STORJA 78

L-ARCISQOF GONZI JITKELLEM
STORJA: A COMMITMENT TO HISTORICAL LEARNING

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In this article indicating an evolution in Anglo-Maltese relations in the second half of the seventeenth century, DOMINIC V. SCERRI* throws light on a hitherto unexplored page in British naval history and invites further research on this topic.

The English merchant's interest in central Mediterranean Malta owed its mark to various interrelated factors. Equidistant from Gibraltar and Alexandria and midway between Sicily and North Africa, the island offered the Mediterranean merchant and sailor a favourable port-of-call. Intimately related to this attraction were the services available on entering the harbour: quarantine, comparatively low customs-tariffs, facilities for ship repairs and maintenance, warehouses, the presence of ruffians eager to be engaged on merchantmen or on the corso, and consular assistance. The island's potentiality as a purchase market in view of its dependence on all sorts of foreign sources of supply could not have passed unnoticed by the ever vigilant northern trader.

The general movement of the English in the Mediterranean, which can be traced back to the 1570s, was part of an overall shift in the European economic system. This made the Mediterranean a highway of commerce for traders, particularly those proceeding from the North Sea, resulting in the economic development of Western ports. The extent of

* FR. DOMINIC V. SCERRI, O.P., is the Rector of St. Albert the Great College in Valletta. The thesis for his B.A. (Hons) degree in history, presented in 1972, was on English Commercial Traffic in the Mediterranean with special regard to Malta, 1650-1700. In 1973 Fr. Scerri contributed a paper to the symposium on “England in the Mediterranean”, held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, on Anglo-Maltese trade relations during the same period.
English commercial expansion in this movement is shown by the establishment of English consulates at Malaga, Alicante, Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Gallipoli, Zante, Venice, Tunis and Malta in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The maintenance of English ships in the Mediterranean was efficiently helped by the co-operation of English consuls and factories, especially at Leghorn — the great ‘Magazine of the Straights’ — and at Tunis. In the case of Malta the fact that the necessity for a residential English consul — John Watts — was felt as early as the 1580s, presupposed the presence of a number of English merchants who had commercial links with the island or were actually resident there. Interest in Malta at the court of Elisabeth Tudor was, in fact, expressed by official as well as private commercial concerns. Some Englishmen in the Queen’s service sought information on the island’s resources and defence facilities with a view to correspond with other English agents in the Levant. Has it not been alleged that Elizabeth I had secretly conspired with the Porte to capture Malta?

Perhaps the greatest attraction of Malta to the English Government was the strategic significance of the island’s situation in view of the English navy, its potentiality and how best it could be exploited to the advantage of English trade with the Levant and North Africa. It was Charles II’s intention to pursue a policy of cordiality towards Malta and the Order of St. John. This policy was followed even perhaps when circumstances demanded otherwise. On April 6, 1668 Roger Fowke, the English consul in Cyprus, complained that the Maltese corsairs had inflicted “damage and losses on the coast of Cyprus to the value of four thousands and five hundred Dollars Ryalls of eight principal money besides other expenses and interests”. Grandmaster Nicholas Cotoner had admitted in his correspondence to Charles II “that Fowke has had manifest wrong and injustice by the Court of Malta and judgement there given against him”. Sir Robert Wyseman, Knight Advocate of the King, explained that the Grandmaster’s reply was “so far from being in any measure satisfactory... It is plainly perceivable he (Cotoner) intends not any satisfaction for the damage susteyned by the said Roger Fowke”. There were, therefore, “just and fair grounds for reprizalls”. Charles II refused to act accordingly, as
appears from the letter sent to the Grandmaster:

"But withall, that His Majestie taking into consideration the present state of affairs in Christendome and the increasing power of a common Enemy thereof against whom Maltha is so considerable a Bulwarke, His Majestic is unwilling to grant letters of Reprizall, or proceeds otherwise for Reparation until he finds all other amicable waies and means to fayle, and therefore desiring, that just and speedy satisfaction may be made unto the petitioner."

It was not until March 1674 that the Grandmaster acceded to the King's petition. Peaceful negotiation had led to a better mutual understanding between the two countries. "My will," Nicholes Cotoner had professed to Charles II in 1668, "has always been inclined towards the unconquerable Monarchs of Great Briain...", and that nothing had been "of greater importance than to please Your Majesty. I lived in such a way as to serve well."

Another example of the same tendency was Charles II's preoccupation with Algerian pirates. These were undermining the otherwise healthy trade relations with the Regencies. On January 17, 1668 Charles II informed the Grandmaster of his intention to send Thomas Allen, an able naval commander, to the Mediterranean to check such pirates from inflicting more damage to traders. The King asked the Grandmaster to accord Allen with all facilities and other requirements on his arrival in Malta.

It was also Charles II's policy to keep a definite number of vessels in the Mediterranean with a view to safeguarding trade in the area. An expert "tradesman" would be despatched, among other ports, to Malta to provide the vessels with equipment and other material necessary for their construction.

"Since it seems to us that it is in the interest not only to ourselves, but even to the Christian world as a whole, if we ourselves were to keep a definite number of triremes in the Mediterranean Sea, always ready as a prompt protection of all our neighbours and allies against the frequent Barbary and Turkish attacks, we have consequently ordered two triremes to be built: one at Genoa and another at Leghorn; hence we have ordered a tradesman, skilled in such concerns, to be sent to several places, as well as to the Island of Malta which is under the jurisdiction of Your Highness, in order to make the necessary purchases and to make the preparations for the work, so that they may be well-furnished—".
When, in 1674, a naval expedition under the command of Sir John Narbrough was despatched against Tripoli, Charles II recommended the Admiral and his squadron to the “good will of the Most Eminent Prince and Lord Nicholas Cotoner Grandmaster of the Order of Malta” and asked that they be “treated as friends and allies” and be supplied with anything they required “at a fair price.” On October 17, 1675 Sir John returned to Malta from Tripoli on the Henrietta, accompanied by Captain W. Holden on the Assistance, and another six vessels. On this occasion the naval chaplain, the Reverend Henry Teonge, paid tribute to Malta’s hospitality. “This City is compassed almost clean round with sea, which makes several safe harbours for hundreds of shippes. The people are extremly courteous, but especially to the English.” He explained that wine could be obtained at 3d a quart, melons at 1d a piece, cotton socks at 9d a pair, and radishes, cabbages, and cauliflowers for 1d a piece.

Bernardo Ravagero, the Proveditore of Zante, informed the Venetian Senate on November 13, 1675 that three English frigates of war, the Henrietta, Diamond, and Swallow arrived at Zante, commanded by Sir John Narbrough and that they had to proceed shortly to Malta for food stores and warlike provisions. Previously, Paolo Sarotti, the Venetian Resident in England, had written to the Doge and Senate, admitting his persistent efforts to find out what the English plans were regarding their differences with Tripoli. He had inquired where they proposed to send their fleet, and where this should get its overhauling and maintenance. Sarotti explained that the English had opted for Malta although Samuel Pepys had written to Sir Thomas Clutterbuck and left him to choose between the use of Malta or Little Cephalonia as a base. Pepys stated that Malta would be the base for ships of war scattered about the Mediterranean, ready to aid convoys of merchantmen in various ports. They were to unite and go against the Tripolitans and force them to an agreement with England. Before blockading Tripoli, Sir John Narbrough had instructed that Malta would act as the fleet’s rendezvous. In the event of a captain being taken sick, he was to send his lieutenant or the next officer to the Henrietta; in case of separation, or in the case of vessels “unable to keep the
sea”, Malta would be the port-of-call and the meeting place for the re-organization of such vessels. 23 When peace was concluded with Tripoli, Narbrough did not forget the gratitude he had received in Malta. He insisted with the Bey that all slaves — both English and Maltese — were to be immediately released. 24

The Marquis de Fleury episode of 1686 provides further evidence of the Grandmaster’s readiness to co-operate with the English in matters of controlling the Mediterranean from excessive piratical incursions. Sailing on the St. John, some 100 miles off Alexandria, the Marquis encountered the English vessels Jerusalem, John and Francis and Anne on their way to Leghorn. The Anne was searched and as everything was in order, she was allowed to sail on. Captain Gilson of the John and Francis was forced to change direction and follow Fleury’s route. The Jerusalem attempted flight but was fired on by the St John, and compelled to surrender. The French pirate’s men boarded her and she was soon towed to Malta, “the capital of Christian piracy”. The Bassà of Tripoli, who was on the English vessel, his retinue, the cargo and the Jerusalem had to undergo quarantine. A detailed inventory was drawn up by M. Cassano Melino, a Maltese notary. Thomas Daniel, the captain of the English vessels was allowed to proceed on his voyage. 25 On April 1, 1687 the Grandmaster wrote to Charles II on the question of de Fleury. As a sign of cordiality, the Sacred Council had decided that henceforth Fleury would “not be admitted to the port of Malta”, that none of his booty would be returned to him, and that this would be kept in Malta until other English vessels arrived. 26 Soon after, the booty was delivered to Captain Killegren. 27

In 1688 Henry Fitz-James, the natural son of James II, paid a courtesy call on Grandmaster Caraffa who donated the Prince a cross valued 5,000 scudi. Caraffa hoped that James would re-establish the English Tongue. 28 On February 24, 1689 James II wrote to the Grandmaster asking him to accept his son Henry in the Order of St John. This was acceded to shortly afterwards. 29

There is no doubt that the English Government and the Royal Navy had been following a clear line of policy with regards to the use of Malta as a base of operations and a centre of communications in the Mediterranean. On August

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15, 1693, for example, Nathaniel Lodington had supplied Lord Nottingham, the Secretary of State, with secret intelligence about the state of affairs in Tripoli. He advised the renewal of peace with the Agency and expressed his intention to remain in Malta for further instructions from London. In December of the same year, Sir Francis Wheler had departed from the Mediterranean as Commander-in-Chief of a considerable fleet. He was instructed to provide the security of convoys, and to proceed as far as Malta with such merchantmen chartered for that island and others for the Levant. Malta would serve, he was told, as a base for communications with Whitehall whenever treaties with Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli were to be concluded.

By the late seventeenth century, contacts between England and Malta, originally initiated in the 1580s by the English pirate-merchant, had reached a more mature stage of development, to the point of attracting official recognition from London. The English Government had started to appreciate the value and significance of Malta’s strategic position and its potentiality as a base for English naval operations in the central Mediterranean.

NOTES:
The following abbreviations have been used:

ADD. MSS. Additional Manuscripts: British Museum
A.I.M. Archives of the Inquisition of Malta
A.O.M. Archives of the Order of Malta
C.S.P. Calendar of State Papers
P.R.O. Public Record Office, London
S.P. State Papers, Public Record Office, London


2 E. Brockman, Last Bastion (London 1961), 165-6. By 1540 an arsenal was erected at Birgu. This was enlarged about 1600 and again some 36 years later. An auxiliary yard was developed in the Grand Harbour during the same time. The Order’s ship-building facilities were kept until its expulsion from Malta in 1798. B. Blouet, The Story
of Malta (London 1967), pp. 127-9. In 1753 an act was passed in England prohibiting any goods from the Levant to be landed in England without a clean bill-of-health from the port where they had been laded; unless they had been aired in one of the mentioned lazarettos: Venice, Ancona, Messina, Leghorn, Genoa, Marseilles and Malta. ADD.MMS. 38348, f.110. In the Mediterranean lazarettos, the period of quarantine ranged from 95 days to 7 months. Ibid. 38349, f.345.

3 See F. Braudel, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II (Paris 1949).
4 C.S.P. Domestic 1649-1650, pp. 11-12; ibid., 1650, pp. 71-2; ibid., 1657-1658, pp. 95-6.
5 Ibid.
6 A.O.M. Quarantine Registers 1650 et seq., passim. English consuls, like all others, exercised their influence in court cases when Englishmen were involved. Such was the case when consul John Jacob Watts asked for the release of two women belonging to the sect of the Quakers, who were held in Maltese prisons, and who offered the necessary safeguards to conduct them to England. A.I.M. Corrispondenza August 20, 1661. See also A.P. Vella, The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta (R.U.M., 1964), pp. 31-7.

8 S.P. 86/1, f. 16 ff.
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
13 A.O.M. 261, fl.127v-129. S.P. 86/1, f.20.
14 Ibid., f.65.
15 A. Mifsud, op.cit., p. 252, n. 1.
17 A.O.M. 57, ff. 29-32.
19 C.S.P. Venetian 1673-75, pp. 479-80.
20 Ibid., p. 368.
21 Ibid., pp. 440-41.
23 S.P. 86/1, f.65.
25 S.P. 86/2, f.5 ff. November 16, 1686.
26 S.P. 86/7, f.73v.
27 S.P. 86/2, f.5 ff. November 16, 1686.
29 A.O.M. 57, ff.35-41. Ibid. 263, f.64.
30 S.P. 86/1, f.91.
31 Ibid., f.89.
32 Ibid., f.91.
JOSEPH A. GRIMA

THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN'S GALLERY

SQUADRON AT SEA

In a scrupulously factual description of various aspects of life at sea on an Order's galley in the seventeenth century Mediterranean, JOSEPH F. GRIMA* details the ship's movements in and out of harbour as well as in action, procedures relating to protocol and discipline, and also conditions of the crew on board, such as food provisions and medical services.

