This study examines the way in which people in Siena in the medieval period used their institutions to affect their urban milieu and to affect their aims and ideals).

Boyle, Margaret E., *Unruly Women: Performance, Penitence and Punishment in Early Modern Spain*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2014).

(Boyle explores the interconnected relationships between female performance, penitence, and punishment in Early Modern Spain. She showed how acts of rehabilitation and punishment were at times mutable and contradictory).

Brafman, David, 'Facing East: The Western View of Islam in Nicolas de Nicolay's 'Travels in Turkey'', in *Getty Research Journal*, i, (2009).

(In his study on Nicolay's survey of ethnic customs and costumes of the Ottoman Islamic world Brafman reveals his dispassionate approach toward Islam that was radical for its time).

Braithwaite, John, 'What's wrong with the sociology of punishment?' in *Theoretical Criminology*, vii, 1, (2003).

(Braithwaite reveals pitfalls in the sociology of punishment. He argues that the sociology of punishment focuses on societal choices of whether and how to punish instead of on choices of whether to regulate by punishment or by a range of other important strategies).

Braudel, Fernand, *Civilisation and Capitalism*, I, (London and New York, Collins, 1981).

(This study explores the elementary basic activity of material life (markets, stalls, shops), in pre-industrial Europe. It suggests that there were several different types of economies that evolved in different ways in time and place).

Braunfels, Wolfgang, *Urban Design in Western Europe, Regime and Architecture, 900-1900*, Kenneth Northcott (trans.), (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988).

(Braunfels shows the dependence of the architectural organisation of a number of successful cities upon differing political conditions).

Brogini, Anne, 'Marginalités et contrôle social dans le port de Malte à l'époque modern (XVI – XVII siècles)' in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, lxi, (2004).

(Brogini argues that the Order of St John and the Inquisition attempted to eradicate poverty through repression and charity. She suggests that this was particularly evident in the seventeenth century when efforts were made to integrate poor and marginalised people).

Brogini, Anne, *Malte, frontier de chrétienté, (1530-1670)*, (Rome, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2006).

(Following the 1551 and 1565 clashes with Muslims, the Order's outlook towards the Muslim world changed from a militant (war on Islam) to an economic orientation (trading of loot and slaves). This changed the structure and outlook of the Hospitaller organisation).

Brontë, Anne, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, (New York, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1858).

(The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is the second and final novel by the English author Anne Brontë. It was first published in 1848 under the pseudonym Acton Bell. In Victorian England mildly-pornographic love-novels became increasingly popular. Such novels were believed to disturb readers).

Brown, Gavin, Browne, Kath, Lim, Jason, 'Introduction, or Why Have a Book on Geographies of Sexualities?' in *Geographies of Sexualities: Theory, Practices and Politics*, Brown, Gavin, Browne, Kath, Lim, Jason(eds)., (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2009).

(A broad, interdisciplinary and international overview of the geographies of sexualities that explores spatialities of sexualities, intersecting discussions of sexualities with issues such as development, race, gender and other forms of social differences).

Brozyna, Martha A., 'Secular Law' in *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, Brozyna, Martha A. (ed)., (Jefferson, NC., McFarland & Company Inc., 2005).

(This study explores the construction of gender in the Middle Ages. It shows how gender equates biology with destiny. Gender is defined as the knowledge created by cultures and societies on perceived differences between the sexes. These perceptions shape principles and norms and provide a framework by which men and women are taught to conduct their lives).

Bruno, Lizio, *Canti Popolari delle Isole Eolie e di altri luoghi di Sicilia*, (Messina, Ignazio D'Amico e Figli, 1871).

(A collection of songs from the Eolian islands including explanatories that contributed towards understanding the meaning of certain Sicilian terminology in use in Malta in the eighteenth century).

Brydone, Patrick , *Travels in Sicily and Malta*, (Aberdeen, George Clark and Son, 1848).

(A lively account of the author's 1770 visit to Sicily and Malta, in the form of thirty-eight letters to William Beckford of Somerly Hall. These letters include descriptions of Brydone's contact with various women. The author appears to have been impressed by the beauty of Maltese females).

Bugeja, Lino, 'Morality and sexuality in Maltese society in the late Middle Ages', *Sunday Times of Malta*, (8 December, 2013).

(A cursory look at honour and shame in the late middle ages within the context of the prevailing circumstances. Bugeja argues that harsh living conditions, poverty, starvation, plague, cholera, typhoid, vermin-carried diseases, smallpox, fear of slavery or a life of abject servitude and marriages that did not require clerical intervention shaped prevalent perceptions on morality and sexuality).

Buhagiar, Mario, *The Christianisation of Malta: catacombs, cult centres and churches in Malta to 1530*, (Malta, Archaeopress, 2007).

(This study was useful in revealing the presence of a late medieval chapel dedicated to St Mary Magdalene in Rabat).

Bullough, Vern, *The History of Prostitution*, (New York, University Books, 1964).

(A history of prostitution from primitive societies to the twentieth century. Bullough explores the ideas of different religions on sex and prostitution. The general social attitudes of different civilisations toward women and the place of sex in society are also examined).

Bullough, Vern L. & Bullough, Bonnie, *Women and Prostitution: A Social History*, (Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Press, 1987).

(A study of prostitution in a social, anthropological and historical context. This study suggests that a study of prostitution requires an understanding of the role of women in society).

Burke, Peter, *Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

(A historical anthropological study of Italian cities. This book shows how in the sixteenth century the authorities and ordinary people consciously and unconsciously used stereotyped perceptions of social groups such as working women and beggars).

Butler, Josephine E., *The Constitution Violated*, (Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1871).

(A book demanding equal protection for women based on the principles of the British Constitution).

Buttigieg, Chantelle, 'Petitions to the Magistracy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Malta', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011).

(This study examines petitions submitted by the Maltese people to the magistracy in early modern Malta. It provided useful insights on female supplicants and the sensitivity of the Grand Master to his subjects and their needs).

Buttigieg, Emanuel, 'Growing Up in Hospitaller Malta (1530-1798): An Overview', in *Religion, ritual and mythology: aspects of identity formation in Europe*, Joaquim Carvalho (ed), (Pisa, Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press, 2006).

(An interdisciplinary study of the lives of early modern young people. Buttigieg shows the importance of supplementing textual primary sources (written sources) with evidence from material objects (non written sources) like for instance statues and paintings. Religion infiltrated most aspects of Early Modern life in Malta and religious material objects can be useful tools in providing visual images of Early Modern people whose voices mostly emerge in court records).

Buttigieg, Emanuel, 'Family life and neighbourliness in Malta (c.1640-1760): Some preliminary observations based on evidence from the Magna Curia Castellaniæ', in *Arkivju* Issue I (2010).

(An examination of family and community life in Malta with a special focus on the roles and voices of children and adolescents in Valletta and its environs. Buttigieg argues that certain poor, alienated and transient sectors of early modern Maltese society may have been controlled by informal relations and formal state intervention rather than religion).

Buttigieg, Emanuel, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity*, (London & New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011).

(An indepth study of the experience of being a Hospitaller knight in Early Modern Malta. By comparing connections between practices, representations and encounters, Buttigieg creates a conceptual framework to examine the culture of Hospitallers. It was particularly useful because it provided important insights on the daily contact and companionship of the Hospitallers with women).

Buttigieg, Noel, 'People of an Urban Night Culture', in *Arkivju* Vol. II Issue 1 (2010).

(An attempt to reconstruct a typical night in early modern Valletta. Buttigieg shows bedtime was regulated by things to do and not by curfews).

Buttigieg, Noel, 'Setting the Stage: Banquet for a Knight' in *A Timeless Gentleman: Festschrift in honour of Maurice de Giorgio*, Giovanni Bonello (ed.), (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2014).

(A detailed analysis of the financial costs of a meal prepared for the Seneschal of the Portuguese Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Roccaful (1697-1720) by the Università of Gozo in 1701. This essay was useful in providing information on the cost of bread during this epoch and a comparison between the buying power of an Early Modern maid servant and a prostitute).

Callus, Leonard, 'Work permit increase sparks prostitution fear' in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 22 November 2015.

(In this article Callus discusses the issuing of new permits for massage parlours and states that these parlours are in reality brothels where women are being exploited).

Camenzuli, Anthony, 'Defamatory Nicknames and Insult in Late Eighteenth-Century Malta: 1771-1798', in *Melita Historica*, xiii (2002).

(Camenzuli shows how nicknames in the Mediterranean served as a mechanism of community social control similar to gossip and slander).

Cagliola, Fabrizio, *Le Disavventure Marinaresche*, (Malta, Palazzo e Stamperia di S.A.S, 1764).

(A mid-seventeenth-century novel that was useful in drawing out various cultural perceptions on courtesans. Notwithstanding the traditional trait of depicting prostitution as the downfall of youths it also reflected social concerns with venereal diseases, consumerism and the presence of foreign men).

Camerano, Alessandra, 'Donne oneste o meretrici?' in *Quaderni Storici*, xcix, 3, (1998).

(Camerano reveals confusion between matters concerning identity in testaments and property rights in early modern Rome).

Camilleri, Mark, *A Materialist Revision of Maltese History: 870-1919*, (Malta, Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2016).

(A broad history of Malta 870-1919 whereby the author attempts to apply Hegelian and Marxist theories to re-examine social history. The emphasis of this study is largely based on twentieth-century police logbooks. Camilleri suggests that Early Modern women's sexuality was sold to the highest bidder, they endured great suffering and were 'ruthlessly oppressed').

Cann, Wesley Lloyd, *The Origin of God*, (Bloomington, Indiana, Wesley Lloyd Cann, 2009).
Cann's journey to find out the purpose of life, death, Heaven, Hell, the beginning, and the end included a biblical interpretation of whores derived from select verses in the Book of Proverbs. The whore is depicted as a loud, stubborn, wicked beguiling woman who devours wealth and whose 'way leads to Hell, to the chambers of death').

Caracausi, Gerolamo, *Dizionario Onomastico della Sicilia: Repertorio storico-etimologico di nomi di famiglia e di luogo*, Vol I (A-L) & Vol. II, (M-Z), (Palermo, L'Epos, 1994).

(Caracausi's study on Sicilian surnames was useful in recognising the fact that a significant number of Early Modern prostitutes in Valletta had Sicilian surnames).

Carasi, M. [pseud.] *The Order of Malta Exposed*, Thomas Freller (Trans)., (Malta, Gutenberg Press, 2010).

(A sensational, historical, philosophical and critical description of Malta and the knights of St John written in 1790. This account attempts to highlight the maladministration of the Order. Besides offering pictorial information on Valletta in the late eighteenth century, Carasi's account was useful in exposing prevalent Enlightenment anti-Hospitalier perceptions and drawing out possible realities on prostitutes in between the lines).

Carmen, Arlene and Moody, Howard, *Working Women*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1985).
Carter, Cathy, *Arthur Munby and Hannah Cullwick*, (Eisenhower Parkway, ProQuest LLC, 2009).

(A twentieth-century account on a particular group of prostitutes in New York City and their subculture. Carmen and Moody suggest that prostitutes in New York City are exploited by procurers, the police and the courts. This was useful in showing how perceptions on prostitution oppressing women still dominate Modern histories of prostitution).

Caruana, Iona, 'Aspects of Marriage in the Maltese Islands in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century' (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2014).

(A study on how early modern bedrooms in Malta provided important multi functional spaces used for sleeping, reproduction, birth, convalescence, death, protection and socialising. This was useful in providing perspectives on details on the contents of Ursula Gatt's and Maria Fioccare's bedrooms as described in their wills).

Cassar, Carmel, 'Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Control in Seventeenth-Century Malta', in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* III (1993).

(A study on what witchcraft trials reveal on witch beliefs and Maltese culture. Cassar shows how early modern people relied on folk healers who combined healing practices with popular magic, sorcery and folk Catholicism).

Cassar, Carmel, *Society, Culture and Identity in Early Modern Malta*, (Malta, Mireva Publications, 2000).

(A systematic approach to studying Maltese society and culture in Early Modern times. C. Cassar's study was useful in sourcing demographical and economical information).

Cassar, Carmel, 'Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Control in Seventeenth-Century Malta', in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology* Vol. 5, Brian P. Levack, (ed)., (New York, London, Routledge, 2001).