The galley-squadron of the Order of St John was "the outward and visible sign of the Order's obligation to engage in constant warfare against the Infidel." ¹ Year after year, the squadron left the shelter of the Maltese harbours to cruise and search for Turkish and Barbary shipping, and particularly for vessels belonging to the Barbary corsairs. In addition to this, the squadron also used to form part of combined Christian maritime forces sent against the Muslims.² The galley-squadron was also extensively used to convoy to Malta the island's vital supplies of grain and provisions together with other occasional mundane activities of providing escorts to princes and ambassadors.³ Yet in all these naval activities, the hands of the Order's naval commanders were, so to say, tied down by the precise instructions and orders handed to them. Their routes and spheres of activity, together with the line of conduct to be undertaken were all exactly given and, where these were lacking or to make up for any inadvertent lacunae, instructions were usually ended by recommending to the officer concerned to

* JOSEPH F. GRIMA, B.A.(Hons), M.A., a history teacher since 1961 is specially interested in the history of printing in Malta up to 1839, the organisation of the Order of St John's galley-squadron in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in naval warfare in the seventeenth century Mediterranean.
behave according to the statutes and ordinations governing the squadron. Naval ordinances and statutes governed everything that happened at sea including navigation, saluting, spoils of war, discipline and even the food which was to be cooked and distributed to all on board.

**Departure from Harbour**

The departure of the galleys from Maltese harbours was to be carried out by day except in cases of necessity. From the Capitana a single cannon shot was to be fired signifying departure at midday, and within half-an-hour all shipmen and Knights on caravan duty with all their arms were to be on board. The roll was then called and skiffs and boats were taken aboard to facilitate the departure. In the meantime arms were prepared, fighting posts and sleeping quarters were allotted, and the necessary munitions were distributed. When the skiffs and boats were taken aboard, no other boats were allowed to approach the galleys. From the time the signal was given to the actual weighing of anchor, two hours elapsed. Halfway in between, that is, one hour after the cannon signal shot had been fired, the Capitana hoisted the fore yard, and then trumpets sounded, directing the squadron to weight anchor immediately in strict order of seniority. No galley was to do anything before these signals. The Capitana then hoisted a yellow flag over the helm, thus ordering the galleys into line ahead, astern of the flag-ship in order of seniority. If departure took place at night, the signal to weigh anchor was given by trumpets and a lantern hung from the helm ordered the galleys to move ahead in line. After clearing the harbour under oars, the galleys took up their cruising stations with the Capitana leading in the centre of a crescent formation, the Padrona on its right or starboard and the next senior galley to the left or port side. The other galleys took up similar positions according to the seniority of their captains, all taking care not to steal each other's wind.

During the departure, other details had also to be taken care of by the Captain-General, the Captains and other ships' officers. The roll-call was very important. It was imperative that the lists of men aboard were properly drawn up so that punishment would be meted out to those Knights
or shipmen who had missed the cruise. No one was allowed to take on board any trunks but just a canvas valise. Space was certainly not plentiful on a galley and so, to prevent abuses, anyone who broke this ordinance had his trunk and its contents confiscated in favour of the Common Treasury whilst the Captain of the galley concerned was fined six gold scudi for every case of transgression. In fact, at the time of departure, the galleys were all checked to ensure that no 'contraband' private merchandise of any sort was on board. The same applied if galleys were coming to the island, and the only goods which could be embarked on board were those belonging to the Treasury. Nor could anyone embark foodstuffs with him, except moderate quantities for which permission had first to be obtained from the galley Captain. Neither was a galley Captain allowed to embark what he wanted. Captains who embarked prohibited goods were not allowed the privilege of benservito at the end of their tenure of office; the testimony of two or three witnesses who were themselves above suspicion was enough to convict a Captain of such an offence.

Navigation

When cruising, strict formation was kept and no galley was allowed to move up to windward of the Capitana except in cases of necessity such as when chasing prizes. For such an offence a guilty boatswain could be deprived of his office, or be punished by at least three rope lashes; the Captain-General could also fine him by depriving him of so many months' salary in favour of the Common Treasury. If the Captain was to blame for the offence, he could even be deprived of his captaincy. In 1640, the Captain of the galley Santa Ubaldesca, Fra Massimiliano d'Ampont, was deprived of his office because his galley was somehow separated from the rest of the squadron without sufficient reason. The same condemnation was passed on the Padrone whilst the pilot was remanded for trial at the court of the Castel­lania. The galley ordinations of the Chapters-General stressed that strict seniority, based on the seniority of the Captains, was to be maintained including when anchoring in port and when taking up cruising position. The only exception was when the galleys were at uninhabited places.
When at sea, the galleys had to maintain contact which was carried out by means of signals by using flags, pennants, standards and burgees, together with trumpets, drums, lanterns, smoke, cannon and musket shot, and rockets. Over eighty different signals could be given in this way and here one must admit the difficulty involved to find enough different positions for flags and pennants in the two-masted seventeenth century galley which, being lateen-rigged, also presented limited sail movements. On most occasions galleys are depicted smothered-in bunting and one might think that this was the artist's imagination at work but actually signals had to be given hoisting flags and pennants in the most eccentric-looking places mainly because of lack of space. The attention to detail is amply brought out by the signals given by the galleys, demonstrating the good seamanship which resulted in the vessels of the Religion having a favourable balance of victories. Yet, here one may point out that, with all this thoroughness, there does not seem to have been someone responsible for signalling. At least there is never any mention of a 'signals officer', unlike the Venetians, who delegated this responsibility to the Ammiraglio serving on flagship.

After the galleys took up their cruising stations, a blue flag over the helm signalled the setting of mainsails. If the flag was dipped twice, thrice or four times it meant the setting-up of the fore, mizzen and the lower mizzen sails respectively. If the wind freshened, a white flag over the fighting platform — or rambades — ordered a reef in the mainsail whilst storm sails were ordered by hoisting a blue flag instead of the white one. If a galley fell out of station a Genoese pennant was hoisted at the ensign staff of the Capitana. Any Captain prevented from keeping station because of shallow waters compelling him to keep to a channel had to report with a red pennant at the foremost and by brailing up any sail he was carrying.

If a galley discovered strange sails, she signalled accordingly. If the ships were square-rigged, a red pennant was raised on the mast-head of the main mast, but a red and white pennant was hoisted to indicate lateen-rigged vessels. These flags were dipped and re-hoisted as many times as the number of ships sighted. The galleys then gave chase under oars and the Capitana signalled the other galleys to follow.
For the chase to be abandoned, a Maltese pennant was hoisted on the main yard and the fore yard was dipped. If the galleys were out of sight, a single cannon shot would be fired. When the separated galleys returned, those who constituted the majority gave recognition signals by showing white and red pennants at the main yard and by dipping their fore yards, the others answering with a red pennant in the same position and at the same time brailing up their foresails. If the galleys were solely under oars, only the pennants were used. If a galley was separated from the remainder of the squadron for an appreciable length of time by adverse winds or storms, the Captain was duty bound to rejoin the squadron at the first opportunity and explain what had happened to the Captain-General. Special care was to be taken regarding the cars and sails of a galley if caught in a storm.

In a cruise, especially a longish one, stocks of firewood and supplies of water had to be replenished according to need. So a quiet convenient inlet from where such supplies were known to be obtained would be chosen and the squadron sailed thither. For replenishment of water supplies, a signal was given by hoisting a white flag over the helm whilst a green flag signalled replenishment of firewood. For both together, a signal white and green horizontal flag was raised. Other signals were given if an armed reconnaissance of the place was to be made. A hurried departure could occur if such actions took place in enemy country. Thus a reconnaissance party was recalled if the Capitana displayed a chequered red and white banner at the foremast, whilst if the Grand Master's banner was unfurled, everyone was to embark as quickly as possible and drop whatever they might have been doing.

The look-out aloft on the Padrona gave a signal with a white and red flag if he sighted enemy sails. The flag was waved up and down as many times as the number of ships sighted. If a general chase was ordered and the anchors were holding too well to allow a quick departure, a standard hoisted over the helm signalled the cutting of cables and buoying of anchors for the future recovery. If a galley found itself in difficulties while cruising, a standard was unfurled on its masthead and immediately one or two cannon shots were fired; immediately the two nearest
galleys went to the stricken galley's aid. A storm could cause a galley to be separated from the squadron and find refuge near land. In such a case, when the squadron was again sighted, two smoke signals were made from the highest ground possible as a countersign prior to the galley's reunion with the squadron. 

Encounters in fog were envisaged. In such cases, every galley posted a drummer forward, fired blank musket shots at intervals and kept its bell ringing. If an enemy sail was discovered, a cannot shot was fired and the enemy was chased. If no answer was forthcoming from the Capitana, the chase was to be abandoned and the galley was to return to its station. If a galley discovered land, two cannot shots were fired.

The Captain-General was bound to call Councils at sea when the occasion demanded. Such a summons to his Captains was made by flying a blue pennant on the Capitana's ensign staff; if he also wanted the pilots or masters the Capitana would fly the blue and red pennant. Moreover the masters alone could be summoned but by hoisting a red and white pennant. The feluca was to be put to sea and sent to the Capitana if a Genoese pennant was flown at the fore mast-head.

No provision for night action was envisaged but night recognition signals were passed among the galleys. Signals for setting sails were given by hoisting and dipping lanterns, each for a specific reason. Moreover, the flagship showed double stern lights whilst the other galleys showed only one. To bring the squadron to anchor, the Capitana hoisted and repeatedly dipped a lantern on her main halyards repeating this signal as she anchored. If an anchor dragged, rockets were fired. If a hurried departure was necessary at night, cables were cut and anchors buoyed after a signal from the Capitana comprising the firing of a rocket and the hoisting of a banner over the fighting platform.

A galley in difficulties fired a cannon burnt a long smoke signal in the prow and hoisted two lanterns in the main shrouds, one on either side. Then the nearest two galleys went to her assistance. Weather sometimes separated the squadron at night; so, on rejoining, the galleys to windward fired two rockets, while the leeward galleys answered with one rocket. Then followed the agreed password or code name. The night the Captain-General could ascertain if a
The Padrona fired one rocket, the second senior galley fired two, and so on. The smoke signal was replaced by two cannon shots by the Capitana, to which the galleys replied with one shot, if visibility was not good enough. Signals could also be given by lanterns hoisted and dipped to call officers to the Capitana and to order the feluca or caiques to be launched.

The sighting of strange vessels at night was signalled by a masked lantern from the galley stern, the number of flashes corresponding to the number of vessels seen. Chase could only be undertaken after first obtaining permission from the Capitana. Her course was then indicated by firing a cannon shot and a series of blank musketry.

In Action

When vessels were sighted far away, a galley or galleys were detached from the squadron and went to identify the strangers. If these vessels were found to be enemy ships, two cannon shots were fired. The Capitana would then either fire two shots to signal these galleys to attack the enemy, or fire two shots signifying an instruction for the galleys to await further orders.

For no reason whatsoever were Captains allowed to go after prizes or to attack without prior orders from the Captain-General.

The galley squadron was not always allowed to attack a superior enemy naval force. The naval ordinances evolved in the Chapters-General vaguely stated that if a superior enemy force was encountered, the Captain-General was to take the advice of the Captains and decide what was to be done, always bearing in mind that the honour of the Order was to be upheld and that the squadron was not to be destroyed needlessly. These orders were clarified by the Council of State in 1642. Bearing in mind that the squadron consisted of only six galleys, the vessels of the Order were not to engage the enemy if the latter's force consisted of eight vessels or more. If the enemy force consisted of seven ships, the Order's squadron was to take evasive action, failing which, they were to uphold the honour of the Order by fighting. If, in an enemy force of seven ships, one was a
privately-owned galley, the Order's squadron was obliged to look for and fight such a force. This reluctance to engage superior enemy forces was not peculiar to the Order's squadron only for "Venetian commanders almost invariably restrained... from joining battle unless they were certain of their superiority to the enemy".

Once the decision to attack enemy ships had been taken, strict formation in attack was to be upheld. A line was formed, the Capitana and the Padrona taking over the two extremities with the other galleys in between according to their seniority. The pilots and boatswains of the galleys were charged, under penalty of the loss of their lives, to hold on to their allotted position and refrain from getting in each other's way, thus causing confusion. Signals to prepare for battle were given. The galley's artillery was alerted by hoisting a flag of St. Barbara on the lateen yard of the foremast whilst if the same flag was raised on the foremasthead, ammunition was handed out. A blue flag over the goaler's quarters signalled the chaining of the rowers but if trusted buonavoglie were to be left unshackled, a red flag was run up instead. Buckets of water were distributed around the deck and bales of wet canvas placed to protect the gunners and the rowers. A number of seamen were detailed to remain aboard if and when the enemy vessels were boarded, whilst the boats were put over the side and towed astern with supplies of oakum and timber to carry out necessary repairs. Moreover, men falling overboard could also be picked up.

If the enemy fought back, care was to be taken to prevent the Order's galleys themselves from being boarded and the slaves from rebelling. If boarding was carried out, the Captain-General and the Captains chose the men, Knights or otherwise, who would board the enemy vessel. The rest were to remain on their own ship. Because of bonuses given to whoever first boarded an enemy ship, there was a tendency for seamen to jump into the sea in order to arrive first. However, punishment was to be meted out on such offenders and on those who left swords, daggers, firearms or gunpowder lying around or slow-matches alight as these could be used by the galley slaves to cause disorders. Offenders were liable to four rope lashes and condemnation to row on the galleys for three years without pay.

The galleys advanced simultaneously. Pennant signals on
the forestays deployed the squadron to port or to starboard; with the signal to prepare for boarding being given by the hoisting of a Genoese pennant which joined the battle standard of the Order at the main top of the Capitana. The raising of the Grand Master's flag to starboard of the fighting platform ordered the rambades to be raised, whilst the subsequent hoisting of a Maltese pennant on the foreyard gave the order to board the enemy. 47

If an enemy vessel surrendered without offering resistance, no one was to board or attack it. Disobedience on the part of a Captain made him liable to pay two years' income from his commandery or, failing this, a fine of five hundred scudi in favour of the Treasury was imposed. If anyone swam over to such a vessel heavy penalties were inflicted; he loss of his habit for a Knight and a condemnation to row for ten years on the galleys if the offender was a secular person. The Captain-General was to send his Captain, or another reliable Knight to deputize for him, together with the Riveditore of the galleys to make out an inventory of all the goods on board the captured prize. They were to be accompanied by the purser of the Capitana and the Riveditore's clerk. 48 In 1638, the Venerable Council of the Order decided that, in addition to the above penalties, an offender would have to pay interests on the accruing losses of the Treasury resulting from his action. 49 The naval ordinances stressed that the only Knights allowed on board a prize taken without fighting were those ordered thither to help the Riveditore. Transgressors were liable to lose four years' income from commanderies or pensions of the Order, or to the loss of four years' seniority depending on the decision of the Venerable Council which acted on the reports given by the Captain-General. 50

After a prize had been taken, the seamen had the right to keep the arms and personal things which they personally had taken over from the enemy. They had no right over money and cargo and no one was allowed to break or open boxes or chests nor to enter the holds. Transgressors incurred a penalty of four rope lashes and a year rowing on the galleys without pay, together with the loss of their loot, which was awarded to the informants concerned. 51 The men were encouraged to inform the authorities on gold, silver, money, pearls and other jewels found in a prize. If the informant
was a Knight, he was allowed twenty per cent of the goods recovered, whilst a layman was given fifteen per cent. Bonuses were also paid to those who were first on the prize and, to avoid confusion in the ensuing claims, boarding parties were only as large as deemed necessary, depending on the size and strength of the opposing vessel. The bonuses paid out when a prize was taken were as follows: fifty scudi for the first man to climb sword in hand on the enemy vessel, thirty scudi for the second, twenty scudi for the third and fifteen scudi was allowed to the fourth man to perform this deed. Furthermore, ten scudi were given to whoever lowered the enemy colours whilst whoever sighted the enemy was given five scudi, the latter bonus being doubled if the sighting took place at night. If one of the above deeds was accomplished by a Knight or a gentleman, the relevant bonus was doubled. Bonuses were only paid if the encounter ended with a victory for the Order. An example of confusion arising when taking a prize occurred in 1620 when the galleys captured a small galleon and everyone seems to have taken his share of the pie. All were ordered to give up their gains within a day or pay the penalty if caught. Knights would be treated as disobedient whilst seculars would be sentenced to four years in the galleys. In 1617, in fact, it had been found necessary to appoint a commission to inquire into similar disorders, chief among which were bad seamanship, the mishandling and mislaying of cargo transferred from the prizes to the galleys and especially the damage done to a captured galleot of 24 oars. Rich cargoes were to be transferred on to the galleys. If a prize happened to be a ship of quality, the galleys were to escort it to home waters but if the prize was of an inferior kind, a trustworthy prize crew was to be put aboard and ordered to sail to Malta without touching land.

**Arrival in Base**

When the galleys returned to base, they entered harbour under oars. If they were returning from a cruise in the Levant or the Barbary coast, irrespective of whether they brought back prizes or not, the galleys were required to enter Marsamuscetto Harbour at the Quarantine anchorage of Manoel Island without as much as putting a skiff to sea or
allowing a boat to come alongside. There the squadron was to await further orders from the Grand Master and the Venerable Council. quarantine regulations then had to be observed by all on board to prevent any contagion from being brought to Malta through the galleys' contact with possible carriers. Such rules were observed after a commission first boarded the galleys for the purpose of inspecting and then deciding whether permission to land could be given. This permission, known as the Pratica, could be withheld for a number of days until the Commissioners were satisfied that the galleys were free of disease. Great importance was attached to quarantine and when it was not carried out according to the orders given by the Commission of Public Health a commission was set up to inquire and report on such omissions. Sometimes, exceptions were made. In 1639, the galleys returned to port carrying a very sick Captain-General, Fra Giacomo Puliege Charrault who, in fact, died three days later. Pratica was given immediately to the sick Captain-General and to the squadron's physician who attended him.

On entering harbour triumphantly, musket salutes were fired by the galley musketeers, who loaded, aimed and fired together according to signals given by one, two and three drumbeats respectively. The galleys then came to anchor in strict order of seniority. A commission then boarded the galleys to inspect and register the prizes taken and to see that everything was in order. Moreover, these commissioners were also charged with searching for any booty which might have been stolen by the seamen. Only after this general search was over and after obtaining the Pratica were the men on board the galleys allowed to land. First the Captain-General's caïque was lowered into the water followed by the boats of the other galleys. Then the Maltese pennant was hoisted on the forecastle to signal permission for the Knights to land. Afterwards shore leave for those Maltese officers who were entitled to it was signalled by raising a blue pennant, also on the forecastle.

**Saluting**

At sea, in the seventeenth century, as now, when ships sailing under different flags encountered one another, recog-
nition was given by saluting. Such compliments could be paid by firing guns, or by manipulating colours and sails. The number of equal or unequal rounds fired by each side depended on the measure of respect, submission or honour which was deemed suitable. Distinctions in salutes were made between sovereigns, princes and republics. Saluting was, however, not only complimentary but, more usually, a clear-cut question of precedence particularly among the smaller, weaker Mediterranean princes. In the Order's squadron, gun salutes could only be fired on the express orders of the Captain-General and a disobedient galley Captain was liable to be fined one hundred scudi for each offence. 65

The naval ordinances of the Chapters-General held by the Order point out the salutes to be accorded by the galley squadron. When entering harbours or cities which were fortified, the Capitana was to fire a four gun salvo, but in places where there was a viceroy or prince present, all the galleys were to fire a similar four gun salute. If the galleys were saluted by a ship, the Capitana was to answer with a single shot by way of reply. 66 When entering Maltese harbours, only the Capitana was to salute, by firing three shots. 67

Of course, sometimes disputes developed which resulted in suspending the saluting of the cities or squadrons involved. Such an occurrence happened in 1634 when the galleys of the Order were forbidden to salute the city of Messina. 68 This dispute endured till 1638 when, after the differences in question were settled, the Order revoked its earlier decision. 69

In Malta itself, or in foreign ports, Grand Crosses were not to be saluted by artillery. 70 After 1625, this prohibition applied also to the Admiral when he was conferring the possession of the squadron or a galley. However, it was left to the prudence of the Captain-General or Captains regarding saluting when aboard. 71 However if Grand Crosses chosen as ambassadors to Rome or Spain and were ferried thither by the galleys, they were to be saluted by artillery in Messina and Naples only twice in each city, that is, when they left the ship for the first time and at the time of their last embarkation. This was intended as an economy measure to curb unnecessary wastage of powder. 72

Salutes were sometimes accorded in other ways. In 1570, Captain-General Fra Pietro Giustiniani was instructed that
if the Order's galleys met those of the Pope, the standard of the Church was to be saluted by dipping the Order's standard three times and then hoisting it to its former place.\textsuperscript{73}

It seems that, for saluting, the same amount of powder was used as when firing regular shots in action because in 1652, the Venerable-Council decreed that this practice was to be discontinued and that hitherto only one half of the powder formerly expended was to be used for saluting purposes.\textsuperscript{74}

**Discipline**

The basis of all fighting arms was, and will always remain, discipline: without which no control can be exercised over the different components of military echelons. Naturally, the Order also sought to maintain discipline among its galley crews, including the members of the Order itself. All the men knew what was expected of them and all knew what was prohibited or not. It follows that all knew the penalties for disobedience, penalties which were harsh in order to force recalcitrant men to toe the line. Of course, punishments sometimes differed depending on whether the offender was a secular or not.

No member of the Order, whether Knight or Novice, could verbally injure or prejudice the honour of any other Religious. Such an offender could be deprived of his habit, or be declared unsuitable for profession in the case of a Novice; if the accused had resorted to arms he could be handed over to the secular courts for punishment even if no blood had been drawn in the ensuing fight. Punishment could even be death. On the other hand, if the insulted parties took advantage of the situation and made capital of such opportunities (i.e. by resorting to arms needlessly) they could incur the same penalties.\textsuperscript{75}

If a secular seaman, or galley soldier, committed such offences he could be sentenced to row for two years on the galley, chained, and with his head shaved. If he had struck blows, the sentence was of three years' duration whilst a life sentence was passed if the offender has resorted to arms.\textsuperscript{76}

The Captains of the galleys had to inform the Captain-General of such offences in writing. Failure to do so meant that the Captain concerned incurred the loss of three years'
seniority and a fine of three hundred ducats. Until the fine was paid, the Captain was not considered for further promotions. If the offender had been a member of the Order, the Captain-General had to order his imprisonment and carry out an inquiry, the result of which was sent, sealed, to the Grand Master and the Venerable Council for their deliberation. Failure to comply with this procedure implied a fine of five hundred ducats for the Captain-General. Secular offenders were tried immediately.

In the Chapter-General of 1598, it was enacted that a suitable secular person assisted by a clerk was to be chosen to judge criminal cases brought against secular maldoers on the galleys. Ration allowances and fixed salaries were at first given to these officials in 1598, but these were abrogated the following year and they were paid through the fines imposed. This office was abolished by the Chapter-General of 1604, a decision confirmed by the Chapter-General of 1631. Henceforth, the powers of this official, known as the Auditore, were passed on to the Captain-General or his deputy, to the senior galley Captain, or to a particular galley's Captain if the galley was cruising alone. If the case was of a grave nature and a quick decisive trial was deemed necessary and essential, a literate secular was chosen to act as Auditore. This temporary Auditore was paid out of the delinquent's pay if it was confiscated. If this could not be done, expenses were included in the accounts of whoever had delegated him. This office was then re-introduced in 1663.

The Statutes also contemplated other misdemeanours. Thus whoever caused even slight trouble on his galley or whoever blasphemed against the name of God, the Blessed Virgin or the Saints lost all the benefits of the current caravan without prejudice to the penalties stated above. Moreover, members of the Order were forbidden to play prohibited games and it was up to the Captain-General and the Captains not to tolerate their doings and to make out the relevant reports to the Venerable Council. Prohibited games included those depending on luck, such as cards and dice, because it was considered indecent for religious to stake money on luck and also because the Knights had the vow of poverty. Playing for moderate sums of money was, however, allowed as were also games to while away the time. Nor were Captains allowed to do what they liked but were sub-
ject to the will and command of the Captain-General, who was himself bound to account for his own actions. Duelling was strictly forbidden and harsh penalties were invoked against transgressors. The Statutes expressly forbade any challenges to duels, either by word of mouth or by written notes or through a middleman; on his part the challenged man had to refuse such an invitation to fight. The penalty was deprivation of their habits for both litigants, without hopes of a reprieve. If the duel actually took place, even if no blood was shed, the litigants were handed over to the secular arm whilst whoever was party to the duel also lost his habit. These orders applied to members of the Order wherever they happened to be. In fact, in 1602, the Chevalier Fra Aloysio Bonin dit Rognosa was deprived of his habit for wounding a soldier, Vincentio Barbara, under the poop of the galley San Giorgio at Syracuse even though his sentence was then commuted to four years' imprisonment. In 1609, the Italian Knight Fra Pompeo Rospiglioso and the Novice Antonio Mignanello were both sentenced to two years in the tower for fighting on the poop of the galley San Stefano. The penalty of the deprivation of their habit was also inflicted in 1602 on six members of the Order who, at Naples, had left the galleys to which they had been assigned while on caravan. In 1634, the Riveditore Fra Gio Batta Calderario was reported for showing disrespect to the Captain-General whilst in 1642, another Riveditore, Chevalier Montsavasse, was deprived of the habit after being found guilty of defrauding the Treasury from prizes taken from the enemy. In May 1602, Chevalier Fra Don Cristophoro de Abarca was sentenced to forty days detention for disobedience and showing disrespect to the Captain-General. If a seaman was arrested on a criminal charge and brought to trial, his pay was withheld from the day of his arrest. If he was found innocent, his pay and allowances were all restored to him but if he was convicted, he lost all payments due to him for all the period starting from his arrest to his last day of imprisonment. The same applied to seamen who were imprisoned for debts. Everyone was expected to know what was prohibited and the penalties for disobedience. Ignorance was no excuse and to ensure that no one could plead ignorance, it was enacted that, whenever the galleys left harbour, after a flourish of
trumpets, the naval ordinances were to be publicly read so that they would be observed. 95