(Cassar's study on seventeenth-century trials of persons offering healing or supernatural services in the archives of the Roman Inquisition in Malta revealed that people from all walks of life (including knights and clerics) sought such services. He argued that the boundaries between Christian practices and popular practices were fluid. Cassar revealed that some women accused of witchcraft were also described as prostitutes).

Cassar, Carmel, *Daughters of Eve*, (Malta, Mireva Publications, 2002).

(Cassar examines the Malta Inquisition records to understand the role of women in the post Tridentine period. An eighteen-page discussion on prostitutes is included in the study. Cassar argues that notwithstanding the fact that prostitution attracted higher monetary rewards than domestic work, prostitutes were largely victims of poverty and a male dominated culture).

Cassar, Carmel, 'Honour and Shame in the Mediterranean', in *Encyclopaedia of the Mediterranean, Contemporary Studies*, Vol. IV, (Malta. Midsea Books, 2003).

(In this essay Cassar suggests that concepts of honour and shame take on different meanings in different societies. In the Mediterranean male notions of honour were manifest in physical strength, loyalty and honesty whereas female honour was based on sexuality).

Cassar, Carmel, 'Monks of Honour: The Knights of Malta and Criminal Behaviour in Early Modern Rome' in *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke*, Melissa Calarescu, Filippo de Vivo, Joan Pau Rubiés (eds)., (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2010).

(In this essay Cassar shows how the knights enacted notions of honour and prestige in outbreaks of violent behaviour. Testimonies placed by participants and victims in the criminal records of the Governor of Rome indicate links between criminal behaviour and masculinity. This included conflict between knights seeking to prove their sexual competence).

Cassar, Carmel, 'Gut Feelings' in *Strada Stretta*, George Cini (ed)., (Malta, Allied Publications, 2013).

(Some reflections on George Cini's collection of testimonies gathered from people who lived and worked in Strait Street Valletta. The lower end of this street was a hub of prostitution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.).

Cassar, Mario, *The Surnames of the Maltese Islands: an etymological dictionary*, (Malta, P.E.G. Ltd., 2001).

(This etymological dictionary of surnames of Malta was useful in providing information on the origins of certain surnames).

Cassar, Paul, *Medical History of Malta*, (London, Wellcome Hist. Libr., 1964).

(This is one of the earliest studies that dealt with prostitution in Malta. It places prostitution under a medical lens).

Cassar, Paul, 'Women in Malta an Historical Vignette' in *Scientia*, xxxviii (1977).
(A cursory look at the participation of women in the structure of Maltese society from prehistory to Modern times).

Cassar, Paul, 'Grand Master Cottoner and the foundations of the lectureship of anatomy and surgery 1676', in *Melita Historica*, viii, 1, (1980).
(An exploration of the circumstances that in 1676 may have influenced Grand Master Cottoner to found the lectureship of anatomy and surgery. Cassar shows how the major driver was the plague).

Cassar, Paul, 'A tour of the Lazzaretto Buildings' in *Melita Historica* vol.ix, 4 (1987).
(A description of the Lazzaretto (quarantine station) on Manoel Island in Marsamxett Harbour).

Cassar Paul, 'The Medical and Social Services under the Knights', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor-Mallia-Milanes (ed)., (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993).
(A cursory look at early modern medical and welfare institutions that includes information on the Ospizio and its Conservatorio where some prostitutes were placed by the *Castellanica* judges).

Cassar, Paul, 'The Concept and range of charitable institutions up to World War I', in *Malta Medical Journal* Vol. xviii, 1, (2006).
(Charitable institutions were organizations devoted to relieving the poor by providing them with money, food and shelter; nursing and treating them when sick either in their own homes or in hospitals; providing care for the aged and the mentally ill and assisting the helpless by protecting unwanted babies and orphans and ransoming slaves. These activities took the form of three services: hospital Services, district medical service, social welfare).

Castillo, Dennis, *The Maltese Cross: A Strategic History of Malta*, (London, Praeger Security International, 2006).
(Castillo traces the various challenges the Maltese people witnessed in history. The Early Modern challenges the threat of Islam, the French Revolution etc. were relevant to the purpose of this study).

Chapin Lane, Frederic, Mueller, Reinhold C., *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice: Coins and Moneys of Account* Vol. 1, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1985).
(This study revealed information on Early Modern currencies and their value).

Chapkis, Wendy, *Live Sex Acts*, (London, Cassell, 1997).
(An inquiry on women involved in live sex acts in the US and the Netherlands that reveals the complex, multi-faceted nature of sex work).

Cheek, Pamela, 'Prostitutes of Political Institution' in *Eighteenth Century Studies*, xxviii, 2 (1994-1995).
(This study revealed secret documents that the police in eighteenth century Paris tolerated even encouraged prostitution. This takes issue with historians who argue that during this period of time the policing of prostitutes was harsh).

Chetcuti, Paul, 'Direct Employment of the Maltese with the Order of St John 1775-1798', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1968). (This dissertation was useful in revealing distinctions between the militia forces and the hired army and maritime soldiers. The hired army soldiers and the maritimes soldiers were salaried whereas the militia forces were not).

Chojnacka, Monica, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, (Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, 2001). (Drawing on Early Modern Venetian parish censuses Chojnacka argues that women occupied a more socially powerful space than traditionally believed).

Ciantar, Giovannantonio, *Malta Illustrata* Vol. II, (Malta, Giovanni Mallia, 1780). (This is a standard reference work expanded on Giovanfrancesco Abela's 1647 work, describing all aspects of Malta's general history from antiquity to Ciantar's time: Geography, archaeology, gazetteer chronology, customs and folklore, religious aspects, orders of the Church, the nobility, and the Order of St John. Ciantar refers to prostitutes as *donne libertine*. He mentions the enactment of the courtesan law instigated through a papal brief dated 16 November 1602. Ciantar denies the existence of many prostitutes).

Frans Ciappara, 'Non Gode L'Immunità Ecclesiastica' in *Melita Historica*, ix, 2 (1985). This article was useful in identifying the location of certain chapels where prostitutes used to confess and receive Holy Communion.

Ciappara, Frans, *Mill-Qighan ta'L-Istorja; il Kappillani fis-seklu tmintax*, (Malta, Publishers Enterprises Group, 1987). (Ciappara traces the vicissitudes of various eighteenth-century parish priests, their responsibilities as wardens and administrators of the parish).

Ciappara, Frans, *Marriage in Malta*, (Malta, Associated News Ltd., 1988). (A study of marriage in Malta, 1751-1800. Notwithstanding Catholic religious ideals Ciappara shows that some Maltese individuals at the end of the eighteenth century condoned carnal commerce as not sinful and accepted fornication. Secret marriages in which vows were exchanged without the assistance of a priest took place. Ciappara argues that some Catholics understood marriage as a private matter and rejected church authority over it).

Ciappara, Frans, *Society and the Inquisition in Early Modern Malta*, (Malta, Publishers Enterprises Group, 2001). (A close scrutiny of the Archives of the Inquisition in Malta that revealed insights on mental habits and frame of mind of a wide cross-section of Maltese society and major aspects of social life in the second half of the eighteenth century).

Ciappara, Frans, *Enlightenment and Reform in Malta 1740-1798*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2006). (Ciappara suggests that notwithstanding the absence of an anti-Christian wing enlightened ideas with a close connection to Italy can be identified in some institutions and in local political traditions. This manifested itself in the assertion of state power, the desire to reduce the number and influence of the clergy, emphasis on the criterion of utility, early attempts of budgeting, and a fairly rational economic policy).

Ciappara, Frans, *The Social and Religious History of a Maltese Parish: St Mary's Qrendi in the Eighteenth Century*, (Malta, Malta University Press, 2014).

(A study of the Parish of St Mary in Qrendi in the eighteenth century that cast insights on the humble lives of common people and how they inter-related within the cultural, religious and social milieu of a Maltese village community. This study was useful in revealing ideas on how some villagers resisted clerical interference in family affairs and that significant numbers of parishioners moved out of the village).

Ciarlò, John, *The Hidden Gem*, (Malta, Progress Press, 2000).

(A description of St Pauls Shipwreck Collegiate Church Valletta mainly focusing on its material outlook).

Cini, George, *Strada Stretta*, (Malta, Allied Publications, 2013).

(Transcripts of eighteen interviews with some of the protagonists of Strait Street in its heyday when British navy sailors gravitated in this street in search of bars and music halls. Some interviewees revealed that they were women from poor families who moved to Valletta to make a living and because they were attracted by the dynamics of the city).

Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano, riordinato per comandamento del Sacro Generale Capitolo celebrato nell'anno MDCCLXXVI, (Malta, Paolo Mallia, 1782).

(This was the last compilation of statutes, laws and ordinances published by the Order of St John. A standard reference of work in the study of the Order's organization and administration from the legal point of view).

Cohen Elizabeth S., 'No Longer Virgins: Self presentation by young women of late Renaissance Rome', in *Refiguring Women, Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (eds), (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991).

(This study pays particular attention to the way women and men portray themselves or are portrayed in cases involving sex and gender relations).

Cohen, Elisabeth S., 'Courtesans' and Whores: Words and Behavior in Roman Streets', in *Women Studies* xix, (1991).

(A study on the way women and men portray themselves or are portrayed in cases involving sex and gender relations).

Cohen, Elisabeth S., 'Seen and Unknown: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late Sixteenth-Century Rome' in *Renaissance Studies* xii, 3 (1998).

(Cohen shows the benefits of occupational solidarity among Roman prostitutes).

Cohen Elizabeth S., 'Women on the Margins', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, M. Poska, Allyson, Couchman, Jane and Melver, Katherine A. (eds), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2013).

(A study on how marginal women were not segregated but negotiated spatial porous borders).

Cohen, Sherrill, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums since 1500*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992).

(Cohen uses the historical records of three convents or asylums for women to explore the multifunctional, social and historical significance of these early refuges for women and to draw parallels between these institutions and a number of other institutional prototypes including girls' schools, women's prisons, residence homes for unwed mothers and shelters for battered women).

Cohen, Thomas V. and Cohen, Elizabeth S., *Words and Deeds*, (Toronto Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 1993).

(Snapshots of Renaissance Rome and its population through the transcriptions of trials held before the Papal Magistrates. These cast insights on how men and women could weave webs of alliance across the city).

Cohn, Samuel K., *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy*, (Baltimore, London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Seven essays on women, sex, violence, and piety in Renaissance Italy. Cohn suggests that the Renaissance brought about a decline in Italian women's status. This theory challenges views on Renaissance women being equal to men).

Cohn, Samuel K., 'Renaissance Emotions: Hate and disease in European Perspective', in *Emotions, Passions, and Power in Renaissance Italy*, Fabrizio Ricciardelli and Andrea Zorzi (eds), (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2015).

This study examines the connection between epidemic disease and hate during the sixteenth century, with a particular focus on syphilis. Cohn argues that Renaissance society put the blame on itself and not on outsiders 'the other').

Comfort, Alex, *The Joy of Sex*, (New York, Octopus Publishing Group, 2002).

(A classic work that speaks about how human beings experience sexuality).

Connolly, S.J., *Religion, Law and Power*, (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002).

(An examination of the power struggle in Ireland 1660-1760 when the structure and problems of modern Ireland took shape. Connolly argues that religion had a crucial role in personal and political motivation in Irish pre-industrialised society).

Coote, William Alexander, *A Vision and its Fulfilment*, (London, National Vigilance Association, 1910).

(A history of the origin of the work of the 'National Vigilance Association for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic').

Corbin, Alain, *Les filles de Noce: Misère Sexuelle et Prostitution au XIX^e Siècle*, (Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1978).

(A reflective study on the mutation of various forms of desire in nineteenth-century France. Following the revolution prostitutes were marginalised and enclosed in institutes. Corbin focuses on discourse and political movements in an attempt to draw perspectives behind the isolation of sex workers).

Corbin, Alain, *Women for Hire*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990).

(In this study, prostitution in nineteenth-century France is not depicted as a vice, crime or disease, but as a well-organised business. Corbin suggests that the brothel was an institution that provided an efficient and profitable sale of services).

Cremona, Antonio, *L-Ospizju tal-Furjanau l-Erwieħ ta' Wied Għammieq*, (Malta, Department of Information, 1959).

(A pamphlet containing some information about the *Ospizio*).

Crepaldi, Silvano, *Santi e Reliquie*, (Milan, Lampi di Stampa, 2012).

(Based on Carlo Bescapè's 1612 *Novaria sacra* this book offers valuable information on the religious sentiments of ordinary people as seen through the eyes of the cleric during pastoral visits. This book also offers a wealth of information on religious traditions including bell-ringing).