Provisions

The problem of outbreaks of scurvy in the Order's galley-squadron was conspicuous by its absence. This was due to the fact that the two main conditions responsible for its occurrence, namely, long voyages and the lack of fresh provisions on board the galleys, were not forthcoming. The voyages pursued in the Mediterranean were either usually short or else various stoppages were made in case of long journeys. Moreover, fresh provisions had to be embarked on each galley and great attention was paid to the wholesomeness of the food distributed to Knights, seamen and rowers. Each galley, when cruising down the Barbary coast or voyaging to the Levant, had to leave port carrying a maximum of two head of cattle, twenty mutton and fifty hens; the hens were to be kept in a coop taken on board for the purpose. At the beginning of the journey the meat of a dead bull had to be taken aboard to suffice for the first week at sea. The other two head of cattle were expected to tide the galley over for the following fortnight, excluding the mutton and the hens. No meat or other animals such as cocks, calves or other hens in excess of those already mentioned were to be allowed aboard and, whenever possible, it was the Captain's duty to provide other fresh provisions by the time this fresh food ran out. 96

The Captain's table was placed within the poop, together with a supplementary one if one table did not suffice. Officers, technical officers, and councillors alone could eat at table; the others ate in groups of fours or sixes. 97 The provisions needed were either taken on board from Maltese harbours or else the galleys were sent to re-victual in Sicily. 98

Apparently the type of food being served on the Captains' tables by 1625 was too rich and costly when relating it to a Christian military Order and so the Venerable Council pleaded for moderation in this respect. 99 In the same year it was decided that a day's food included helpings of roasted and boiled meat, thick soup and dessert of herbs and fruit according to the season. Food was to be served in the morning and evening but Knights were exhorted to be moderate

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at breakfast. Fowl was forbidden except at Eastertide. Abuses continued, however, and in 1627 the Venerable Council authorised the drawing up of ordinances to cut down needless expenses. In 1632 details about distribution of food were emanated for the future, details which the Captain-General and the Captains were to uphold or else they would not be reimbursed the money expended on the ‘tavola’ of members of the Order on board their particular galley. At the end of the voyage the Captain-General and the Riveditore had to report to the Commission of the Galleys how food matters had progressed and also any transgressors for eventual punishment. Menus differed according to whether it was a fast day or not. On fast days, Knights were twice served with thick soup and a dish of salted food or fish; supper consisted of salad, thick soup, salted food and dessert. On the other days, Knights were served with either roast and boiled meat or stew or meat balls or else something similar together with thick soup and helpings of ham or similarly-cured meat, rounded off by dessert of cheese, olives and herbs. Only three of the above items were to be served for the morning meal. In the evening there were servings of salad, salami, fresh meat, thick soup, and the same dessert as the mornings. Under no circumstances were there to be servings of fresh or pickled chicken or game, pastry, pies or any alimentary paste. In fact, the Captain-General and the Captains were forbidden to take on board either ovens or pie-dishes. Rations for the ‘Gente di Capo’ were not so rich. On fast days the seamen’s food consisted of pickled tunny or sardines or a thick soup. On the other days they were allowed salted meat, thick soup and cheese. When it was possible, cooking was carried out in the morning and the distribution of rations for the whole day was carried out once daily. These rations were calculated to cost the Order one carlino daily for each person making up a total of over fifteen scudi yearly expended on each man’s cooked rations, excluding ship’s biscuit and bread. The Order recognised the fact that the ciurma (or rowing element of the galley) was important for the fighting efficiency of the galleys and so wholesome food had to be given to the rowers, especially when the galleys were out on voyages pertaining to the Corso. Their rations included oil,
vinegar, refreshments of wine, cheese and a thick soup, called 'Caccavo' made up of ground grain. These rations were reckoned at one grano daily for each rower, including the cost of fresh vegetables which amounted to almost 12½ scudi monthly, but excluding the cost of bread and ship's biscuit.

Knights, seamen and rowers were also given their rations of bread when in port, or ship's biscuit when at sea. Each crew-member was allowed half a rotolo of ship's biscuit twice daily, at midday and in the evening. In 1604, these orders about ship's biscuit became applicable also to fresh bread distributed on the galleys. When in foreign harbours, any consignment of fresh bread for the galleys had to be signed by the Order's Receiver in that particular place. Each shipman was allowed four loaves, each weighing eight ounces.

In 1629 it was decided that fresh bread was to be distributed as follows: six loaves each for Knights and officers, five loaves each for artificers, technical officers, trumpeters and muskettiers, four loaves each for the remainder of the crew, including servants, soldiers and marines. Moreover, each galley Captain was allowed fifty loaves daily to be distributed to deserving soldiers and sailors. Each loaf was to weight ten ounces. The rowers were each allowed three loaves having a total weight of forty ounces. In 1639, a new arrangementment in bread distribution was made by which the galleys' complements were given an additional loaf on average.

Moreover, no good seaman neglects his machinery and so, when the opportune moment came, to put heart into the men, the Captain General would order the hoisting of a red pennant on the ensign staff, thus signalling an extra issue of wine to crew and rowers alike. The Riveditore (or, in his absence, the most senior among the Knights on Caravan,) was charged with seeing that the rowers' rations were actually given out. If they were withheld, a note of the days and the amounts in question was taken by the purser who had to present them to the Accounts Office on the return of the galleys to port. The amounts were then debited on the guilty Captain in favour of the rowers themselves.
Religious Welfare

Like all other Christian navies, including the French, Spanish, Venetian and Papal vessels, each galley had its own chaplain, oddly enough called Prior, whose duty it was to look after and attend to the religious ministrations of the particular galley to which he was assigned, his term of duty also being termed a "caravan", as was the case with his brother Knights. He was to be regarded, in fact, as the Parish Priest of all on board, including the Christian element of the ciurma, wherever the galley happened to be, at sea or in harbour. Various ordinances in the Chapters-General of the Order testify to the importance attached to the religious welfare of the galley-crews. All the galleys had to observe the usual devotions of the so-called messa secca, that is, a mass in which no consecration took place, salutations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist and all the other Saints, whilst Knights had to recite their obligatory prayers. Especially important was the observance of the ordinance imposing the obligation of confession and communion for Knights at the beginning of a caravan or a voyage.

On all Sundays and principal feast days, when the galleys were at Malta or in a Christian harbour, the Chaplains celebrated mass on land between the poop of the Capitana and the other galleys in conformity with a Brief of Pope Sixtus V of 1588. These feast days amounted to 29, of which only one did not have a fixed date in the religious calendar. The Captain-General had to decorate the altar which was to be covered by a canopy and made secure against bad weather. Moreover, the Blessed Sacrament had to be saluted either by acclamation or by sounding trumpets, whichever seemed better. This ordinance was amended in 1631 in a way that when the galleys were in a foreign port, mass was to be said every day by one Prior, according to seniority and by turn. When the galleys were at Malta, mass was to be celebrated only on Sundays and the principal feast days.

In the exercise of their duties, the Chaplains were charged with the confession of all the crew, including the seculars, the sick and the wounded. They had to communicate to the crew the principal feast days and prepare them
for the reception of Holy Communion and, in particular, they were to see that the Knights carried out their religious obligations. If their duties were not properly carried out, they had to answer to the Conventual Prior who was responsible for delegating to them the faculty of administering the sacraments and the power to hear confessions. Knights and novices were duty bound to confess and receive Holy Communion at least seven times a year, including Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Christmas Day and the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

According to the Brief of Pope Sixtus V of 1588, the Chaplains of the galleys were allowed to celebrate mass up to two hours before the day began if early sailing was deemed necessary. Every Chaplain could absolve all those who sailed on his galley, which had to carry a portable altar for the celebration of mass under shelter on the seashore and which was to be heard from the galleys. Moreover, on fast days, those on board were allowed to have their main meal in the evening and breakfast in the morning.

Throughout the day, the Prior was expected to carry out his religious duties. He was to start the day by the recitation of lauds, followed by the Messa Seccha. At daybreak, midday and evening he was to recite the Ave Maria and had to impart benediction at table. An important part of his duties was to take care of the sick, especially those who were very ill and in danger of death and to whom he had to impart the last rites and the viaticum. Moreover, the Chaplain was also enjoined to help dying men to draw up their last wills. This care of the sick was also one of the duties of Chaplains on board Venetian galleys, where they were expected to give food and medicines to sick persons and to report to their Captains any irregularities and the deaths which occurred. Of course, this was in addition to their pastoral work.

When a sick or wounded man died, the Prior had to give him a Christian burial. If the galleys were in port, burial was to be effected in a consecrated place, or in a grave dug for the purpose if the squadron was in an uninhabited place. When at sea, burial was effected in the sea but the Prior had to recite the prayers and perform the rites prescribed by the Roman Ritual at all burials, irrespective of where these were taking place. Another important duty was the instruction in the Catholic faith of all Muslims aboard who wanted to
apostasize, and the comforting and assisting of all dying infidels. 128

When the galleys encountered the enemy, it was the Prior's duty to encourage the men who were now facing death. If there was no time to confess everyone in need, the Prior would walk the whole length of the galley from stern to prow with his cross in hand and exhort everyone to have faith in Divine help, enjoin all to make the act of contrition and then impart a general absolution. At the beginning of the conflict, he gave a blessing and then retired below to give the necessary spiritual and temporal help to the wounded. 129

Perhaps, the part religion played on board the Order's galleys is best reflected in the votive offerings to various Maltese Churches, particularly to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces at Zabbar. Quite a number of these offerings have now disappeared but they are described in inventories still preserved in the Zabbar Parish Archives. Moreover, enough offerings still exist to amply show the religious fervour of the time. These offerings were made by seamen and Knights to show gratitude to Providence for victories obtained or, as in the case of the 1606 Cimbalo incident, for safely extricating themselves from what could easily have been a disaster of the first magnitude. 130

Medical Services

The galleys carried on board a great mass of men, 131 making it imperative that medical orderlies should be present to look after their health. Yet the construction of the galleys did not provide good sanitary conditions. Accommodation was cramped and although elementary hygienic measures were carried out, there still remained the grave problem of adequate living and sleeping space, a problem which was aggravated when the galleys took on board booty and prisoners. 132

Great attention was paid to the food distributed on board the galleys as has already been explained. This care about the wholesomeness of food is seen in a court case brought by Aloysio Farrugia of Qormi in 1643 who claimed that his family was still owed 13 scudi on the price of salted beef supplied to the Order's galleys in 1630. It was proved in court
however, that the meat in question was rotten, not fit for eating and had to be disposed of. Farrugia lost his case as the practice was not to pay anything if it was proved that supplies were uneatable. If anything, this case indicates the care taken with regard to the food bought and served in the squadron.\textsuperscript{133}

Other naval powers, such as Venice and Spain, used hospital ships.\textsuperscript{134} The Order did not conform to this practice but had medical officers in all the galleys, which were all furnished with a sick bay. Naturally, this was the medical officers' posting during action, to tend the wounded.\textsuperscript{135}

The Order engaged one physician for the whole galley squadron, though the number was increased to two in 1686.\textsuperscript{116} The physician's work started when the galleys were still in harbour. He had to report and visit all sick men, including those in the Holy Infirmary and in their own private homes. He naturally weeded out the malingerers and then, for the genuinely sick men, he issued certificates countersigned by the Captain concerned and the Riveditore. This was important or else these men were not paid their due allowances. Moreover, sick personnel in their homes had to be transferred to the Infirmary or else they also lost their allowances, even though they had already been certified unfit for duty.\textsuperscript{137}

At sea, the physician had to be transferred from the flagship to the other galleys to carry out his duties. His orders were carried out by the barbiere,\textsuperscript{138} who was a medical orderly found on board each galley and who, therefore, had charge of the sick bay and was responsible for his galley's medicine chest. Incidentally, each orderly was also the barber of his own particular galley. Expenses connected with illnesses and wounds were usually borne by the Order. The procedure was that the Re of the galley countersigned all medical expenses so that these would be refunded to the Captain by the Treasury.\textsuperscript{139}

The extent of the responsibilities of the Barbiere is shown by a case in 1616 when Francesco Giannello, the barbiere of the galley San Lorenzo, was found guilty of having caused the death of two slaves because he had accepted them on board his galley when they were not fit for work; he was ordered to pay the Treasury the price of the two slaves but was allowed to take the Barbiere of the slave prison to court.
for redress, if he so wished. This case seems to indicate that these so-called ‘barber-surgeons’ had, at least, some rudimentary medical knowledge and were superior in this respect to their counterparts on Venetian galleys who are reported to have had “no other ability except how to cut hair and beards”. Perhaps it was to attract more suitable persons that such medical orderlies on Spanish galleys started to be termed Cirjiano after 1587 in preference to the former appellation of barbero. The Order’s barber-surgeons were obliged to hand over weekly reports concerning the names and numbers of the sick together with an account of goods and medicinals expended. Barber-surgeons were not available on ships only but also ‘practised’ medicine ashore. It seems that “it was customary in Malta to call in the village barber to cure certain ailments, set broken bones and carry out dentistry services”. At the request of the Captain-General the physician had to furnish reports on the health conditions of the squadron; these reports were then submitted to the Venerable Council. One such example was the 1646 report on the sanitary conditions of the galleys of the Order on its voyage to Candia made out by the physician, Giuseppe del Cosso.