Critien, Attilio, *The Mandraggio*, (Malta, St Joseph's Institute, 1938).

(A twentieth-century report written by Dr Attilio Critien Senior Medical Officer of Health who was the Chief Government Medical Officer and Superintendent of Public Health on the Mandraggio and the Mandraggiane. A picture of the insanitary condition of the area).

Critien, Attilio, 'The Foundlings under the Order and After' in *Scientia*, I, xv, (1949).

(A pioneering standard study of foundlings under the Hospitallers).

Cruikshank, Dan, *The Secret History of Georgian London*, (London, Random House, 2009).

(This study looks at how a world of riches, glamour but also tragedy, abuse and disease influenced building and the arts in Georgian London).

Coy, Jason Philip, *Strangers and Misfits: Banishment Social Control and Authority in Early Modern Germany*, (Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2008)

(This study examines banishment and the reactions of the persons who were subject to it in sixteenth-century Ulm. It shows how law enforcement was insufficient for early modern magistrates to purge undesirables from society. Public banishment rituals were used to display civic norms, confirm the boundaries of inclusion within the community and demonstrate the power of central authority. This was useful in drawing comparisons with banishment rituals pertaining to prostitutes in early modern Valletta where similar to sixteenth-century Ulm banishment was a common form of punishment).

Cummins, Stephen, 'Forgiving Crimes in Early Modern Naples', in *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe*, Laura Kounine and Stephen Cummins (eds), (Surrey, Ashgate Publishing, 2016).

(A study of legally instituted forms of peacemaking in early modern Naples. Cummins argues that remissions of offended parties did not exist in a vacuum. They were cast in close relation with other aspects of law that addressed crime and violence and had a significant and complex role in social life).

Cutrerà, Antonino, *Storia Della Prostituzione in Sicilia*, (Palermo, Editori Stampatori Associati, 1971).

(A history of prostitution in Sicily from classic antiquity to the early modern period. Cutrerà transcribed several *bandi* pertaining to prostitution in early modern Palermo. This was useful in drawing comparisons with similar regulations enacted in contemporary Valletta).

Dabhoiwala, Faramerz, 'The Pattern of Sexual Immorality in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century London' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, Paul Griffiths, Mark S.R.Jenner (eds.), (Manchester, New York, Manchester University Press, 2000).

(An investigation on early modern London's social concern with sexual immorality. Dabhoiwala argues that because scholarly studies on sexual immorality are mostly based on court, church or hospital records they tend to focus on subordinate groups. He suggests that a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues concerning sexual immorality require the involvement of cases concerning middling and upper ranks of society).

Dabhoiwala, Faramerz, 'Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800', *Journal of British Studies*, xlvii, 2 (2007).

(Dabhoiwala suggests that sex was at the heart of the social rite of purification that was the impetus behind the movement for the Reformation of Manners).

Dabhoiwala, Faramerz, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

(This study reveals how, where and when Western attitudes toward sex were revolutionised, and how this has shaped the course of modern history).

Dal Pozzo, Bortolameo, *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di S[an] Giovanni Gerosolimitano detta di Malta*, (Verona, Giovanni Berno, 1703).

(Another important work related to the general history of the Order of St John. Dal Pozzo takes up the history from where Bosio had left off in 1570 and brings up the chronicle up to date releasing it for publication in 1703 (vol. I) and 1715 (vol. II)).

Dalli, Charles, *Malta, The Medieval Millennium*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2006).

(An overview of Malta's medieval history that offered a background to the period under study).

Dalli, Charles, 'Satellite, Sentinel, Stepping Stone, Medieval Malta in Sicily's Orbit', in *Malta in the Hybleans, the Hybleans in Malta*, A.Bonanno and P.Militello (eds.), (Palermo, Officina di Studi Medievali, 2008).

(In this essay Dalli shows how during the Middle Ages, the Maltese islands were intimately drawn into the wider sphere of influence of Sicily).

Darmanin, Denis, 'Origin and development of Valletta's Mandraggio' Part I, in *The Sunday Times of Malta* 21 June 2015. Part II, 'Residents, reputation, religion and rebuilding Valetta's Mandraggio' in *The Sunday Times of Malta* 28 June 2015.

(These two articles offered useful information and illustrations on the Mandraggio from the early modern period to modern times).

D'Amico, Stefano, 'Shameful Mother: Poverty and Prostitution in Seventeenth-Century Milan', in *Journal of Family History*, xxx, 1 (2005).

(D'Amico suggests that asylums proliferated through the early modern period. He showed how enclosure in such institutions was common to both elite women and social dregs).

Davidson, James N., *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

(A study on the heterae and prostitution in ancient Athens).

Davis, Kinsley, 'The Sociology of Prostitution', in *American Sociological Review*, ii, 5 (1937).

(A study on the sociology of prostitution. Davis suggested that prostitution is an economic activity which performs a function which no other institution fully perform).

Davis, Natalie Z., *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995).

(An account of the personal stories of three seventeenth-century marginalised females; one Jewish (Hamburg), one Catholic (France), and one Protestant (Netherlands). These life stories go down divergent paths yet Davis revealed common challenges and influences that shaped female life in Europe in early modern times).

Davies, Stevie, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, (London, Penguin, 2003).

(An edited version of Anne Brontë's final novel. A study of a woman's struggle for independence from an abusive husband, domestic independence and creative freedom. Davies examines the novel's language, biblical references and narrative styles and reveals Brontë's feminist inclinations).

Debono Dinah, 'An Interpretative Plan for the Inquisitor's Palace with a focus on the prison cells', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation in Tourism, Department of Tourism, Travel and Culture, 2012).

(This dissertation examines the prison cells inside the Inquisitors' Palace. It shed some light on the early modern female section where some prostitutes were incarcerated).

Deezema, Jo, 'Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-Emergence of the Myth of White Slavery' in Contemporary Discourses of Trafficking Women in *International Sex Trafficking of Women & Children*, Leonard Territo, George Kirkham (eds)., (New York, Law Publications, 2010).

(This essay traces the emergence of narratives on 'white slavery' and their re-emergence in the moral panics and boundary crises of contemporary discourses on 'trafficking in women'. Deezema argues that these narratives reflect persisting anxieties about female sexuality and women's autonomy).

Degiorgio, Stephen and Fiorentino, Emanuel, *Antoine Favray (1706-1798)*, (Malta, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2004).

(An indepth study on the life and works of art of Antoine Favray. This study was useful as it offered information on *donna publica* Catherina Valenti's portrait in St Paul Shipwreck church. This portrait is traditionally attributed to Favray).

Degiorgio, Stephen, 'Genesis of a Fortress City' in *Floriani*, Raymond Saliba (ed)., (Malta, Raymond Saliba and Christopher Ebejer, 2012).

(A short well-documented article on the development of the town of Floriana in the early eighteenth century. The Ospizio was located in this town).

Degiorgio, Stephen, 'The Hospitaller Church of Our Lady of Victory', (Unpublished M. A. degree dissertation in Hospitaller Studies, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011). (This study examines the history of the Church of Our Lady of Victory. It was useful in providing information regarding a small alley behind the church where some prostitutes used to practise).

Del Dritto Municipale di Malta, (Malta, Stamperia del Palazzo, 1784).
(A compilation of laws enacted and published under the reign of Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan (1775-1797).)

Denaro, Victor, 'Houses in Merchants' Street Valletta', in *Melita Historica* II, 3 (1958).
(A seminal work on the historic (public and private) buildings surviving in Valletta. Reference is made to the many important owners (particularly knights) who once inhabited the stately mansions and more humble dwellings of historical relevance).

De Christophoro d'Avalos, Felice Antonio, *Tableau Historique et Politique de Malte et de ses Habitants*, (London, Schulze et Dean, 1818).
(A historical and geographical description of Malta with a special focus on fauna and flora. D'Avalos was one of the very few visitors who said that numbers of prostitutes in Malta were not excessively high).

De Contreras, Alonso, *The Life of Captain Alonso de Contreras*, (London, Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1926).
(A diary that recounts fifty years in the life and career of a seventeenth century knight of Malta. Contreras depicts prostitutes as money-grabbers).

De Giorgio, Cynthia, *The Image of Triumph and the Knights of Malta*, (Malta, Printex Ltd., 2003).
(This book reveals the symbolic language of baroque decoration ranging from art and architecture to sculpture and tapestries. This was useful in contributing details on the rich areas in Valletta).

De Liancourt, *A Comparative View of Mild and Sanguinary Laws* Edition II, (London, Darton & Harvey, 1796).
(A late eighteenth-century comparative view of mild and sanguinary laws based on the prisons of Philadelphia whereby the author shows the good effects of the former).

De Lozoya, Marqués, 'El Reino de Aragon, el Principado de Cataluña, el Reino de Valencia y el Reino de Mallorca, constituyen una confederación de Estados', in *Historia de España*, Vol. II, Salvat, (ed). (Barcelona, Ariel, 1952).
(A history of the Kingdom of Aragon that was useful in formulating some suggestions on the origins of Flaminia Valenti).

De Lucca, Dennis, *Carapечchia: Master of Baroque Architecture in Early Eighteenth Century Malta*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 1999).

(A study of the city of Valletta's baroque embellishments implemented by Carapecchia during the magistracy of Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena).

De Lucca Dennis, *Giovanni Battista Vertova: Diplomacy, Warfare and Military Engineering in Early Seventeenth Century Malta*, (Malta, Midsea Books Ltd., 2001).

(De Vertova's early seventeenth-century plan of Valletta was useful in showing the location of various important buildings in Valletta and the main areas where prostitutes lived).

De Lucca, Dennis, 'The City-Fortress of Valletta in the Baroque age', in *Journal of Baroque Studies* Issue 1, (2013).

(A description of the Baroque architectural and artistic accomplishments of the Knights in the city of Valletta).

De Medina, Bartolomeo, *Breve Istruzione de' Confessori come si debba amministrare il Sacramento della Penitentia* Lib.II, (Venice, Bernardo Basa, 1584).

(Translated into Italian from the Spanish original, this book was a handbook for priests and confessors. It conveys the sense of a book meant for repeated consultation in times of doubt or weaknesses while on parish duty. It revealed important insights on the confessions of prostitutes).

De Nicolay, Nicolò, *Le Navigazioni et Viaggi nella Turchia*, (Anversa, Giuglielmo Silvio, 1576). De Nicolay, Nicolas, *Le Navigazioni et Viaggi fatti nella Turchia*, (Venice, Francesco Ziletti, 1580).

(The first visitor's account in Hospitaller Malta that alludes to the presence of many courtesans in Birgu).

De Piro, Nicolas, *Valletta: A City Built by Gentlemen for Gentlemen*, (Malta, Miranda Publications, 1997).

(A tribute to Valletta its Auberges, palaces, churches with a special focus on the rich areas).

Devereux, Cecily, 'The Maiden Tribute and the Rise of the White Slave in Nineteenth Century: The Making of an Imperial Construct' in *Victorian Review* xxvi, 2 (2000).

(Devereux shows the nineteenth century rhetorical association between prostitution and white slavery. She shows how this was developed through the media).

Di Giacomo, Salvatore, *La Prostituzione in Napoli nei Secoli XV, XVI e XVII*, (Naples, Tipolitografia Volpicelli, 1994).

(A study of prostitution in Naples from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Di Giacomo's discussions on the origins of the tax imposed on prostitutes, insights on venereal diseases as well as description of areas where prostitutes lived were useful in drawing comparisons).

Dinan, Susan E., 'The Daughters of Charity and Early Modern Catholicism' in *Early Modern Catholicism*, Kathleen M. Comerford, Hilmar M. Pabel (eds.), (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2001).

(A study of the problems posed for Early Modern Catholicism by the unenclosed status of the Daughters of Charity. Dinan argues that the motivation behind this organisation was not

rebellion against Trent but a desire to practise vocation outside convent walls and engage in a missionary vocation of serving the poor and sick as teachers and healers).

Dixon-Kennedy, Mike, *Encyclopedia of Greco-Roman Mythology*, (Oxford, ABC-CLIO, 1998).

This encyclopedia was useful in providing information on the Roman goddess Vesta and her Vestals.

Dolan, Frances E. *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994).

(A study on the way women and men portray themselves or are portrayed in cases involving sex and gender relations).