Naval Precedence

Perhaps as the result of the influx of Spanish customs especially in Italy, the fifteenth and the following centuries witnessed an excessive desire of pomp and pageantry, with various states and courts all trying to outdo each other. This rivalry was also reflected in the way naval squadrons of different states claimed pre-eminence and precedence over the others sparing no arguments (however trivial these may appear by our 20th century standards) to substantiate their claims. The Order of St. John was no exception to this line of thought: great attention was always paid to the way the Order’s representatives were treated. In naval matters, this attention was usually confined to the position the Order’s Capitana was assigned when the galleys of other states on joint campaigns against the Islamic States.

The Order of St. John always maintained that it was superior to Genoa, Tuscany, and Savoy, including also the
ships of the Order of Saint Stephen. The reasons for the Order's stand were many and included the fact that the squadron represented a Religious Republic — 'Religiosa Republica' — which existed for the exaltation of the name of Christ and to defend the Faith and not for mundane interests. Moreover, it was contended that the members of the Order represented not simply one city, or kingdom, or republic but "the noblest and most illustrious families of the world". Other reasons given included the fact that the Order had been instituted for hundreds of years and enjoyed ecclesiastical privileges. Moreover, the position of Grand Master was considered equal to the Cardinalate, which was second to the Pope. In their eyes, therefore, this fact placed the Grand Master in a more exalted position than a Duke, who was regarded as only fifth in precedence.

To substantiate these theoretical claims, the Order then looked for concrete precedents of which, it seems, there was a great number. Giacomo Bosio continually lists and emphasises the honourable position given to the Order's Capitana at Coron in 1532, at Tunis in 1535, and at Algiers in 1541 in which the flagship was always placed on the exact left of the Commander-in-chief's vessel, the right being reserved for the Capitana of the Papal squadron. At Prevesa in 1538, at the 'Citta d'Africa' in 1550, and at the attack on the Penon in 1563, the Order's Capitana was accorded the right flank of the commander's Reale. In 1563, the squadrons of Malta, Savoy and Genoa combined to cruise in the Levant, and it was decided to give overall command to the Captain-General of the Order in his Capitana. In a further attack on the Penon, the Order's galley was placed on the left, ceding the more honorific right to the Capitana of the king of Portugal. At Lepanto in 1571, the Order's galley was accorded the extreme right but the Commander-in-chief, Don John of Austria, declared that this was not to be taken as a precedent, a declaration echoed by a Papal Brief of Pius V. In 1574, when the Order's squadron went to Palermo to join forces with other squadrons under Don John of Austria, the Capitana of Genoa was berthed on the right of Don John's Reale. The Genoese were obliged to relinquish their berth in favour of the Religion's Capitana.

If one even ignores the claims on which precedence was based, the fact that the number of precedents favouring the
Order in the 16th century are many stands out clearly. There was never any question of claiming precedence over kings, the Pope and even Venice but the Knights seem to have been successful in the main in being declared pre-eminent to the Italian dukedoms. In 1538, they were accorded a better placing than the Viceroy of Sicily in his Capitana 154 and in 1563, it was the Savoyards and Genoese themselves who placed the command of the combined three Squadrons under the Religion's Captain-General. 155 The not too exalted placing accepted at Lepanto may be interpreted as one of need in order to preserve the unity of the Christian fleet which, on other occasions, was actually rent asunder because of squabbles on precedence. No wonder that, basing on the previous century, the Order continued on the same lines in the seventeenth century. Such a mentality may be regarded as the fruit of "ridiculous ambitions" 156 but the fact remains that such ambitions were considered important enough to justify the breaking-up of various naval coalitions. In 1606, a concentration of galleys at Messina achieved nothing because the Order's galleys returned to Malta after being denied precedence over the Genoese who, in their turn, stayed away because they wanted precedence over the Papal squadron which was only commanded by its Lieutenant Commander. 157 These disputes, especially between Malta and Genoa, continued and in 1620, Prince Filiberto of Savoy, in order to carry out an attack on Susa, was obliged to get rid of the Genoese from Messina because their leader, Gian Francesco Imperiali, had declared that they would not fight unless Genoa was granted precedence over the galleys of Malta. 158 This dispute was finally decided in 1622 when the King of Spain decided in favour of the Order, 159 a step perhaps influenced by the part played by the Order's galleon in the attack on Huguenot La Rochelle. 160 Pope Gregory XV agreed with and endorsed this line of action. 161 In 1634, the Capitana of the Order was given the right flank in preference to the Sicilian and Genoese flagships by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, an action which the Order transformed into a public record and registered in the Chancery records. 162 One can here end by noting that, on the outbreak of the War of Candia (Crete) in 1645, in the first campaign, the Papal flagship was assigned the middle placing, flanked on the right and left by the Venetian Reale and
Order's Capitana respectively, while the Tuscans were assigned the extreme right wing of the battle plan. What has been written above is concerned primarily about the way a normal cruise was undertaken including aspects of life aboard the galleys. The period under consideration was 1596-1645, a time devoid of large-scale campaigns. So such a cruise is supposedly taken by the Order's squadron on its own, though the Order's seniority in Christian ranks is also placed on record.

At sea, the Order's galley squadron carried out its functions like any other Mediterranean Christian squadron. Galley warfare was formal and everyone knew what to except, though the squabbles about seniority in Christian ranks helped no one except, perhaps, the Muslims against whom such joint expeditions were organised.

Since the Order was military, religious, and hospitalier, care was taken to ensure that 'efficiency' in these three branches of duty was maintained. Military efficiency at sea was secured through officials whose work was supervision of stores, war material and the like. Councils-at-sea helped to check imprudent Captains whilst naval ordinations made sure that all knew what was expected of them. The religious aspect was never neglected either at sea or on land. Each galley was provided with a Chaplain who was expected to help and encourage the living, comfort the dying, bury the dead, and help convert the infidel. Medical treatment also had its share: care was taken to ensure against contagious diseases, not least by ensuring that the food rations provided militated against such outbreaks. Treatment was provided for the wounded and the sick, and for this purpose medical orderlies were present on all galleys. When the galleys returned to base, precautions were taken to ensure that quarantine regulations were properly carried out.

One fact stands out clearly, namely, that the organisation of the Order's galley squadron reflected current practice and organisation in the Western Mediterranean. Points of similarity are many whilst differences are negligible, and these occur mainly when the Knights' vessels are compared with the Venetian navy rather than with Spanish or Papal squad-
rons. It was the organisation of their squadron which enabled the Knights to fit out their vessels year after year to engage in the ‘Holy War’ against the Crescent. With their limited resources, the Knights were hard pressed even to defend their base properly and to ensure regular food supplies for the Maltese islands, and it is to the credit of their squadron and its land-based organisation that a certain amount of limited law and order could be imposed in the narrows between the Eastern and Western basins of the Mediterranean.

NOTES:

2 Archieves of the Order in Malta 449-465, Libri Bullarum, passim, wherein are contained the orders issued to the Captains-General under the section entitled Salveconductus et altres scripturas. See also Anderson R. C., Naval Wars in the Levant 1559-1853 (Liverpool, 1952), which contains a useful account of these wars.

3 AOM 449-465 Libri Bullarum, passim.

4 An example of instructions given to Captain-General Fra Ferdinando Ruyz de Corral for a scouting cruise to Barbary waters is found in AOM 452, f.235 r, dated 5th June 1599.

5 AOM 293, Ch(apter) G(eneral) 1598, f.104 r, Ord(inatione) 11 Ga­lere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 r, Ord. 22 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.141 r, Ord. 33 Galere; AOM 108, f.112 r, dated 2nd August, 1625.

6 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.104 r, Ord. 12 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 r, Ord. 23 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.141 r, Ord. 34 Galere.

7 National Library of Malta 110, ff.3 r-v and 11 r. This manuscript is a signals book entitled Ordini e Segni Navali delle Galere copied in 1719 by Chev. Carlo Maria Olgiati from an earlier document by his kinsman Camillo Antonio Olgiati who had been received in the Order in 1691. Cf. AOM 2166, p. 264. An English translation by Captain Eric Broskman CBE, RN, is now available and has been published in A(nnales de l'O(rdre) S(ouverain Militaire de) M(alte), July-December 1973, Nos. 3/4, pp. 66-79, entitled “The Signal Code of the Galleys of Malta”. The main lines of the preamble preceding the translation had first appeared entitled “Two Signal Books of the Order”, S(unday) T(imes) O(f) M(alta), dated 1st April 1973. That signals were also used by other nations is shown by Nani Mocenigo M., Storia della Marina Veneziana da Lepanto alla Caduta della Republica, (Rome, 1935), pp. 56-7, who says that flags, buoies, smoke signals etc were used both as day and night signals. Bamford P. W., Fighting Ships and Prisons, (Minnesota, 1973), p. 106, states that by the early 1690’s, in the French galley corps, “special maneuvers were prescribed for combat situations, others for bad weather, and so on.” In fact, Guilmartin Jnr. J. F., Gunpowder and Galleys, (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 202-3, asserts that as early as “the beginning of the sixteenth century Mediterranean naval commanders could exercise a considerable degree of control over galley fleets through a comprehensive set of standing operating instruction supplemented by a system of sail, flag, cannon, trumpet and lantern signals.” Guilmartin also mentions two sets of sailing instructions which are dated 1430 and 1564.
Similarly, in the French galley corps, "the position of each galley was determined by the seniority of its commanding officer." Cf. Bamford P.W., *op. cit.*, p. 106. 

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106, Ord. 35, 36 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120, Ord. 47, 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.143 r-v, Ord. 57, 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.105 r, Ord. 20 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118, Ord. 30 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.142 r, Ord. 41 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.108, Ord. 65, 66, 67, 68 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.122, Ord. 80, 81, 82 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff. 145 v-146 r, Ord. 90, 91, 92 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.105 r, Ord. 21 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118, Ord. 30 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.142 r, Ord. 41 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.105 r, Ord. 20 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 v, Ord. 30 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.142 r, Ord. 41 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57

AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.

On the galleys' return from the Levant, there were fears that they might be possible carriers of disease. These fears were unfounded.
9th May 1586. AOM 96, f.48 v; AOM 1759, f.143 v; both dated 18th May 1582.

71 AOM 108, f.112 v; AOM 223, f.12 r; AOM 224, f. 311 r; AOM 226, f.26 r; all dated 2nd August 1625.

72 AOM 226, f.26 r; AOM 257, f.49 r; both dated 12th April 1640. AOM 257, f.193 v, dated 7th January 1645.

73 AOM 226, f.3 r; AOM 433, f.251 r; both dated 6th September 1570.

74 AOM 117, f.165 r; AOM 220, f.199 r; both dated 30th January 1652.

75 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.88 v, Ord. 7 and 8 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, ff.116 v, Ord. 9 and 10 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.139 v, Ord. 19 and 20 Galere.

76 Ibid., Ord. 9, 11 and 11 respectively.

77 Ibid., Ord. 10, 12 and 12 respectively.

78 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.89 r; AOM 226, f.26 r; AOM 257, f.49 r; both dated 12th April 1640. AOM 257, f.193 v, dated 7th January 1645.

79 AOM 1759, f.381 r; AOM 1760, f.329 r; both dated 17th April 1598.

80 Ibid., AOM 100, f.111 v; all dated 29th March 1599.

81 AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.121 v, Ord. 67 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.144 r, Ord. 71 Galere.

82 Ibid.

83 AOM 1759, f.381 v; AOM 1760, f.392 v; both dated 8th November 1663.

84 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.109 r, Ord. 71 and 72 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.123 r, Ord. 86 and 87 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.146 r, Ord. 96 and 97 Galere.

85 NLM 1463, Vol. 1, ff.17. v-18 v.

86 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 r, Ord. 33, 34 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.119 v-120 r, Ord. 43, 44 Galere AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.42 v-143 r, Ord. 53, 54 Galere.


88 Statuti S(acra) R(eligione) G(erosolimitano) (Borgo Novo, 1676), p. 226, Statuto 38 Delle Proibitione e delle Pene, entitled "Delle Pene che sono proposte a coloro che provocano e accettano i Duelli", passed under Grand Master La Cassiere (1572-81). The same penalties were confirmed in subsequent Chapters-General. Cf. AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.84 v, Ord. 1; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.132 r, Ord. 5 De Prohibitionibus et Paenis. Periodically, further confirmation emanated from the Venerable Council. Cf. AOM 109, f.232 v dated 31st October 1629; AOM 222, f.163 r; AOM 224, f. 63 r; AOM 110, f. 262 r-v; all dated 9th August 1633.

89 AOM 100, f.225 r-226 r; AOM 1759, f.188 v; AOM 1760, f.183 r-v; dated 2nd and 7th May 1602.

90 AOM 103, f.84 v, dated 7th July 1609.

91 AOM100, f.225 r-226 r; AOM 1759, f.188 v; AOM 1760, f.183 r-v; the men in question were three Knights and three servants-at-arms:— Maiolinus Georginus, Bernardus Vechetti, Alphonus de Dura, Joannes de Paola, Paulus Raimus, and Alexander de Jacovone. This penalty was imposed by Ordinances passed by the Chapter-General. Cf. AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.84 v, Ord. 1; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.111 v, Ord. 11; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631 f.133 v, Ord. 13; all under "De Prohibitionibus et Paenis."