D'Olivier Farran, Charles, 'The Sovereign Order of Malta in International Law', in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol.III, 2, (April, 1954).

(This article is one of a long series of attempts to explain the somewhat anomalous situation of the Order).

Donahue, Darcy, 'Dressing Up and Dressing Down: Clothing and Class Identity in the Novelas Ejemplares, in Cervantes', *Bulletion of the Cervantes Society of America*, xxiv, (2004)

(A study of attire in Spanish novels. Donahue suggests that although clothing was an important marker of social divisions and social status it was manipulated and used to challenge traditional social hierarchies).

Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* Vol. II, 1966, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966). Pelican Books, 1970). Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger*, (London, New York, Routledge, 2002).

(An inquiry that traces the words and meaning of dirt in different contexts. What is regarded as dirt in a given society is any matter considered out of place. In 2002 Douglas retracted this explanation and proposed that dietary laws intricately model the body and the altar upon one another).

Douglas, Mary, *Implicit Meanings*, (London, Routledge, 2003).

(A collection of essays written by Douglas. 'Looking back on the 1960s', and 'Essays on the a priori' were useful in offering ideas on the broader issues of categorisation).

Doublet, Jean Louis Ovide, *Mémoires Historiques sur l'invasion et l'occupation de Malte par une armée Française, en 1798*, (Paris, Mesnil, 1883).

(Louis-Ovide Doublet, a French politician and writer who spent much of his life serving the Knights of Malta criticised Grand Master Pinto's habit of frequenting women and said that he set a bad example to young knights).

Drescher, Stephanie, *What is Entrepreneurship? – Historical Approach and Critical Discussion*, (Aberdeen, The Robert Gordon University, 2007).

(This seminar paper traces the changing role of the entrepreneur in society. It analyses some of the various theories of famous authors to explain the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. This contributed towards formulating a clear definition of entrepreneurship).

Duff, Anthony, Farmer, Lindsay, Marshall, S.E., Renzo, Massimo, Tadros, Victor 'Introduction' in *Criminalization: The Political Morality of the Criminal Law*, Anthony Duff et al. (eds.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

A study on principles that guide decisions about what kinds of conduct should be criminalised, and the forms that criminalisation takes. This book was useful in developing a normative theory of criminalisation.

Du Mont, Jean, *A New Voyage to the Levant*, (London, M. Gillyflower, T. Goodwin, M. Wotton, J. Walthoe, and R. Parker, 1696).

(A seventeenth-century visitor's account that offers a detailed description of city and peasant women. Sieur du Mont's description of city women offers a sensual image he also says that they they were ghosts wrapped in shrouds in the streets and angels at home).

Ebejer, Matthias, 'A Penultimate crisis: the Order of St John, Malta and the French Revolution', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2012).

(This study revealed useful information on the magistracy of Grand Master de Rohan. Ebejer suggests that de Rohan's rule indicates the struggle between the Order's old traditions and new emerging trends and his efforts to consolidate the integrity of the Order in an age of change).

Eisenach, Emlyn, *Husbands, Wives and Concubines*, (Kirksville, Missouri, Truman State University Press, 2004).

(Essays and studies on marriage, family, and social order in sixteenth-century Verona. The author argues against the common emphasis on the growth of law and government in this period, her study emphasises the fluidity of the principles that governed marriage and its dissolution. It was useful in offering a deeper understanding of the patriarchal family and its complex relationship with gender and status during the sixteenth century).

Ellul, Michael, 'Carlo Gimach 1651-1730- Architect and Poet', in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 1986).

(A study on Carlo Grimach who originally designed Palazzo Carniero in the volumes of correspondence between Grand Master de Vilhena and the Order's ambassador in Rome).

Engel, Claire Eliane, *Knights of Malta*, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963).

(Engel argues that most knights did not conform to the period's moral or political code. They had strongly developed personalities, they lived far from their family surroundings, there was no one to restrain them and they rarely accepted the Grand Master's advice or criticism).

Evangelisti, Silvia, *Nuns*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2007).

(An exploration on how nuns responded to monastic discipline and their attempts to reach out to the society around them).

Falcone, Pompeo, 'Una relazione di Malta', in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, vi, (1934).
(A description of early seventeenth century Malta and the foreign world. Falcone mentions draperies imported to the island from Spain, timber from Venice and metal and munitions from France. These may have been some channels through which some prostitutes reached Malta).

Farrugia, Aleks, 'An Order in Decline? An Alternative Perspective' in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 2013).
(Farrugia tackles the issue of relevance of the order by focusing on its ability to adapt to the changing economic, social and political environment it operated in).

Ferracuti, Gianni, *Mediterranea 14– L'Amor Scortese*, (Trieste, Università di Tries, 2013).
(This study provided a transcription of Delicado, Francisco, *Retrato de la Lozana Andaluza*).

Ferrante Lucia, 'Pro mercede carnali: Il giusto prezzo rivendicato in tribunale', in *Memoria*, xvii, (1986).
(A feminist work that approaches the subject of prostitution with strong preconceptions. Although the article describes an institution through which prostitutes could make legal claims against their clients, Ferrante emphasises universal male coercion and exploitation. In this light prostitutes and other women appear as helpless victims and objects of control).

Ferrante, Lucia, 'La sessualità come risorsa. Donne davanti al foro arcivescovile di Bologna (Sec XVII),' in *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* Vol.xcix (2), (1987).
(Ferrante reveals details on the cloistered lives of the least reputable convent women who were former prostitutes).

Ferrante, Lucia, 'Honor Regained' in *Sex & Gender in Historical Perspective*, Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds.), (Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1990).
(A study of women in the Casa del Soccorso di san Paolo in sixteenth-century Bologna. This house was designed to allow unhappy wives to escape untenable family situations without having to live on their own. Such women were perceived to be likely candidates for prostitution. Ferrante argues that women living outside marriage on their own were perceived to have few other options).

Ferrante Lucia, 'Il valore del corpo: ovvero la gestione economica della sessualità femminile', in *Il Lavoro delle Donne*, Angela Groppi (ed.), (Rome, Bari, 1996).
(In this article Ferrante shows how women used their sexuality as a resource. She reinstates that single women without male support were economically and juridically disadvantaged).

Ferraro, Joanne M., 'The Power to Decide: Battered Wives in Early Modern Venice', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. xlvi, 3, (1995).
(An investigation on violence against women and the control of women's sexuality).

Finnegan Frances, *Poverty and Prostitution: a study of Victorian Prostitutes in York*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979).
(A study of the social and geographical origins of 1,400 prostitutes and brothel-keepers operating in a Victorian cathedral city over a half century. Finnegan argues that far from being a health and comparatively harmless activity which could be abandoned with ease Victorian street-walker's career was generally tragic and brief).

Fiorini, Stanley, 'Status Animarum I: A Unique Source for 17th and 18th Century Maltese Demography', in *Proceedings of History Week*, (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 1983).

Fiorini, Stanley, 'Status Animarum II: A Census of 1687', *Proceedings of History Week* (Malta, The Malta Historical Society, 1984).

(These two essays show how Status Animarum records constitute a very rich and quite unique source for seventeenth and eighteenth century demography of the Maltese Islands. They also reveal personal information on parishioners and shed light on some social aspects).

Fiorini, Stanley, 'Demographical Aspects of Birgu up to 1800', in *Birgu – a Maltese Maritime City* Vol. I, (Malta, Malta University Services, 1993).

(This essay offered insights on demographical shifts that were useful to the purpose of this study).

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(Fontenay argues that in the eighteenth century the main economic activities of Malta's harbour were technical and sanitary services for ships travelling to the Levant and the Barbary coast).

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(Foyster argues that women were regarded as emotionally volatile, physically weak and unable to control themselves).

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(Freccero takes issue with Ruth Mazo Karras and argues that the term meretrix is more closely approximated with whore than prostitute it did not signal inherent deviant identity but social transgression. According to Freccero it was the public nature of her transgression, not the fact of multiple sexual partners that constituted the identity of the prostitute).

Freller, Thomas, *A Classical Traveller in Eighteenth-Century Malta: Johann Hermann von Riedesel*, (Malta, Mondial Publishers, 1997).

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(An exploration of the extension of the European Grand Tour to Malta from the sixteenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth century. Freller argues that travellers' tales and descriptions show that the microcosm of Malta reflected many phenomena and developments of European culture).

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(A study of Antonio Micallef's 1792 lectures on the statutes of the Order that sheds light on the legal history of the Order and of the University of Malta).

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(A study of chapels in relation to harbours that revealed that the principle anchorages in medieval Gozo were Xlendi and Marsalforn).

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In this paper Gambin discusses the way in which the past inhabitants of Malta used harbours. Specific reference is made to the ancient harbour complex that was situated around the Marsa area).

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(Ginzburg proposes to scale down the level of analysis. He suggests that microhistory can be related to the notion of the agent-based perspective. He shows that individual human experiences or specific events can be characteristic of or distinct from general historical narratives).

Gli Statviti della Sacra Religione di S[an] Gio[vanni] Gierosolimitano, [Trans. from Latin by Giacomo Bosio], (Rome, Stampatori Camerali, 1597).

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(Hayward considered the political use of clothing by Henry VIII through gift giving and note that power was disseminated at court through items of apparel).

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(A study of English sumptuary legislation 1509-1547. Hayward shows how the four 'Acts of Apparel' were primarily concerned with male dress).

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(An overview of travel writing that shows the amibuties, uncertainties and element of fiction in travel narratives).

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(This book was useful in providing information on the history of the urban planning of Valletta during the rule of the Order of St John).

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(Luttrell suggests that in Rhodes and in Malta the Order encouraged trade, invested heavily in defences and arts and the Hospitaller vocation of care of pilgrims and the sick took second place).

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(A detailed analysis of the world of travellers in early modern Europe).

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(In this study Mallia-Milanes makes ample use of sources to argue that the Order managed to keep its relevance even in the seventeenth century when its crusading ideals were no longer relevant).

Mallia-Milanes, Victor, 'A Man with a Mission: A Venetian Hospitaller on Eighteenth-Century Malta' in *The Military Orders* Vol.IV, Judith Mary Upton-Ward (ed.), (Hampshire, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2008).

(Massimiliano Buzzaccarini Gonzaga Venice's resident minister's perceptions on the role of the Order of St John in the second half of the eighteenth century. Gonzaga states that the Order was indispensable to European Christendom and that they performed this role admirably).

Mallia-Milanes, Victor, 'Hospitaller Baroque Culture: The Order of St John's Legacy to Early Modern Malta', in *The Military Orders* Vol. 3, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed.), (Hampshire, Burlington, Ashgate, 2008).

(An analysis of the seventeenth century 'baroque' social reality of the Order and the achievements this reality produced in a time of fear, instability and general crisis).

Magro, Janica, 'Padre Pelagio Backstabbing de Soldanis', in *De Soldanis*, Godwin Vella Olvin (eds.), (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2012).

(An analysis of Padre Pelagio's views on Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis an eighteenth-century linguist, historian and cleric from Gozo).

Martin, Brian Joseph, *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France*, (New Hampshire, University of Hampshire, 2011).

(Brian Joseph Martin's view encompasses a broad range of emotional and erotic relationships in French armies from 1789 to 1916. He argues that the French Revolution's emphasis on military fraternity evolved into an unprecedented sense of camaraderie among soldiers in the armies of Napoleon).

Massey, Doreen, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1994).

(Massey suggests a notion of spatiality as the product of intersecting social relations. She traces the development of ideas about the social structure of space and place and relates these concepts to issues of gender and various debates within feminism).

Mathers, Helen, *Patron Saint of Prostitutes: Josephine Butler and a Victorian Scandal*, (Gloucestershire, The History Press, 2014).

(A study on how Josephine Butler challenged taboos and conventions in order to campaign for the rights of prostitutes).

Matthews, Roger and O'Neill, Maggie, *Prostitution International Library of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Penology*, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

(This study examines the many facets of prostitution with a special focus on its history, sociology, politics and regulation. The authors argue that the widely held contention that prostitution is the "oldest profession" has served to militate against a proper investigation of its changing nature, meaning and significance over time).

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(A study of Renaissance sexual and marital disorder with a special focus on male rather than female, sexual reputatuion).

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(Mazo Karras suggests that in Christianity saints who had been sinners embodied the message that confession, contrition, and penance could wipe away the worst of sins, and saints who had been prostitutes embodied it most dramatically).

Mazo Karras, Ruth, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1996).

(Karras shows that prostitutes in medieval England were marginalised. Prostitution as an institution was central to the medieval understanding of what it meant to be a woman).

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(This essay suggests that meretrix was a term used for women engaged in sex outside marriage. Mazo Karras argues that meretrix became a sexual identity with sinful and deviant connotations).

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(A study of the Jesuit mission in England 1588-1597. This book provides insights on the tensions, disagreements and debates concerning the nature and structure of English Catholicism).

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(An examination of the underlying roots and ideologies of terms used to define prostitution. McCracken suggests that this is useful in reaching a deeper understanding not only of the language itself but also of the people who participate in these exchanges).

McDowall, John R., *Magdalen Facts*, (New York, The Author, 1832).

(One of the earliest American crusades intended to wipe out prostitution in American cities that was highly criticised).

McGinn, Thomas A.J., *Prostitution, Sexuality and the Law in Ancient Rome*, (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998).

(An examination of the legal rules affecting the practice of female prostitution in Rome 200BC-250AD. This study explores the socio-economic reality of Roman laws that sheds light on marginal groups especially women).

McGough, Laura J., 'Quarantining Beauty: The French Disease in Early Modern Venice', in *Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe*, Siena Kevin Patrick (ed.), (Toronto, Ontario, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

(Through her study on institutional records in early modern Venice, McGough argues that while beauty was looked on favourably even as a sign of God's favour, extreme beauty was associated with vice).

McGough, Laura J., *Gender, Sexuality and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

(A study of how syphilis in early modern Venice was embedded in the society, culture and institutions of early modern Venice due to the pattern of sexual relations that developed from restrictive marital customs, widespread migration and male privilege. This study was useful in revealing the broad definition of the term *meretrici*).

McCracken, Jill, *Street Sex Workers' Discourse: Realizing Material Change Through Agential Choice*, (New York, Oxon, Routledge, 2013).

Discussion on the definition of prostitution.

Meil Hobson, Barbara, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*, (New York, Basic Books, 1987).

(An analytic approach to understanding public policy and its impact on prostitution policy. Hobson argues that prostitution policy must be viewed in the broader context of the political and economic struggles to emancipate women).

Memili Esra, Eddleston Kimberly A., Zellweger Thomas M., Kellermanns Franz W. and Barnett Tim, 'The Importance of Looking toward the Future and Building on the Past: Entrepreneurial Risk Taking and Image in Family Firms' in *Entrepreneurship and Family Business*, Alex Stewart, G. T. Lumpkin, Jerome A. Katz (eds), (Bingley, Emerald Publishing, 2010).

(This study suggests that entrepreneurs benefit from risk taking and reputation and that these are nurtured by expectations).

Meranze, Michael, 'Histories of the Modern Prison: Renewal, Regression and Expansion', in *The History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, Paul Knepper, Anja Johansen (eds), (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016).

(Meranze argues that the ongoing crises of empire and the emergence of nation-states in the eighteenth century shaped the history of the prison as we know and imagine it in present times).

Mercieca, Simon 'Arabic Literature and Malta Fāris Al-Shidyāq's Novel', in *Treasures of Malta*, xlvii, (2010).

This article revealed some ideas an Arab visitor expressed on prostitution in Valletta in the early nineteenth century.

Mercieca, Simon, 'How was Judicial Power Balanced in Malta in Early Modern Times? A cursory look at the Maltese Legal System through a Historical Perspective', in *Journal of Civil Law Studies* Vol. vi, (2011).

(An analysis of the development of the tribunal of the Court of the Inquisition in Malta 1530-1798).

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(Meredith says that up to the seventeenth century the term mistress was used to refer to a married woman or spinster whereas during the medieval period concubine meant a woman engaged in extramarital sexual relations).

Meyer Setton, Kenneth, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571) Vol. II*, (Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1997).

(A history of the later crusades to the year 1400).

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(A transcription of Frà Antonio Micallef's studies on law cases in the last quarter of the eighteenth century).

Miethe, Terance D., Lu, Hong, *Punishment: A Comparative Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

(A study of differences in types of economic punishments, incapacitation devices and structures and lethal and non-lethal forms of corporal punishment over time and place).

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(A study of the legal and social status of women in eighteenth-century Malta. This study seeks to dispel prevalent impressions on women being under the complete control of men in all fields: political, social, religious and economic).

Miner, Jess, 'Courtesan, Concubine, Whore: Apollodorus's deliberate use of terms for Prostitution', in *The American Journal of Philology*, cxxiv, 1, (2003).

(This article examines Apollodorus' use of the terms hetaira, pallake, and porne in the speech Against Neaira. It argues that he employs these terms with consistency and with attention to differences among them rather than haphazardly or interchangeably as was previously believed).

Money, John, *Lovemaps*, (New York, Irvington Publishers, 1993).

(An idealised and idiosyncratic image of clinical concepts of sexual health, gender, adolescence and maturity).

Montalto, John, *The Nobles of Malta 1530-1800*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 1980).

(Montalto study on the locally nobility offers a brief description of suspected liaisons between knights and certain ladies).

Moulton, Ian F., 'Whores as Shopkeepers: Money and Sexuality in Aretino's Ragionamenti', in *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Juliann M. Vitullo, Diane Wolfthal (eds), (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2010).

(An examination of Pietro Aretino's 1534 Ragionamenti (Dialogues) in which Nanna an experienced whore relates her sexual life to a younger whore named Antonia. The two discuss which one of the three ways of life available to women would be best for Nanna's teenage daughter Pippa; nun, wife or whore. Moulton explores what this dialogue reveals on society, politics, power, gender and the influence of market forces on traditional morality).

Muir, Edward, Ruggiero, Guido, 'Introduction: The Crime of History', *History from Crime: Selections from Quaderni Storici*, Muir, Edward, Ruggiero, Guido (eds), (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1994).

(Historians Ruggiero and Muir warn that trials present a hegemonic view of the past: legal paragraphs determine the parameters of debate, testimony is tailored toward providing innocence or guilt, and all activity is polluted by the authority of the state and its representatives in court, the prosecutors and the judges).

Murstein, Bernard I., *Love, Sex and Marriage through the Ages*, (New York, Springer Pub. Co, 1974).

(A general perspective of love, sex and marriage in different societies. This study attempts to detect the historical roots of present modes of love, sex and marriage).

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Muscat, Jonathan, 'The Administration of Hospitaller Malta – Bandi and Prammatiche 1530-1798', (Unpublished M.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011).

(A study on laws that impinged on Malta's administrative matters and on each every inhabitant's way of life. This was useful in providing ideas on the extent to which these laws affected prostitutes).

Muscat, Pauline, 'Aspects of Municipal Government in Malta 1720-1780', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1975).

(Muscat argues that from 1530-1798 the Maltese population became subject to an absolute government. The local municipal government (Università) was repressed and manipulated by the Grand Masters of the Order).

Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina, 'Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, XXXIX, 3 (2009).

(This study offers a comparison between sumptuary laws enacted in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and England between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries. Muzzarelli shows how these laws operated to reconcile interests of the privileged few with the common good).

Myers, Kathleen A., Powell, Amanda, *A Wild Country out in the Garden: The Spiritual Journals of a Colonial Mexican Nun*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1999).

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Nicholson, Helen J., *The Knights Hospitaller*, (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2001).

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Nirenberg, David, *Communities of Violence: Persecutions of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, (New Jersey, West Sussex, Princeton University Press, 1996).

A discussion of sexual relations between Christian prostitutes and non-Christian men in thirteenth and fourteenth century Spain.

Norberg, Kathryn, 'Prostitutes' in *A History of Women in the West Vol. 3 Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Zemon Davis, Natalie, Farge, Arlette (eds.), (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993).

(In this article Norberg suggests that prostitutes were not victims but independent entrepreneurs who controlled their own labour).

Norberg, Kathryn, 'The Body of the Prostitute: Medieval to Modern' in, *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body 1500 to the Present*, Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher (eds.), (London & New York, Routledge, 2013).

(Norberg traces nuanced and variegating changes in the way how European society perceived prostitutes from medieval to modern times. She suggests that these changes stemmed from

the advent of syphilis, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations and more importantly the growth of the state).

Olson, Debbie Clare, 'Clothing' in *Prostitution and Sex Work* Vol. 1, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Connecticut, London, Greenwood Press, 2006).

(Olson suggests that a prostitute's clothing reveals autonomy that threatens patriarchy).

Otis, Leah Lydia, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, (Chicago, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

(A study of the social construction of sexuality through an exploration of prostitution in the Languedoc between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries).

Norris, Jesse, 'Religion' in *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work* Vol II, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Greenwood Press, 2006).

(A cursory look at how the great religions perceive prostitution).

Parent-Duchâtelet, Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, (Paris, J.B. Baillière, 1835).

(A study on nineteenth-century prostitution in the city of Paris from the perspective of public hygiene, morality and administration).

Peiss, Kathy, *Hope in a Jar*, (New York, Metropolitan Books, 1998).

(Historian Kathy Peiss gives a full-scale social history of America's beauty culture. This was useful in understanding that though socially perceived to be an idle activity the culture of beauty is laborious).

Peristiany, Jean.G., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, (Chicago, London, University of Chicago, 1965).

(A study of the values of honour and shame both in contemporary Mediterranean rural societies and in past periods through an anthropological lens).

Peristiany, Jean G., 'Introduction' in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, J.G. Peristiany (ed.), (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966).

(Peristiany says that the concepts of honour and shame dominate small scale, exclusive societies where face-to-face personal, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of paramount importance).

Perry, Mary E., *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville*, (Hanover, New Hampshire and London, University Press of New England, 1980).

(Perry suggests that there was a large and well organised class of professional deviants in sixteenth and seventeenth century Seville. They were transient and seldom caught. Prostitutes were mostly impoverished women or women who came from broken homes and they formed part of this group. Perry shows how prostitutes were useful to city fathers in distinguishing good from evil).

Perry Mary Elizabeth, 'Deviant Insiders: Legalized Prostitutes and a Consciousness of Women in Early Modern Seville', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxvii, 1, (1985).

(A study of the strategy of the institutionalisation of prostitutes in Early Modern Seville).

Perry Mary E., *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990).

(In this exploration of crisis in Counter-Reformation Spain, Mary Elizabeth Perry reveals the significance of gender for social order by portraying the lives of some deviant women (including prostitutes) who lived on the margins of respectability).

Perry, Mary E., 'Magdalens and Jezebels in Counter-Reformation Spain' in *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* Vol. 7, Anne J. Cruz, Mary E. Perry (eds), (Minneapolis, Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

(A study of asylums in Counter-Reformation Spain. Perry argues that Magdalene homes were purely punitive, closer to prisons than convents. The latter were perceived to be appropriate for women who refused to change their ways).

Peters, Edward, *Torture*, (Philadelphia, Penn, 1985).

(This book is about torture in Western society from earliest times to the present).

Phinney, Jean S., Rotheram-Borus, Mary Jane, *Children's Ethnic Socialization*, (Newbury Park, Sage Publications, 1987).

(A summary of ethnic differences along the dimensions of group versus individual orientation, active versus passive coping style, attitudes toward authority, and expressive versus restrained communication. This was useful in casting insights on how migrant prostitutes may have fitted into certain neighbourhoods in Valletta).

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(A perspective of the Order through the eyes of Bailli Chambray. In his memoirs, Frà Jacques-François de Chambray (1687-1756), a knight of the Grand Cross, reiterated that Maltese women did not resist the gold of bailiffs or the sumptuous dinners of the knights).

Pollak, Martha, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

(A study of the phenomenon of military urbanisation and how wars transformed cities. Pollak shows how the fortress city of Valletta is still defined by geometrically perfect fortifications).

Pomeroy, Sarah B., *Goddesses, Whores, and Slaves*, (New York, Schocken Books, 1975).

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(A feminist history of women in classical antiquity. The work covers the lives of women in antiquity from the Greek Dark Ages to the death of Constantine).

Poutiers, Jean Christian, *Rhodes et ses Chevaliers 1306-1523*, (Brussels, Impr Catholique, 1989).

(An archaeological study of the medieval history Order. Poutier offers information on how the knights dealt with prostitutes in Rhodes).

Prontuario di Vocaboli Siciliani Attenenti A Cose Donnesche e D'Uso Comune colla corrispondenza Italiana e Francese (scritta e pronunziata), (Catania, Tipografia del Reale Ospizio, 1852).

(This handbook was useful in shedding light on the meaning of Sicilian terms used to describe items of female apparel).