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92 AOM 1759, ff.192 r-v; AOM 1760, ff. 186 r-187 r; dated 23rd October 1634, 23rd October 1641 and 21st February 1642. It is significant to note that on 25th October 1634, Calerario was replaced as Riveditore by Fra Don Nicolo Ximenes. Cf. AOM 6430, f145 r.

93 AOM 100, f.225 r, dated 2nd May 1602.

94 AOM 100, f.225 r, dated 2nd May 1602.

95 AOM 101, f.73 r; AOM 224, f.312 r; dated 2nd September 1604.

96 AOM 110, ff.150 r-151 r, dated 11th March 1632. French galleys usually embarked a two-month supply of victuals, weighing about fifty tons in all. Cf. Bamford P. W., op. cit., p. 35.

97 AOM 110, f.150 r, dated 11th March 1632.

98 AOM 255-258, 449-465, 467, 469, 470, passim.

99 AOM 108, f.107 r, dated 16th July 1625.

100 AOM 256, ff.70v-71 r, dated 30th July 1627.

101 AOM 110, ff.150 r-151 r, dated 11th March 1632.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 AOM 737, f.88 r, dated 20th July 1637; AOM 738, f.2 v, dated 27th July 1644.

105 AOM 110, ff.150 r-v, dated 11th March 1632. On French galleys, the rowers’ official allowance consisted of two pounds of bread or sea biscuit a day with bean soup, oil (or lard), salt, and sometimes a little wine. Cf. Bamford P. W., op. cit., p. 203.

106 AOM 737, f.87 r, dated 20th July 1637; AOM 738, f.3 r, dated 27th July 1644.

107 AOM 101, ff.72 r-75 r, dated 2nd September 1604. AOM 108, ff.111 v-113 r, dated 2nd August 1625.

108 AOM 664, ff.161 r-162 r, dated 21st April 1629. AOM 109, ff.188 r-189 r, dated 30th April 1629.

109 AOM 1759, f.173 v; AOM 1760, ff.168 v-169 r; both dated 30th November 1631.

110 AOM 110, ff.182 r-v; AOM 222, ff.188 r; AOM 225, f.20 v; all dated 28th June 1632.

111 AOM 257, ff.37 r-37 v, dated 14th September 1639.

112 NLM 110, f.8 v.

113 AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.145 r, Ord. 84 Galere.


115 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.103 r, Ord. 3 & 4 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 r, Ord. 15 & 16 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.140 r-v, Ord. 26 & 27 Galere.

116 NLM 211, pp. 1-3.

117 AOM 293, Ch. G. 1598, ff.102 v-103 r, Ord. 1 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.115 v, Ord. 3 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.139 v-140 r, Ord. 24 Galere.

118 Ibid., Ord. 2, 4, and 25 respectively.

119 NLM 211, pp. 282-3.

120 Ibid.

121 AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.139 r, Ord. 12 Galere.

122 NLM 211, p 350.

123 NLM 271, Cap. XX, p. 238, No. C. NLM 211; p. 48.

124 NLM 211, pp. 252-3. The other feast days were First Sunday of Quaresima, the Assumption of the B. Virgin, All Saints’ Day and, after 1676, the Conception of the B. Virgin.
125 AOM 97, ff.155 v-156 r; AOM 220, f.211 r; AOM 225, f. 195 v; AOM 1759, ff.88 r-v; AOM 1760, f.74 r; all dated 17th December 1588. NLM 211, pp. 407-8. The Papal Brief is dated 15th October 1588.

127 Nani Mocenigo M., op. cit., p. 31.
128 NLM 211, pp. 357, 367-374.
129 Ibid., pp. 393-5.
130 Zarb J., Zabbar Sanctuary and the Knights of St. John, (Malta, 1969), passim, especially pp. 37-57. The votive paintings and other offerings still in existence can still be viewed at the Zabbar Sanctuary Museum.
131 Refer to Libro dei Contratti del Tesoro, AOM 737, f.87 r, dated 20th July 1637. The Capitana and each private galley carried 564 and 443 men respectively, these figures comprising solely the 'huomini di capo' and the rowers. The numbers increase greatly if one were to add the Knights, officers, servants, etc.
132 Cassar P., Medical History of Malta, (London, 1964), p. 120.
133 Archives of the S(uperior) C(ourts of Justice, M(agna) C(uria) C(astellaniae), Officium V(enerandae) S(eniscalliae), Vol. 2, case dated 10th July 1843/8th October 1843, Don Aloysio Farrugia vs. Thomaso Scattaretic, designated as 'Mastro Sala in Galera'.
135 Cassar P., op. cit., p. 128.
136 AOM 1759, f.386 r; AOM 1760, f.341 r; dated 9th January 1686; Cassar P., op. cit., pp. 125-6.
138 AOM 101, fff.72-75 r, dated 2nd September 1604; AOM 109, ff.95 v-96 v, dated 10th March 1628. In the lists of offices of men serving on board the galleys, the only medical officers mentioned are the 'barbieri' and the 'barberotti' who helped the former. Cf. Cassar P., op. cit., p. 126.
139 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.107 v, Ord. 53 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.121 v, Ord. 66 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.144 v, Ord. 76 Galere; AOM 737, f.93 v, dated 20th July 1637. The Re was the senior caravanist on board.
140 AOM 663, f.282 v, dated 10th June 1616.
141 Nani Mocenigo M., op. cit., p. 31, footnote no. 3: "non havevano altra abilità che quella di saper radere i capelli e la barba."
142 Guilmartin J. F., op. cit., p. 293.
143 NLM 676, ff.31 r-32 r.
145 AOM 1769, ff.186 r-187 r, dated 13th October 1648.
147 NLM 118, Miscellanea Gerosolimitana, p. 179 sqq.
148 Bosio G., op. cit. III pp. 115, 152, 203 respectively.
149 Ibid., pp. 177-8, 267, 464 respectively.
150 Ibid., p. 467.
151 Ibid., p. 482.
152 Dal Pozzo B., op. cit., I, pp. 15-17. Don John of Austria's declaration is dated 17th September 1571 and the Papal Brief bears the date of 22nd September 1571, that is, before the actual battle took place.
153 Dal Pozzo B., op. cit., I, p. 79.
154 Bosio G., op. cit., III, pp. 177-8.
155 Ibid., p. 467.

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In his memoirs on the war in Burma, Lord Mountbatten recalled the trick used by Major-General Frank Messervy to exchange radio-telephone messages without having them intercepted by the enemy.

Messervy chose two British officers who had learnt French by the methods which are traditional in British schools. They understood each other reasonably well in French, but, declares Mountbatten, “they really spoke it so badly that they could not have been understood by the French let alone the Japanese! They were entirely successful.”

Paris Match.
A REIGN OF AUSTERITY:
ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES DURING THE RULE OF
GRAND MASTER XIMENES (1773-1775)

In this article, which is part of his B.A.(Hons.)
thesis, PETER FAVA* looks at some of the grave
problems faced by Grand Master Ximenes in the mid-
1770s, an administration that was not exactly the
embodiment of good government in any sense.

Signs of the decadence that for many years had been
eroding the moral political and economic foundations of the
Order of St. John of Jerusalem became more pronounced
by mid-seventeenth century. In the following century Grand
Master Pinto's misgovernment, if anything, helped accelerate
the rate of decline. Parallel to this one must also consider
another important factor — one which seriously questioned
the Order's very existence in the centre of the Mediterra-
nean: the growing international indifference towards the
Order's role as the bulwark of Christendom in direct propor-
tion to the ever increasing interest and appreciation (especi-
ally European) of the absolute strategic importance of the
Maltese Archipelago. This problem must have preoccupied
the Order, more so, as there was little or nothing it could do
about it. Indeed, late in Pinto's reign, many were the affronts
to the Order's flag at sea and violations of the Order's privi-
leges on land: clear indications to the fact that the Order had
lost much in power and prestige.

Economically Pinto had been making both ends meet

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by raising loans, and the Treasury was barely managing to
avoid deficits. Nevertheless, a debt of 400,000 scudi against
the Maltese Commune was honoured. Deficits from 1770 to
1773 amounted to about a quarter million scudi, while the
Maltese Commune was bankrupt. Pinto's successor faced a
formidable task to re-establish the Order's finances and the
Massa Frumentaria on a sound footing. The Commune re-
quired a new financial set-up and a commission of four
Maltese deputies was appointed immediately on Ximenes' 
election to draw up an advisory report. The commissioners
discovered that Pinto had appropriated 293,000 scudi; that
the Commune's officials and clients had overdrawn 234,000
scudi; and that 66,000 scudi, and perhaps much more, were
unaccounted for. The Massa Frumentaria, however, began
running into difficulties before Pinto's meddling. In 1728,
Grand Master de Vilhena had appropriated its funds to
finance the building of his palace at Mdina and the repairs
to the old city's fortifications. Successive Grand Masters had
followed suit, and by 1741 the sum thus appropriated had
reached almost half a million scudi. During Pinto's rule
the debts incurred were astronomical: public officials, who
were aware of the Commune's position, would not divulge it.
Consequently, the Massa Frumentaria rarely had any cash
in hand to make the usual wheat purchases from Sicily. The
reason was that loans were unsecured and could not be
recovered at will. Out-of-season purchases had to be made
at prohibitive prices or not made at all and the annual
sizeable trafte (the special reduced tariff quota of grain
conded to the Maltese Commune and the Order from Sicily)
of 20,000 salms were at times forfeited.

On 28th January 1773, the rich Grand Prior of Navarre,
Francesco Ximenes de Texada, succeeded Pinto. Ximenes had
been one of the Order's financial administrators; he had
occupied the post of Seneschal or president of the Maltese
Commune. Ximenes had also been a commissioner investi-
gating magisterial debts. Consequently on his election,
Ximenes must have been fully aware that the Order faced
economic, financial and moral collapse. An extensive reform
plan was required to offset the danger.

One of Ximenes' election promises was that he would
supply the market-squares with foodstuffs. There was an
acute grain shortage during Pinto's last year, mainly because
he had arbitrarily borrowed the \textit{Massa Frumentaria}'s funds earmarked for wheat purchases. In fact the food shortage had become so acute that the Commune had to resort to buying wheat from grainships which happened to be in port. As its money was tied up with the commission agents in Sicily, the Commune incurred large debts against the Order's Treasury in order to pay for these extraordinary purchases. Ximenes could have wound up the \textit{Massa Frumentaria}, but the Maltese commercial community would have been adversely affected, and many concerns would have collapsed. Yet some observers believed that Ximenes' attempt to save the Maltese Commune was ulteriorly motivated in that the \textit{Massa Frumentaria} would then honour its debts towards the Order's Treasury.

Ximenes' immediate problem was to import wheat. Within two days of his election he sanctioned the importation of the essential commodity aboard foreign vessels, thereby removing the legal obstacle to merchants in their having to charter Maltese vessels. The Grand Master also commissioned the Order's agents in Sicily to purchase foodstuffs from state granaries. The Sicilian authorities seemed, however, reluctant to abide by their contractual obligations, for Sicily had little grain to export due to crew failures in 1772 and others forecasted for the 1773 season. Yet somehow some merchants still received preferential treatment. Under the circumstances, the Commune sought grain markets elsewhere and importations were quickly effected from Puglia, the Marches and other distant places to avert the impending famine.

These efforts offered only a short respite for the provisioning of the Island required long-term planning, which had been notoriously lacking. This problem was to plague Ximenes throughout his short reign. Moreover the people had assumed that as soon as Ximenes was in government, he would also lower the price of grain. Ximenes, however, soon realised that election promises could not be implemented overnight. In fact, he drew up a list of priorities: primarily, that of stocking the Floriana and Valetta granaries, without creating an artificial shortage; and secondly, that of imposing a minimum sale-price of grain, allowing the \textit{Massa Frumentaria} a substantial profit margin so that the Commune would obtain cash flow and start repaying its
debts. If these measures were successful, the price of grain could be reduced. Ximenes began to implement his new policies by decreeing an increase in the price of grain.

As the Order itself faced grave economic problems Ximenes thought of reducing state expenditure. Carnival festivities were curtailed and free refreshments were limited. Treasury and palace officials were no longer exempted from payment of postage dues because the postal service ran a loss of 13,800 scudi. The customary Embassy of Obedience to the Pope made by a special envoy of the newly-elected Grand Master was to be made in a non-pompous manner by the Order's resident ambassador to Rome. Yet, notwithstanding ambassador de Breteuil's frugality, he failed to stay within Ximenes' 1,000 scudi allowance and he demanded the reimbursement of 600 scudi. Ximenes also withheld from de Breteuil an annual 500 scudi grant which de Breteuil used to spend on gifts addressed to the Vatican Secretary of State and other influential officials, who lobbied with the Pope to consider favourably the Order's grievances. The ambassador was, however, prepared to pay for the gifts himself rather than alienate the goodwill of these friends.