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(A review on prostitution in Europe from antiquity to the end of the sixteenth century. This study similar to other contemporary studies (Lacroix, Parent-Duchâtelet) on prostitution was severely judged because its descriptions were perceived to threaten public hygiene and morals).

Raccolta di Leggi, Costituzioni, Bandi, Pramatiche ed altri atti pubblicati dal Governo di Malta dale 17 Luglio 1784 al 4 Ottobre 1813, Compreso il Codice di Rohan Ossia Dritto Municipale di Malta, (Malta, Paolo Cumbo, 1862).

(This Code is the *summa* of the whole of legislation enacted during the Order's rule. It was the basis of modern law developed from the nineteenth century onwards. The regulations of various institutions were based on this Code that still forms part of the laws still in force).

Reid, Donald, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, Harvard University Press, 1991).

(A reflection on the material and cultural foundations of everyday life through observations on how sewer men and cesspool cleaners presented themselves in the nineteenth century. This monograph also casts insights on sewer men in late-eighteenth-century Paris).

Renn Stephen D., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, (Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

(A study of key English bible words based on Hebrew and Greek texts).

Rhoades, Michelle K., 'World War I Regulation' in *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work Vol. I*, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Greenwood Press, 2006).

(In this essay Rhoades shows how regulation and policing did not decrease prostitution or the spread of venereal disease during World War I. Some prostitutes adhered to regulations and managed to run a profitable business. The disease and business declined at the end of the war when soldiers returned home).

Riley-Smith Jonathan, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c. 1070-1309*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

(A study of the tension that always existed between the Order's hospital and military roles).

Rock, Daniel, *Hierurgia: or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* Vol.II, (London, Joseph Booker, 1833).

(Notes and dissertations elucidating doctrines, ceremonies, relics, vestments, images and other items used during mass).

Rocke, Michael, 'Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy', in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, Judith C. Brown, Robert C. Davis (eds)., (London, New York, Routledge, 1998).

(An exploration of the prescriptive language of moralists and preachers of Renaissance Siena. Rocke also examines ways in which sexual crimes (including prostitution) were perceived and prosecuted).

Rogadeo, Giandonato, *Ragionamenti*, (Lucca, 1780), (Naples, 1783).

(Rogadeo sustained that the jurisdiction of Malta's government was limited by the supreme authority of the pope and by his institutions).

Rossiaud, Jacques, *Medieval Prostitution*, Lydia G. Cochrane (trans). (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988).

(A description of the social background of prostitutes, brothel-keepers, procurers and their clientele, providing a vivid overview of the context in which medieval prostitution existed in fifteenth-century France).

Roobke Henry, *Atheism*, (Berkshire, Nash Ford Publishing, 1974).

(A philosophical examination of the case against God).

Roper Lyndal, 'Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg', in *History Workshop Journal* xix (1985).

(Roper explores the closure of brothels in sixteenth-century Augsburg. These brothels were an established part of civic life for more than two centuries. Roper suggests that this decision marked a turning point in the organisation of prostitution, attitudes towards it and sexuality).

Roper, Lyndal, 'Going to Church and Street: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg', in *Past and Present*,cvi, (1985).

(In this essay Roper suggests that the Protestant view of marriage approximated more closely German townspeople's traditional notions of how a marriage was made than the Catholic sacramental theory of marriage did).

Roper Lyndal, 'Madri di Depravazione: Le mezzane nel cinquecento', in *Memoria*, xvii, (1986).

(This study suggests that young girls were often violently introduced to prostitution by elderly women who were procuresses).

Roper, Lyndal, *The Holy Household*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989).

(A study of gender and the impact of the Reformation on women in Augsburg. Roper argues that Protestant civic righteousness ideals eroded the status of women).

Roper, Lyndal, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1994).

(Roper deals with the nature of masculinity and femininity in Augsburg. She showed that live-in older women who tended to new born babies while the mother was recovering were often accused of witchcraft. She suggests that these accusations stemmed from anxieties over the child's future. This was useful in shedding light on why some prostitutes in early modern Malta were accused of witchcraft).

Rosen, Ruth, *The Lost Sisterhood*, (Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, 1982).

(This study on prostitution in early twentieth-century America offers some perspectives on prostitution and reasons why some women chose to become prostitutes).

Rosenthal Laura J., *Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*, (Ithaca & London, Cornell University Press, 2006).

(Rosenthal uses literary and historical sources to explore the meaning of prostitution from the Restoration through the eighteenth century. It shows how both reformers and libertines constructed the modern meaning of sex work during this period).

Rosenthal, Margaret F., *The Honest Courtesan*, (Chicago & London, Chicago University Press, 1992).

(A study of the literary works of Veronica Franco a Venetian courtesan in a cultural, social and economic setting. Rosenthal shows how honest courtesans embodied a city immersed in luxury, spectacle, disguise, commercialisation, voluptuousness, and sensuality while at the same time offering proof of the republic's progressive social policies and tolerance. She also reveals Franco's support of defenceless women and her strong convictions about inequality).

Rosenthal, Margaret F., 'Venetian Women Writers and their Discontents', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, James Grantham Turner (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

(A discussion of aspects of the lives of sixteenth-century female Venetian writers. Rosenthal questions the determinants that class, gender, and social privilege play in cultural, textual production).

Rossi David, 'Vulnerable and deprived: of prostitutes and nuns in the fourteenth to eighteenth century', in *Sacra Militia* xii, (2013).

(This essay suggests that charitable institutions in Malta and Sicily encouraged prostitutes to retire behind cloister walls to atone for their shortcomings).

Rossi Ettore, 'Il Dominio dei Cavalieri di Malta a Tripoli e i rapporti dell'Ordine con Tripoli nei secoli seguenti,' in *Archivum Melitense*, vi, (1924).

(Rossi offers a sceptical view of Reverend Giuseppe Agius's 1770-1775 *giornale di notizie*. This *giornale* contributed significant information on *pubbliche donne*).

Rublack, Ulinka, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999).

(Rublack draws on court records to examine the experiences of marginalised women (including prostitutes) in Memmingen during the Reformation and the Thirty Years War. She shows how gender shaped conflicts in early modern German communities and how women experienced law enforcement).

Rublack, Ulinka, 'Clothing and cultural exchange in Renaissance Germany' in *Early Modern Europe: Forging European Identities 1400-1700* Vol. IV, Herman Roodenburg (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007).

(Urbanisation and commercialisation changed German consumption patterns, enabling people of different ranks to use clothing to express social identities which sumptuary laws did not accommodate Rublack shows how clothing figured prominently in the wide cultural argument about material goods and self-presentation. She argues that for Renaissance people, clothes were among the first objects prompting desires for cultural analysis).

Ruff, Julius R., 'Popular violence and its prosecution in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France', in *Crime, Law and Popular Culture in Europe. 1500-1900*, Richard McMahon (ed.), (Oxon, New York, Routledge, 2013).

(Ruff draws on research in criminal justice to find that cabaret assault and its incomplete prosecution was typical of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French popular violence).

Ruggiero, Guido, *Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989).

(Ruggiero uses the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century records of Venetian courts that dealt with sex crimes to show the evolution of licit and illicit sexuality).

Ruggiero, Guido, *Binding Passions*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993).

(Through the records of Venice's Roman Inquisition Ruggiero shows how passions were both bound by late Renaissance society and were seen in turn as binding people. He suggests that although prostitution remained legal the institutional structure attacked prostitutes on three areas: keeping the trade modest and unobtrusive, restricting profits and the operations of procurers and procuresses, and limiting numbers).

Ruggiero, Guido, 'The Abbot's Concubine: Lies, Literature and Power at the end of the Renaissance', in *Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, E. Kittell and T. Madden (ed.), (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999).

(In this microhistory Ruggiero illustrates women striving to manipulate sex for power).

Ruggiero, Guido, 'Who's Afraid of Giuliana Napolitana? Pleasure, Fear, and Imagining the Arts of the Renaissance Courtesan', in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (eds.), (New York, Oxford University Press, 2006).

(A study of a rare transcript of a courtesan's speech in the records of the *Sant'Uffizio*. Ruggiero shows how notwithstanding the potential subversive nature of prostitution that threatened marriage and the family, the activity in sixteenth century Venice flourished).

Ryan, Frederick W, *The House of the Temple*, (Malta, Gutenberg Press, 1998).

(A study of Malta and its knights in the French Revolution).

Ryan, Michael, *Prostitution in London with a Comparative View of that of Paris and New York*, (London, H.Bailliere, 1839).

(An account of the nature and treatment of the various diseases caused by the abuses of the reproductive function that highlights the medical threats of prostitution).

Salkeld, Duncan, 'Alien Desires: Travellers and Sexuality in Early Modern London', in *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe*, Thomas Betteridge (ed.), (Aldershot, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2007).

(Salkeld shows how early modern travel was undertaken in a context of intense political, diplomatic and religious suspicion. This influenced travellers ideas on politics, religion and sex).

Saler, Benson, *Conceptualizing Religion Immanent Anthropologists, Transcendent Natives, & Unbounded Categories*, (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2000).

(Saler argues that religion is conceptualized as an affair of "more or less" rather than a matter of 'yes or no' and no sharp line is drawn between religion and non-religion).

Sammut, Joseph C., *Currency in Malta*, (Malta, Central Bank, 2001).

(This work documents the events leading to Malta's complete and final change-over from Maltese to British currency in the 19th century).

Sanders, Teela, *Sex Work a Risky Business*, (Devon, Willan Publishing, 2005).

(A detailed account of the way the sex industry works. An empirical study that investigates the off street industry in Britain).

Sanders, Teela, O'Neil Maggie, Pitcher Jane, *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics*, (London, Sage Publications, 2009).

(An analysis of prostitution in contemporary society. Situating sex work at the intersection of economy, occupation, and emotion, the authors illuminate the complex forces that shape prostitution within an emerging global order).

Sanger, William Wallace, *The History of Prostitution*, (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1858).

(A mid-nineteenth-century investigation on factors causing women to turn to prostitution. This inquiry was based on interviews conducted by the police under Sanger's direction. 2,000 women incarcerated at Blackwell's venereal disease hospital were interviewed about their ethnic and social backgrounds and their reasons for entering the profession).

Savona-Ventura, Charles, *Devotees of Venus*, (Malta, Discern, 2003).

(A short history of sexuality in Malta).

Savona-Ventura, Charles, *Caring for Calypso's Daughters*, (Malta, Malta University Press, 2013).

(A history of maternity and child care in Malta from antiquity up to the present times. Savona-Ventura suggests that a fear of impending disaster created the need for special assistance from gods, saints, midwives and obstetricians).

Savona-Ventura, Charles, *History of Gynaecology in Malta*, (Malta, University of Malta, 2010).

(This book covers the history of gynaecology in the Maltese Islands from the prehistoric age right through the modern period).

Savona-Ventura, Charles, *The History of Maternity Care in the Maltese Islands*, (Malta, Association for the Study of Maltese Medical History, 2003).

(An overview of the maternity care offered in Malta in the light of the developments in the speciality that were occurring in Europe. The study deals with the various maternity care services, and the professional control and training facilities of both midwives and doctors. It looks at the medical and obstetrical aspects of maternity care practice and the social and biological influences on maternity as evident from the published obstetric statistics).

Scaglione, Giannantonio, 'The City of Valletta in an eighteenth-century map realized by Sebastiano Ittar', in *Journal of Maltese History* II, (2011).

(A study of a late eighteenth-century map of Valletta by architect Sebastiano Ittar. Scaglione analysis the complex relationships between space and urban society).

Scaglione Giannantonio, 'Spazio abitato ed economie urbane nel quartiere/mercato della 'Piazza de Viveri' de la Valletta nella seconda metà del settecento' in *Storia Urbana*, cxlviii, (2015).

(An attempt at reconstructing the socio-economic and administrative structure of the central area of Valletta where the meat, fruit and vegetable market was located in the second half of the eighteenth century).

Schermerhorn, Elizabeth, *Malta of the Knights*, (Surrey, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1929).

(An overview of the Order and its reign in Malta with a special focus on particular knights into sharp focus).

Sciocluna, Sandra, 'The Mad, the Bad and the Pauper: Help and Control in Early Modern Carceral Institutions' in *The History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, Paul Knepper, Anja Johansen (eds)., (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016).