When Pope Clement XIV wanted to present the Grand Master with the Estoch and Pilier, Ximenes asked for a postponement to avoid further ceremonial expenses. As is often the case the unhealthy economic situation soon triggered a crime wave. The authorities were understandably quite concerned and the Notabile Università appointed a mayor, a jurat and a catapan to bring criminals to book. Malta was divided into nine districts and the three officials were appointed in each. These officials were also authorised to inspect public houses, inns, the prices of foodstuffs, of wine and of cotton, to check whether these were in line with the Commune's regulations. Retailers could be arrested for presenting bad quality goods on the market. Nothwithstanding such measures the people were generally dissatisfied. To make matters worse, a rumour was gaining ground that the government intended to raise the price of grain again, when for several months now the populace had expected a reverse measure. The prohibition of hare-snaering, decreed on 14th February 1773, had created great resenting among peasants, who feared that hares would destroy their crops. This prohibition, moreover, instigated a bitter
church-state controversy. The clergy had expected to be exempted from the prohibition, by virtue of the privilege they enjoyed of exemption from secular jurisdiction. After several incidents involving priests and the Grand Master's game-wardens, Ximenes succumbed to pressure and the clergy had their way, as long as they did not trespass the demarcated reserved areas. The Bishop, Mgr. Pellerano, had maintained all along that priests had as much right to go hunting as knights. Yet estrangement and mutual mistrust among the ecclesiastical and civil bodies set in. The peasants had to do without hare-meat until August 1773, when the government intended to withdraw he sanctions. But, resentment against the law, however temporary its nature, was augmented by the fact that agricultural products were inexplicably selling at a higher price in the villages than in the towns.

In the meantime Ximenes' economic policies with regards to the Maltese Commune and the Order's Treasury did not have the desired effect during the first six months of his reign. He, therefore, decided to tighten the belt further. When the Commune's overdraft with the Order's Conservatoria and the Camera di Pagamento reached 200,000 scudi, Ximenes halted more advances. He also appointed a commission to look into the Commune's finance and to suggest economies. This Commission reported that administrative and charitable expenses could be cut down and salaries reduced. As regards the Order, certain administrative posts had to be abolished, while salaries and the hospital's budget had to be reduced. The Università degli studi had to forfeit its government grant of 2,000 scudi, which entailed the dismissal of expatriate professors with effect from 1st October 1773 and the retention of the lesser qualified Maltese teaching staff members with an annual salary of 160 scudi each.

Still the Maltese Commune showed no signs of recovery and to make matters worse wheat was again scarce. A food riot seemed imminent and the Order immediately took steps to deter rebellion. Sentries for the night-watch at the Valletta gates were doubled, the Grand Master's palace guards were increased and the city-streets were patrolled at night. Soon, when mysterious night-time fire signals were attributed to the insurgents, a detachment of guards was posted at Portes-des-Bombes to arrest suspicious looking persons pass-
ing through. Peasants were prohibited from entering Valletta before 6 a.m. and their weapons were sequestrated. When Ximenes insisted on raising the price of grain to eighteen tari per tumolo members of the Order's council opposed this provocation and the Grand Master withdrew the edict. 42

Events in Sicily forced Ximenes to moderate his austere policies. 43 The Palermitans had rioted because of grain shortages and the Viceroy chose to flee to loyal Messina. Grain exports to Malta were withheld, notwithstanding the Sicilian contractual obligations towards the Island and that these were already paid for. 45 Ferment in the Maltese countryside continued to spread as a result and Ximenes had to be more sensitive to popular discontent. 46 He soon abolished for a two-year period the state monopoly on the importation of foodstuffs, but the goods would still have to be sold to the Commune at negotiated prices. 47 Further, he declared Malta a free-port zone with the exception of commerce in grain and wine. 48 Although these measures were intended to free the island from its endemic shortages of foodstuffs, in fact, no solution to this problem had been found and Ximenes resorted to the repeal of the hare-hunting law from the 3rd November to the 12th December 1773 49, yet simultaneously forbidding the presentation to him of the people's grievances for November. 50 The hunting season was extended to the end of December for the food supply had not improved, but as from 3rd January 1774, harsher penalties were enacted in the new game-law. Popular discontent was quite obvious and the authorities imposed a general disarmament 41, thereby eliminating the threat of an armed uprising. Nevertheless, anonymous satirical pamphlets, circulated clandestinely, criticised Ximenes' policy regarding the problem of shortages. 42

Beside grain, wine also became scarce and costly, especially when the sale of wine from the Auberges for outside consumption was prohibited. 53 No step were, however, taken to import the essential commodity. The shortage persisted for four months when in February 1774 large consignments were bought from vessels which chanced to call at Malta. 44

By the first year since Ximenes became Grand Master, the situation had deteriorated rather than improved. Inflation was rife and prices kept rising unchecked, especially those
of meat, oil, wine and bread. A meat shortage was solved but only temporarily and in a most highhanded fashion, when Ximenes ordered the slaughter of oxen, belonging to peasants, who naturally protested vociferously yet without success.

The Maltese Commune on the other hand was still vexed with impending bankruptcy and the financial administrators now had to set a deadline for the settlement of overdrafts with interests. The Milizia Urbana was disbanded thus saving the Commune 60,000 scudi annually. Ximenes donated the Commune 30,000 scudi to mark his first anniversary as Grand Master although no festivities commemorated this occasion. The Order also made some savings: repair work on Valletta streets was halted, and the free distribution of medicines was discontinued. The Order, however, increased its monthly contribution to the House of Poor Women for this could no longer meet the heavy demand for assistance. Notwithstanding these well-intentioned measures ferment was still spreading, mainly because Ximenes had failed to implement his election pledges. Stop-gap measures contradicted the government's declarations that it envisaged a long-term policy. A short respite in the grain-shortage problem was obtained in December 1773, but the overall position had not improved. Four months after Malta had become a free-port zone, foodstuffs had remained scarce. In fact, merchants had no more success than the Order when seeking wheat purchases from Sicily. As the situation deteriorated, Ximenes gambled on cultivating direct trade relations via French and vessels of other nationalities with North African ports, which were prepared to sell oil, wheat, foodstuffs and livestock in return for wood, nails and iron. Papal sanction to waive the Order's statutes was sought merely as a matter of courtesy.

The price of wheat could not, however, remain the same when the local grain stocks had dwindled. The Commune's officials and the Grand Master conferred three times before deciding to raise the price from 20 to 25 scudi per salma. Ximenes obviously intended to safeguard the Commune's interests rather than those of the people on whom its effect was devastating:
da gran tempo d'avece peicorso di ben più anni, comprato sempre a tar1 qufdici if tummino iI Frumento, ed a caro costo ogn'altro commestibile, null'altro desideravano dall' amato Sovrano cotanto da esse applaudito nella di lui elezione se nonche un qualche sollievo alle loro miserie."

This price increase did not solve the shortage problem, which became critical when a total ban on Sicilian grain exports came into effect and famine was only averted when Ximenes made purchases from grainships which "Divine Providence chanced to be in port", irrespective of cost. Soon Ximenes' free-trade policy began to pay dividends: three vessels laden with oil arrived from Messina; three grainships came from Ancona; five from France and three from Tunis. These new supplies were, however, not regular and a definite regular supply had still to be secured. In fact, these stocks were quickly exhausted while the debt-ridden Massa Frumentaria had its cash money tied up in Sicily for eventual purchases, which could not be made because of the export ban on state-owned grain. Until the political situation in Sicily was stabilised and royal authority was enforced, no definite arrangement regarding the Maltese grain-rights could be re-established. Under the circumstances, Ximenes advised the Order's agents in Sicily to exchange these rights for the costlier privately-owned grain so that quick shipments could be effected. But grain for export was difficult to come by in Sicily and the little found was exhorbitantly priced. Yet a Maltese agent obtained an export licence for 1000 salme of state-owned grain from Girgenti. Notwithstanding the Maltese rights, the agent was forced to pay the export tax when other foreign merchants had obtained theirs duty-free. This injustice was greater because the Maltese Commune had been deprived of availing itself of its preferential tariffs throughout 1773. To add insult to injury, the Girgenti authorities reclaimed 600 salme as Girgenti had run short on grain.

Ximenes felt that these obstacles could only be surmounted through diplomatic pressure at the Neapolitan court. Though previous protests had been upheld in Naples and the Order had been authorised to obtain 3000 salme of state-owned grain and 3000 salme of privately-owned grain, the Sicilians were reluctant to fulfill their obligations with regard to the state-owned grain. The Order's Minister
Plenipotentiary in Naples was asked to insist with King Ferdinand III that the Sicilian authorities would not prevent the Maltese Commune from exercising its rights to preferential tariffs on exports from the Sicilian state-owned granaries. The King had to be made aware that the Order could not accept this unilateral abrogation of the Maltese rights and threatened to take steps to prevent famine in Malta. Talks between the Maltese envoy Pignatelli and the Neapolitan chief minister Tanucci would have to be short and conclusive, for Ximenes suspected that Tanucci was playing a double role. To counter Tanucci's argument that the Sicilians could not honour fully Malta's annual right to 26,000 salme of grain at preferential export tariffs, Pignatelli would have to quote from the 1749 tariff agreement between the King of Spain and the Order granting Malta at least 20,000 salme. 

This diplomatic haggling was not going to feed the Maltese and grain purchases were sought from Ancona. Some 541 rubbia of Austrian grain were shipped to Malta, but these were of a bad quality. The Pope was willing to sell the Order 2,000 rubbia from the papal granaries. Ambassador de Breteuil promised Grand Master Ximenes that the Roman grain would better and cheaper than that from the Marches. Meanwhile, the Sicilian ban was lifted.

The grain flow into Malta improved considerably in the later half of 1774. Substantial quantities were imported from Sicily. Grain was also bought quite cheaply from Algiers. The impasse with the Sicilian authorities was overcome when Ferdinand III upheld and reaffirmed the 1749 agreement. After further representations from Pignatelli, "His Majesty had graciously deigned to issue an order in Sicily so that the Order's galleys be given any provisions they would require when Malta would face a shortage of foodstuffs."

The improvement in the grain supply raised hopes among the people that the price would be reduced to an acceptable level. The people were, however, deluded and discontent at Ximenes' intransigence was obvious in a graffiti daubed on the Grand Master's palace walls. The slogan read: "Poveri Maltesi, in che miserie vi ha portato questo Gran Maestro." More rebellious feelings were expressed on a loose leaf of paper left in a Valletta street with an open threat that Ximenes would soon face a "Sicilian Vespers."

Political stability on the Island was again being threat-
ened with the resurgence of the politico-religious conflict. The January 1774 ban on hunting was at the root of the problem, because the Bishop had permitted, without prior authority from the Grand Master, his master-mason and some priests to go hare-huning. The Bishops contended that the hares were causing extensive damage to the fields of his tenants. 92 These hares had been purposely let loose by Ximenes in order of let them breed to the extent of becoming a cheap supply of meat to the peasants. The problem could not be solved easily for both personalities remained steadfast and they even exchanged gestures of disrespect in public. 93

Incidents involving the game-wardens, priests and the Bishop's exempts were on the increase. 94 It was the Inquisitor's opinion that the disorders were mainly due to a few hot-headed ecclesiastics, who, with episcopal backing, took sport in causing disturbances. 95 Several other petty incidents widened the division between the secular and ecclesiastical bodies. 96 The arrest and beating on board an Order's galley of a Bishop's manservant, 97 the arrest by the Bishop's police of the Order's soldiers who had beaten the manservant, 98 the breaking down of the Bishop's prison gates by knights who freed these soldiers, 99 the rumour that some knights intended to assault the Bishop's palace 100 and the fleeing of the Bishop incognito from Valletta to Mdina, 101 brought matters to a head.

The Maltese clergy were so alarmed at the gross disrespect shown towards the Bishop and ecclesiastical immunity that they made a public demonstration en masse in support of the Bishop at the Cathedral Square in Mdina, where they solicited in a Pro Memoria the immediate convocation of the Chapter General to discuss the situation. 102

The Grand Master, the Inquisitor and the Bishop reported the case to Rome and the Pope reproached the Bishop's handling of the affair and his provocative stance taken on the hunting laws. The Bishop was suspended and called to Rome to answer for his actions. 103

Before the Bishop's trip to Rome, however, another grave incident helped to create further animosity among the people. The Bishop had decided to intone the Te Deum on 19th February 1775 as a sign of thanksgiving on the occasion of the birth of an heir to the throne of Naples. Ximenes, however,
refused to attend for the Order had not yet taken steps to celebrate the occasion. The Capitano della Verga (the Mdina municipal mayor) and the Commune's officials were forbidden from attending. Still the Bishop went ahead with the Cathedral services against Ximenes' wishes. The next day graffiti in red paint were smeared on the bastions near the Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa gates with the slogan: Viva il Vescovo ed il Re di Napoli, nostro Sovrano." The politico-religious conflict, coupled with the government's austere policies were causing political instability. On the other hand there was a good supply of foodstuffs, though, sometimes, the Sicilian authorities tried to flout royal assurances to the Order. The meat shortage was also solved with the importation of 300 head of livestock from Sicily. Oil and charcoal could still be bought from Sicily, though there was an export ban on the commodities. Nevertheless the people were depressed for the cost-of-living had spiralled and Ximenes' economy measures were causing massive unemployment. They still hoped that the least the government could do was to reduce the prices of grain. Rumours were, however, officially disclaimed. Ximenes had no intention of sanctioning a price reduction until all the debts of the Massa Frumentaria had been repaid. Ximenes' economic advisors maintained that the Commune could never reduce the price, because this had remained high in foreign markets. The people, however, had no confidence in the Commune's financial administrators because they feared that the profit reaped from the excessive selling price of grain was not being used to pay off these debts. The people's hopes received a severe jolt at the end of May 1775. Although the grain price was fixed, it rose by five scudi per salma to thirty scudi, which left the Massa Frumentaria a profit margin of nineteen scudi per salma, because the grain had been bought at such a low price due to its poor quality. This artificial measure to keep the price high was quite unjust and it provoked bitter protests. The Inquisitor commented to the Vatican Secretary of State that the little food the basso popolo were eating, rendered them so weak that an infectious disease soon assumed epidemic proportions. The Grand Master was implored several times by the Jurats of the Maltese Commune, by the Governor of Notabile and by Grand Cross knights to reduce the price. These pleas
were all rejected because the Grand Master still believed that it was the only way of saving the Massa Frumentaria. At the same time, Ximenes promised that soon he would reduce the price. The Inquisitor also tried to mollify Ximenes, but the latter attributed his austere measures to the grain shortage prevailing at his election. These measures were to be withdrawn, when the granaries were replenished and the people's misery thus alleviated.