(This essay analyses the development of carceral institutions, such as asylums, workhouses, and hospitals, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It shows that in Malta although these institutions were established with the aim of controlling crime, in reality they sought to control the poor, the lazy, and the morally corrupt).

Schembri, Amanda, 'Women in Hospitaller Malta 1565-1610', (Unpublished M.A. degree dissertation in Hospitaller Studies, Department of History, University of Malta, 2011).

(This study based on the archives of the Inquisition of Malta offers some perspectives on early modern women including prostitutes. Schembri suggested that prostitutes and other types of unconventional women threatened the social order. She argued that venereal diseases and ideas emerging from the Council of Trent had a significant negative impact on the lives of prostitutes).

Sciberras, Sandro, 'Hospitals and Charitable Institutions in Early Eighteenth Century Baroque Malta', (Unpublished M.A. degree dissertation in Baroque Studies, Department of History, University of Malta, 2003).

(Sciberras examines French architect Charles François de Mondion's contributions toward social works. Information about the prepared plans for the construction of the Casa di Carità a multi-purpose building in Floriana that included a female prison was useful to this study).

Sciriha, Mario 'Disaster Management in late seventeenth-century Hospitaller Malta (c.1675-c.1700)', (Unpublished M.A. degree Dissertation in Hospitaller Studies Department of History, University of Malta, 2015).

(Sciriha examines points of similarity and divergence in the Order's reactions to the plague of 1676 and the earthquake of 1693: two major disasters that happened in less than twenty years during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This was useful in understanding measures taken against prostitutes in response to these calamities).

Schofield, John, Morrissey, Emily, *Strait Street: Malta's Red Light District Revealed*, (Malta, Midsea Books Ltd., 2013).

(An archaeological perspective on the artefacts and places that characterise Strait Street. These material remains reveal how people including prostitutes lived, adapted and survived in this street in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).

Scupin, Raymond, 'The Anthropological Perspective on Religion', in *Religion and Culture*, Raymond Scupin (ed.), (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 2000).

(A discussion on the basic issues that provide insight into the anthropological perspective on religion. It includes topics of mythology and folklore, ritual, shamanism, sorcery and witchcraft, aboriginal religions, African religions, classical Old and New World religions, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and New Age religious trends).

Schwarz, Ronald A., 'Uncovering the Secret Vice: Toward an Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment', in *The Fabrics of Culture*, Justine M. Cordwell, Ronald A. Schwarz (eds.), (The Hague, Paris, New York, Mouton Publishers, 1979).

(A study of the symbolic or rhetorical power of dress. Schwarz suggests that clothes are indicators of emotion that reveal and at times conceal a person's desires, ambitions and emotions).

Self, Helen J., *Prostitution, Women and Misuse of the Law*, (London, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003).

(A feminist examination of regulating prostitution in Britain. This study's main focus is on the 1950's).

Sharpe, James A., *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* Second Edition, (London, New York, Routledge, 1999).

(Smith uses court records to capture the everyday lives of people who would otherwise have left no trace in historical record. He casts insights on gender and crime).

Siena Kevin P., 'Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English Venereology and the Early Modern Medical Discourse on Social and Sexual Danger', in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, viii, 4 (1998).

(A study on the role of the 'other' in discourse on venereal disease).

Shepard Alexandra, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

(A study of the language of self-description in English courts. Shepard argues that a culture of appraisal was central to the competitive processes whereby people judged their own and others' social positions).

Shepard, Alexandra, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy'. *History Workshop Journal*, lxxviii, (2015).

(In this essay Shepard shows that an understanding of women's work opportunities requires an exploration of women's impact in the early modern economy as much as the early modern economy's impact on women).

Shepard, Benjamin, 'Scapegoating' in *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work Vol. II.*, Melissa Hope Ditmore (ed.), (Westport, Greenwood Press, 2006).

(A study on how attacks on prostitutes as threats to public space, morality, and health are a long-term fixture of discourses on prostitution. These moralistic views typify and transform the public response from one of tolerance for a victimless crime to more punitive approaches).

Silverman, Lisa, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France*, (Chicago & London, Chicago University Press, 2001).

(Torture was at the center of an epistemological crisis that forced French jurists and intellectuals in early modern France to reconsider the relationship between coercion and sincerity, or between free will and evidence. As the philosophical consensus on which torture rested broke down, and definitions of truth and pain shifted, so too did the foundation of torture, until by the eighteenth century, it became an indefensible practice).

Sire, H.J.A., *The Knights of Malta*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1994).

(An overview of the history of the Order of St John from its beginnings in Jerusalem to present-day).

Skeel, David A. Jr., Longman, Tremper, 'The Mosaic Law in Christian Perspective' in *Faculty Scholarship*, paper 367, (2011).

(In this study on Mosaic laws the authors discuss a few possible implications of a Christian perspective for contemporary criminal law; economic and commercial law; and the issues of marriage, divorce and sexuality).

Skeen, Dick, *Different Sexual Worlds*, (Oxford, Lexington Books, 1999).

(An in-depth look at the sexual lives of real people, using their own words).

Smith Bonnie G., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History: Vol I*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008).

(A reference work that comprehensively covers the role women have played throughout world history).

Sonnini, Charles. S. *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, (London, J. Debrett, 1800).

(An eighteenth-century travel account with a special focus on botany. Sonini describes Valletta as a dangerous place where priestesses of Venus flocked).

Smith Rosenberg, Carroll, *Disorderly Conduct*, (New York, Oxford University Press 1986).
(A focus on disorderly conduct in nineteenth-century America. This study suggests that some women and some men used to break away from the Victorian era's rigid class and sex roles. It examines the dramatic changes in male-female relations, family structure, sex, social custom, and ritual that occurred as colonial America was transformed by rapid industrialization).

Sperber, Jonathan, *The European Revolutions 1848-1851*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).
(A study of the European Revolutions between 1848–1851. Emphasizing the socioeconomic background to the revolutions, and the diversity of political opinions and experiences of participants).

Sperling, Jutta Gisela, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice*, (Chicago, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1999).
(Sperling argues that the rise of forced vocations in late sixteenth-century Venice happened within the context of aristocratic culture and society).

Spierenburg, Pieter, *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and their Inmates in Early Modern Europe*, (Amsterdam, Amsterdam Academic Archive, 2007).
(Spierenburg traces the evolution of the prison during the early modern period and illustrates the important role it has played as both a disciplinary institution and a penal option from the late sixteenth century onward).

Spiteri, Mervick, 'Social relations in Valletta: preliminary studies of property disputes recorded in the Officium Commissariorum Domorum' in *Arkivju*, vi, (2015).
(A study of Valletta's residential developments that were regulated by a code administered by the *Officio delle Case*).

Spiteri, Stephen C., *Fortress of the Cross: Hospitaller Military Architecture (1136-1798)*, (Malta, Heritage Interpretation Services, 1994).
(A study of bastionated fortifications that was useful in offering definitions of military terms).

Spiteri, Stephen, *Fortresses of the Knights*, (Malta, Book Distributors Limited, 2001).
(A tribute to the fortification building of the Order from the twelfth to almost the nineteenth century. The knights and their military engineers were not only capable of keeping abreast of developments, but were able, on so many occasions, to lead the field).

Spiteri, Stephen, *Armoury of the Knights*, (Malta, Midesa Books, 2003).
(A study of the military storehouse of the Knights of the Order of St John. This monograph offers a detailed description of the Armoury in the Palace of the Grand Masters, Valletta).

Spiteri, Stephen C., 'Civilian use of Military Spaces in Hospitaller Malta', in *ARX- Journal of Military Architecture*, vii (2009).
(This essay is about the manner in which fortifications were subjected to social and urban influences and the way that civilian activities spilled over into areas reserved for predominantly military uses).

Spradley, James P. and McCurdy, David W., 'Culture and the Contemporary World', in *Conformity and Conflict*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1994).
(An introduction to the basic concepts of cultural anthropology).

Statvta Hospitalis Hierusalem, (Rome, [?], 1588).

(A compilation of the Order of St John's statutes and regulations governing the entire Convent, ornate with the portraits of all the Grand Masters and an extensive number of engravings attached to each chapter).

Statvti della Sac[ra] Religione di S[an] Gio[vanni] Gerosolimitano..., (Borgo Nuovo, Antonio Scionico, 1718).

(Another compilation, more voluminous, and incorporating all the ordinances enacted up to the time of publication. Short biographies of the Grand Masters are included with this work, as well as a number of ceremonial prerogatives and privileges).

Storey, Tessa, 'Storie di Prostituzione nella Roma della Controriforma', in *Quaderni Storici*, cvi, 1, (2001).

(This paper explores the relationship between official narratives of prostitution, and the personal narrative identities of prostitutes and their clients in early seventeenth century Rome. It finds that prostitutes frequently employed quite different narrative strategies to account for their experiences, often implicitly rejecting the stigmatising characterisations of the moralising narratives and stressing their liberty to live as they wished and needed).

Storey, Tessa, 'The Clothing of Courtesans in Seventeenth Century Rome', in *Clothing Culture 1350-1650*, Catherine Richardson (ed.), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004).

(This essay studies the homes and jewelry of courtesans and concludes that in 1564 the Roman authorities had reason to issue a sumptuary law forbidding courtesans from wearing silks, gold and jewels as they possessed many luxuries).

Storey, Tessa, 'Fragments from the 'life-histories' of jewelry belonging to prostitutes in Early Modern Rome', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xix, 5 (2005).

(This article examines a number of case histories which illustrate the meanings, values and functions which jewellery had at a personal level for prostitutes).

Storey, Tessa, *Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).

(Storey explores how and why women became prostitutes, the relationships between prostitutes and clients, and the accumulated wealth of some prostitutes. She shows the earning potential of prostitutes, how they dressed and furnished their homes. The book reveals that despite energetic attempts at social disciplining by the Counter-Reformation Popes, prostitution continued to flourish, and to provide a lucrative living for many women).

Storey Tessa, 'Prostitution and the Circulation of Second-hand Goods in Early Modern Rome', in *Alternative Exchanges*, Laurence Fontaine (ed.), (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2008).

(In this article Storey examines the issue of the prostitute's complicated and intense relationship to wealth in the form of material goods. She suggests that prostitutes had an almost obsessive interest in material wealth).

Tackett, Timothy, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth Century France*, (Guildford, Surrey, Princeton University Press, 1977).

(A social and political study of parish priests in a Diocese of Dauphiné 1750-1791. This study cast some insights on the clergy in the second half of the eighteenth century).

Tannahill, Reay, *Sex in History*, (New York, Stein & Day, 1980).

(A chronicle of the pleasures and perils of the flesh from antiquity to the modern day).

Taylor, Julie Lynn, 'Prostitute, Victim, Survivor, Woman: Examining The Discursive Structures Surrounding Women in Sex Trafficking Situations', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of Communication Studies, Colorado State University, 2010).

(A study on the discursive structures used by officials to talk about by women who are drawn in and victimised by involvement in the sex trafficking industry. This offered insights on tendencies to adopt loose labels).

Testa, Carmel, *Life and Times of Grand Master Pinto 1741-1773*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 1989).

(A biography of Grand Master Manuel Pinto that was useful in revealing information on his intimate relationship with Magdalene nun Sister Melania Dionisija Paulicci).

Testa, Carmel, *Romegas*, (Malta, Midsea Books, 2002).

(This is a biography of Mathurin d'Aux de Lescout also known as Romegas or Mathurin Romegas (1525/8?-1581) who spent nearly all his life on the Orders galleys. This story also describes a period of intense conflict between the rival super-powers: the Christian block and the Muslim challenge for final dominance in the Mediterranean, and political turmoil within the Order).

Testa J.G. & Zammit H.E., 'The Parish of Porto Salvo, 1600-1613; A Demographic Study', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 1973).

(A dissertation that examines statistics gleaned from the parochial registers of the parish of Porto Salvo 1600-1613. Testa and Zammit show how immigrants were being assimilated into the community).

Tommaseo Nicolò, Bellini Bernardo, *Nuovo dizionario della lingua Italiana Vol 1, Part II*, (Torino, Società l'Unione Tipografico, 1865).

(An Italian lexicography that provided definitions for certain terms with special reference to terms originating in the region of Turin).

Tommasino, Attilia, *Sessa Aurunca nel Periodo Aragonese*, (Ferrara, G. Corbo, 1997).

(A study of the vicissitudes of the Aragonese city of Arunca in the fifteenth century. Tommasino draws on statutes, chapters and royal privileges to analyse the political relationship between the dukes of Naples and the Aragonese monarchs 1404-1465).

Tortora, Phyllis G., Johnson, Ingrid, *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Textiles VIII Edition*, (New York, Bloomsbury, 2013).

(A study of fibers, fabrics, laws and regulations affecting textile materials and processing, inventors of textile technology, and business and trade terms relevant to textiles. This was

useful in providing information on the clothing of certain prostitutes in early modern Valletta).

Trotter, Henry, *Sugar Girls & Seamen*, (Johannesburg, Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd., 2008). (An ethnographic study of the role that sex workers and sailors play in the social, economic and cultural realities of South African port cities. Trotter argues that prostitutes are the ultimate cosmopolitans, the 'unsung sirens of globalisation').

Van der Meer Theo, 'Medieval Prostitution and the Case of a (Mistaken?) Sexual Identity, in *Journal of Women's History* xi, 2 (1999).

(This essay takes issue with Ruth Mazo Karras's claim that prostitution in the Middle Ages was a sexual identity. Van der Meer questions the notion sexual identity in medieval sexuality).

Van de Pol, Lotte C., 'The Whore, the Bawd, and the Artist: The reality and imagery of seventeenth-century Dutch prostitution', in *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, ii, 1-2, (2010).

(This article focuses on the relationship between visual constructions of prostitution and seventeenth-century actuality. Drawing on a multitude of observations from the criminal records it lays out the main characteristics of the trade, including descriptions of the behavior and the appearance of both the procuresses who operated as peddlers of vice and the prostitutes in their thrall. In the paintings (and in prints) women are depicted as seducers and men as fools, the forbidden sexuality they portray being implicitly blamed on the women, who are understood as being inspired by the devil).

Van de Pol, Lotte, *The Burgher and the Whore: Prostitution in Early Modern Amsterdam*, Liz Waters (Trans)., (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011).

(This study examines how prostitution was embedded in early modern Amsterdam's social, economic and judicial systems. It shows how legislation and policing were shaped by misogynist ideas emerging from the powerful Calvinist authorities members of the Dutch Reformed church).

Van Dijkhuizen, Jan Frans, 'Narratives of Reconciliation in Early Modern England', in *Discourse of Anger in the Early Modern Period*, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Anita Traninger (eds)., (Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2015).

(A examination of the cultural construction of anger in early modern times. The author argues that different eras and cultures conceive interpersonal reconciliation in different ways).

Van Kessel Peter, Van Kessel Elisja Schulte, *Rome, Amsterdam: two growing cities in seventeenth-century Europe*, (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1997).

(A multifaceted comparison of two contrasting cultural and political cities. This study reveals how the growth and change of cities in the seventeenth century is based on socio-cultural considerations).

Vàquez Garcia, Francisco, Mengibar, Andres Moreno, *Poder y prostitución en Sevilla*, (Seville, Universidad de Sevilla, 1998).

(A study of the secular evolution of venal love in Seville from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. This scholarly examination seeks to understand the reasons that lead society to regulate prostitution).

Vassallo, Carmel, *Corsairing to Commerce*, (Malta, Malta University Publishers, 1997).

(A study of eighteenth-century trade between Spain and Malta. Vassallo provides information on the distribution of Maltese traders throughout different cities in Valencia, their living conditions and their economical activities. He argues that the unsustainability of corsairing in the eighteenth century encouraged commerce with Spain through brigantine trading and the provision of cotton).

Vassallo, Peter, 'Valletta (meta) Fictionalized Historiographically', in *Sites of Exchange: European Crossroads and Faultlines*, Maurizio Ascari, Adriana Corrado (eds)., (Amsterdam, New York, Rodopi, 2006).

(This chapter explores the representation of the city of Valletta in Malta as an important point of quest).

Vella, Godwin, 'Carta e Veduta dell'Isola del Gozo, e Comino', in *De Soldanis*, Godwin Vella and Olvin Vella (eds)., (Malta, Heritage Malta, 2012).

(An examination of a manuscript map in *Il Gozo Antico-Moderno Sacro-Profano* through which Vella confirms the innate harsh insular reality of Gozo in the eighteenth century).

Vella, Kimberley, 'Prostitution and Entertainment in Valletta in the First Year of the Self-Government Period', (Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2016).

(This study was useful in revealing the social realities of some prostitutes in Valletta in the early 1920's).

Vella, Yosanne, 'Women and Work in Eighteenth Century Malta', in *Women's History Notebooks*, vi, 1 (1999).

(Vella shows how twenty-four percent of all licenses and permits in the eighteenth century were awarded to women for running businesses like millers, tailors, bread and biscuit shops, convenience stores, liquor stores, card stores, clothes shops, inns/hotels, and porter stores).

Vella, Yosanne, 'Earthly Madonna's: Women troublemakers in 18th Century Malta' in *Storja*, (1998).

(A study on women who were personally involved in and committed crimes. Vella argues that despite being traditionally more conformist than men women could at times be aggressive. This is particularly notable in areas where one had to be tough to survive).

Vella, Yosanne, 'Women Victims of Crime in Eighteenth Century Malta' in *Proceedings of History Week*, (2003).

(This paper explores the perspective of women as victims rather than perpetrators of crime in eighteenth-century Malta).

Vickery, Amanda, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres, A review of the categories and chronology of English Women's History', in *The Historical Journal*, xxxvi, 2 (1993).

(A critical review of two debates that structure the history of the changing roles of English women. Early modern arguments on the social and economic marginalisation of propertied women and the degradation of working women and the nineteenth-century theories on the separation of spheres of public power and private domesticity).

Vickery Amanda, 'Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions', in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, John Brewer, Roy Porter (eds). (London, New York, Routledge, 1993).

(A study of eighteenth-century female consumption and material culture in Lancashire through the values and practices of Elizabeth Shackleton. Vickery shows how cultures of production and consumption carry gender biases. Male cultures are represented as collective, creative and useful whereas female cultures are individualistic, parasitic and pointless).

Vidulli Marisa, *Antichi Proverbi e Detti Veneti*, (Milan, Lampi di Stampa, 2009).

(A study of proverbs and sayings from the Veneto region and how this discourse expresses the habits and customs of ordinary folk).

Vincent, Susan 'Clothing the Early Modern Body', in *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present*, Toulalan, Sarah, Fisher, Kate (eds). (London, New York, Routledge, 2013).

(This article presents different theories on the significance of the social and cultural meanings of clothing in a historical context and how this affected the formation of embodied identities. It examines the relationship between clothing and the body in early modern times).

Vitullo, Juliann, Wolfthal, Diane 'Trading Values: Negotiating Masculinity in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Vitullo, Juliann M., Wolfthal, Diane, (eds)., (Surrey, Burlington, Ashgate, 2010).

(An exploration of the conflict between the Christian ideals of poverty and charity and the accumulation of wealth by merchants north and south of the Alps from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Vitullo and Wolfthal show how lay merchants learned ways to reconcile their riches with their religious values).

Von Numers, Lorenz, *Havets Karavaner*, (Stockholm, P.A. Norstet & Söners Förlag, 1985).

(*Caravans of the Sea* is a relatively unknown travel account by Carl August Ehrensvärd (1745-1800), an eighteenth century Swedish traveller, a naval officer and an architect. Ehrensvärd was in Malta in April 1781, unlike other contemporary visitors he stated that he did not see numerous prostitutes in Valletta).

Von Riedesel, Johan Herman, *Travels through Sicily*, (London, Edward and Charles Dilly, 1773).

(Baron Riedesel's visitor's account based on letters he sent to his friend Winckelmann initiated the fashion for visiting Sicily. It is the first complete guide to southern Italy and Sicily in which the author offers a detailed description of Valletta and the decayed morality of the knights).

Walkowitz, Judith, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980).

(A study of alliances between prostitutes and feminists and their clashes with medical authorities and police).

Warneke, Sara, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England*, (Leiden, New York, Köln, E. J. Brill, 1994).

(This book explores the public images of educational travellers, their development and popularity, and the fears and prejudices in English society that engendered them).

Warner, Marina, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2000).

This book was useful in revealing information on Tuccia an ancient Roman imaginative figure. In the late seventeenth century, a church known as *Della Tuccia* existed in Malta. This church was possibly frequented by spinsters seeking to refute slanderers who wanted to show that they were chaste.

Weitzer, Ronald, 'Prostitution: Facts and Fictions', in *Contexts* vi, 4 (2007).

(Review of several popular myths regarding prostitution, in comparison to research evidence).

Welch, Evelyn, *Art in Renaissance Italy 1350-1500*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997).

(Essays on key aspects of the history of art that focus on how art appeared and functioned within its context, both historical and topographical).

Welldon, Estela V., *Mother, Madonna, Whore. The idealization and Denigration of Motherhood*, (London & New York, Guilford, 1992).

(Welldon explores the potential causes and consequences of maternal and paternal incest and their frequent aftermath, prostitution).

Wettinger, Godfrey, 'Arabo-Berber Influences in Malta: onomastic evidence' in *Proceedings of the First Congress on Mediterranean Studies of Arabo-Berber Influence*, Micheline Galley, David R Marshall (ed.), (Alger, Société Nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 1973).

(This paper discusses the Arab-Berber influences on Maltese place names and surnames from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries).

Wettinger Godfrey, 'Honour and Shame in Late Fifteenth Century Malta' in *Melita Historica* VIII (1980).

(A short study of unusual fifteenth-century marriage cases surviving in the records of the bishop's court in Malta concerned the alleged entrapment of men into marriage. These reveal that the feeling for family honour in Malta was much stronger than it is now).

Wettinger, Godfrey, *Acta iuratorum et consilii civitatis et insulae maltae*, (Palermo, Pietro Corrao, 1993).

(A study of the fifteenth century records of the Maltese municipal administration).

Wettinger, Godfrey, 'The Origin of 'Maltese Surnames' in *Melita Historica*, xii, 4 (1999).
(A study of a 1277 list of thirty-eight upper-class names and surnames that offer the first direct evidence of surnames on Malta. He shows how the larger number refer to localities of origin. Wettenger suggests that this represents the type of Christian settlers on Malta).

Wettinger, Godfrey, *Slavery in the Islands of Malta and Gozo ca. 1000-1812*, (Malta, PEG Publications, 2002).

(A detailed study of the sizable Muslim and Jewish slave communities in Malta with a special focus on the early modern period. Wettinger suggests that this establishment was a product of the crusade fought by the knights against non Catholics).

White, L. Michael, 'Paul and Pater Familias', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, Vol. I, J. Paul Sampley (ed)., (Harrisburg, London, New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003).

(An insightful examination of St Paul and the environment in which he lived and worked. This essay shed insights on what it meant to be a good family father in Roman times).

Whittle, Jane and Griffiths, Elizabeth, *Consumption & Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

(Consumption is often viewed as a female activity. This study looks in detail at who managed the provisioning, purchases, and work within the household, how spending on sons and daughters differed, and whether men and women attached different cultural values to household goods).

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E., *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice*, (London, Routledge, 2000).

(Wiesner-Hanks assesses the role of personal faith and the church itself in the control and expression of all aspects of sexuality).

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E., 'Introduction' in *Mapping Gendered Routes and Gender Spaces in the Early Modern Europe*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

(An investigation of gender in relation to spatial realms: borders and their permeability, actual and metaphorical spatial crossings, travel and displacement, and the built environment).

Williams, Ann, 'Constitutional Development of the Order of St John', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed)., (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993).

(Williams argues that the Chapter general of 1631 was a turning point in the Order's constitutional development. The Chapter-general was not summoned again until 1776; this mirrored the absolute rulers of Europe who avoided summoning assemblies and the Grand Master was encouraged to be more insistent on his sovereignty).

Wismayer, J.M., *The History of the King's Own Malta Regiment, and the armed forces of the Order of St. John*, (Malta, Said Publishers, 1989).

(A history of the activity and service of Malta's only infantry regiment - the King's Own Malta Regiment).

Whybray, R.N., *The Book of Proverbs*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972).
(A modern interpretation of the book of Proverbs).

Wolf, Naomi, *The Beauty Myth*, (New York, Morrow, 1991).
(Wolf argues that an obsession with physical perfection is a different kind of social control which traps the modern woman and may prove just as restrictive as the traditional image of homemaker and wife).

Zammit, Themiscoles, *Malta- The Maltese Islands and their History*, (Malta, A.C. Aquilina & Co., 1952).
(An overview of Maltese history).

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