Once again a wave of crime swept over the Island during the first months of 1775. House-breaking, highway robbery, assault and murder became an everyday occurrence and the authorities were quite alarmed. Appropriate harsh laws were enacted coming into effect on 22nd June 1775.

Ferment among the populace become more explicit, especially when the Bishop, who had been postponing his departure from Malta since September 1774, departed to Rome in April 1775. Many other cases of disrespect towards ecclesiastical immunity from the Order's side helped to foment further agitation.

Meanwhile, seditious rumours clamouring for a grain-price reduction were spreading. On 16th July 1775, Ximenes spontaneously reduced the price of Sicilian pears from twelve grani per rotolo to two grani. The famished people promptly bought all the pears. Yet the populace demanded a similar measure as regards grain, but the Grand Master did not oblige. The summer months were almost over when the people expected their exhortations to be upheld. But again the rumour proved false. This state of affairs could no longer be tolerated by a few hot-headed priests and ecclesiastics, who under the leadership of Don Gaetano Mannarino and together with some three hundred supporters made an abortive insurrection on 9th September 1775. The rebels believed that they would have immediate popular support, which however was dismally lacking. One of the demands from the insurgents, who had occupied St. James Cavalier and Fort St. Elmo in Valetta, in return for their submission, was a reduction in the grain-price. Ximenes had only promised that he would study their request. A rumour quickly gained ground that the price would be reduced on the Grand Master's birthday, 4th October 1775. A contemporary diarist, Abbé Boyer, summed up the situation quite concisely when he commented that "every day the people..."
were hoping that the grain-price reduction would be sanctioned on the next; but the people's hopes were always disappointed. The 4th October arrived and passed and the people's expectation was once more dashed. Ten days later, the price was surprisingly reduced to twenty scudi. The people, however, not wholly grateful, for they had expected the price to be fixed at sixteen scudi. Ximenes must have realised that the people needed to be appeased for, in fact, the Massa Frumentaria was now selling the grain at a small loss. Ximenes's successor went one better for in December, (a few weeks after this price reduction that is) De Rohan lowered the price to an acceptable level, personally assuming liability for all the losses the Massa Frumentaria might incur. But then, Ximenes lacked both the imagination and the courage to take such a step which, incidentally would have given his popularity, which by then was at its very low, a much needed boost.

During his Grandmastership, Ximenes failed to solve any of the most pressing problems. He proved to be a bad economist and a worse administrator. It is true that the Maltese Commune made a notable improvement in that it managed to pay off a 600,000 scudi debt against the Order's Treasury. This gave it a new lease of life, but at the expense of demoralising the whole Island and making its people suffer inhuman deprivations so that Grand Master de Rohan found much to put right after Ximenes' death. The Maltese Commune still needed the sound financial foundations which would put it back on its feet permanently. The Island still had to be replenished with foodstuffs. On his election, Grand Master de Rohan appointed a commission to look into these two crucial problems, and especially to advise him on the feasibility of his primary intention to reduce the price of grain. The commissioners soon pointed out, however, that Ximenes' economy measures in the Commune's administration had been faulty in many respects, making it definitely uneconomical to effect any reduction in the price. The Massa Frumentaria could ill-afford a lowering of the price. De Rohan, however, did, as stated above, reduce the price and made a personal surety for the loss. The commissioners also revealed that there were shortages of rice, oil and other foodstuffs. They showed concern about the Massa Frumentaria's lack of liquid cash, which was needed to pay
for a six-month supply of grain to be bought from Sicily at the preferential tariff prices.\textsuperscript{128}

In fact, the situation seemed to have reverted to the time of Pinto’s death. Yet in this short span of time two extra ordinary events took place: the Bishop was forced to leave the Island and the priests led an abortive insurrection against the Order, demanding the observance of the Maltese rights and the reduction of the price of grain. At the end of Ximenes’ reign the political and economic atmosphere was oppressive; a contemporary wrote:

“Grande era l’orrore col quali si viveva
in quest’Isola, e massime nella città
Valletta grande il silenzio, et grandi il
conceputo timore d’ulteriori sconcerti...
Non più si univano alla solita conversazione
famiglie e gl’amici perché sparse per
ogni via le spie. Vivevasi, insomma, con
una gran noia a con somma consternazione.” \textsuperscript{129}

a terrible but true condemnation of a short and sad administration.

\textbf{NOTES:}


3 A(rchives of the) O(rder of St. John of) M(alta) 272, ff.15 v-18 r, 200 v, 234 r, 250 v and 252 v.


6 A(rchives of the) I(nquisitor,) M(dina) Gior nale Ist(orica), f.14 v.

7. Ibid., ff.15 r, 16 r-v and 17 r; NLM 167 ,ff. 178 r-v.


9 NLM 167, f.178 r.
11 AOM 272, f.75 v: AIM Gior. Ist., f.2 v.
12 Ibid. f.3 r, 17 v-18 r.
14 AIM Gior. Ist., ff.17 v-18 r.
16 AIM Gior. Ist., f.3 r.
17 Ibid.
19 (Archivio) Segreteria di Stato; Tomo IV, ff. 425 v-426 r, 22.3.1773; AOM 1364, f.11 v, 13.4.1773.
20 Ibid., f.44 v, 7.7.1773.
23 AIM Alia Segreteria di Stato; Tomo IV, ff. 425 v-426 r, 22.3.1773; AOM 1364, f.11 v, 13.4.1773.
24 Ibid., f.38 v, 7.7.1773.
25 Ibid., f.18 r, 20.4.1773; f.20 v, 27.4.1773; f.22 r, 27.4.1773.
26 Ibid., f.18 r, 20.4.1773.
27 E. Schermerhorn, Malta of the Knights (London 1929) p. 256.
28 AOM 1364, f.24 r, 11.5.1773; f.26 r, 18.5.1773.
29 NLM Univ. 33, Registra degli Atti, ff.4 r, 5 v, 28.8.1773; NLM Univ. 190, Chirografi, a. 1770-1782, ff.26 r-27 v.
30 Panzavecchia, op. cit., p. 45.
32 Miege, op. cit., p. 29.
34 Ibid.
35 NLM Univ. 190, Chirografi a. 1770-1782, ff.23 r-v.
37 Ibid. 21.4.1773; ACM 59, Not. Misc., Ser. B.T. VI, f.3 r. The preacher of the Advent and Lenton sermons of the Church of St Lawrence in Vittoriosa had his allowance reduced from eighty to thirty scudi.
41 Ibid., p. 256, 15.9.1773. An anonymous author, writing in ACM 58, Not. Misc., Ser. B. T. V, f.241 r, claims that members of the faction of Bailiff d'Oz, who had contested the election for the Grandmastership against Ximenes, were the offenders.
45 NLM 167, ff.178 r-v.
46 Panzavecchia, op. cit., p. 51.

49 NLM 429, Bandi a. 1772-1779, f.61 r.
54 AOM 1529, f.18 v, 3.1.1774.
56 Ibid.,
57 NLM 429, Bandi a. 1772-1779, f.68 r; NLM 1146, Gior. Not., II, p. 273; AOM 1529, ff.21 r-v, 17.1.1774, Ximenes to de Breteuil: "... We have been informed that the noble Luigi Gianni has been indebted by 1,000 Maltese scudi towards this poor Commune since 1752... We are very keen to see this debt recovered."
60 Ibid., p. 267, 12.12.1773. But in AIM Gior. Ist., f.17 v it is recorded that the very costly works on the Valletta streets were paid from the Commune's funds.
62 AOM 273, ff.22 v-23 r, 14.1.1773. The House or Hospital of Poor Women in Valletta was founded in 1646 by Catherine Scoppi, who, bequeathed all her possessions for the maintenance of this charitable institute. See V. Azupardi, Raccolta di Varie Cose Antiche e moderni, utile ed interessanti riguardanti Malta e Gozo (Malta 1843) p. 128.
64 AOM 1529, ff.28 v-29 r, 79 r; AOM 1346, ff.183 r-v, 189 v.
65 NLM 1146, Gior. ct., II, p. 279, 3.1.1774. However according to AIM Gior. Ist., ff.3 r-v and Mifsud, op. cit., p. 197, the increase was effected on 12th February 1774, and not 3rd February 1774. The later date is unacceptable because Ximenes, writing to Paternò Castello in Palermo mentions in two letters ... both 7th February 1774 — that he was forced to sanction an increase in the grain-price. See AOM 1529, ff.30 r-32 v.
66 AIM Gior. Ist., ff.3 r-v. Tari quindici il tummino is equivalent to scudi venti per salma.
68 AOM 1529, f.49 v, 21.2.1774.
69 Ibid., f.50 r, 21.2.1774.
70 NLM 1146, Gior. Not., II, p. 287, 4.3.1774; AOM 1529, ff. 55 v-57 v, 7.3.1774.
71 NLM 1146, Gior. Not., II, p. 287, 4.3.1774; AOM 1238, f.195 r.
73 AOM 273, ff.29 r-v, 4.7.1774.
74 Smith, op. cit., p. 276.
75 AOM 1529, f.49 v.
76 Ibid., f.55 v.
77 Ibid., ff.67 v-68 v, 21.3.1774. The Grand Master reiterated to Paternò Castello on this injustice: "— mostrosità di tal sorte non l'aspettiamo da codesto Mons. Arcivescovo, e Ministri, alli quali farate noto il nostro rammarico, e la sorpresa di un così crudo tratto."

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78 Ibid., f.51 v, 2.3.1774.
79 Ibid., ff.67 v-68 v, 21.3.1774.
80 Ibid., ff.81 v-82 r, 11.4.1774.
81 Ibid., ff.93 r-94 r, 25-4-1774.
82 AOM 1529, f.146 r.
83 Ibid., f.164 r, 1.8.1774.
84 AOM 1364, ff.251 r-v, 28.6.1774.
85 Ibid., ff.120 v-121 r, 23.5.1774.
86 Ibid., ff.119 r-v, 23.5.1774; ff.123 r-v, 6.6.1774; f.159 r, 10.8.1774.
87 Ibid., f.147 r, 18.7.1774.
88 Ibid., ff.119 r-120 v, 23.5.1774.
89 Ibid., f.137 v, 4.7.1774.
91 Ibid., f.164 r, 1.8.1774.
92 AOM 1529, f.181 r.
94 AOM 1529, ff.251 r-v, 28.6.1774.
95 Ibid., f.120 v-121 r, 23.5.1774.
96 AOM 1529, f.198 r.
98 AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, ff.440 v, 441 r.
99 Ibid. ff.440 r-441 r; AIM Gior. Ist., f.4 v; NLM 1146 Gior. Not., 11, p. 336; NLM 167, ff.182 v-183 r; AOM 273, ff.45 r-v; AOM 1529, f.198 r.
100 AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, f.440 v; AOM 1529, f.199 r.
101 AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, ff.440 v-441 r; NLM 167, ff.183 r-v.
102 AOM 1529, ff.212 v-213 v; AIM Dal Sant'Officio all' Inquisitore a. 1771-1777, f.150 r; AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, f.441 v, 3.9.1774; AIM Gior. Ist., f.5 r-v; NLM 137, ff.183 v-184 r.
103 AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, f.442 r; AOM 1529, ff.234 r-v.
104 NLM 1146, Gior. Not., II, pp. 346-347; NLM 137, ff.33 v, 35 r.
105 AOM 1529, f.204 r.
106 Ibid., f.166 r.
107 Ibid., f.249 v.
108 NLM 137, f.57 r.
109 Ibid., f.63 r.
110 Ibid., f.60 r.
111 AIM Gior. Ist., f.4 v; AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, f.445 v.
112 AIM Gior. Ist., f.4 v.
114 NLM 429, Band a. 1771-1777, f.112 r; NLM 137, f.71 r; AIM Gior. Ist., f.4 r; AIM Alia Segreteria dl Stato, Tomo IV, f.450 v, wherein the Inquisitor informs the Vatican Secretary of State that Malta was infested with thieves.
115 AOM 273, f.46 r; AIM Dalla Segreteria dl Stato a. 1774, ffè101 r-v.
116 P. Fava, Francesco Saverio Ximenes d eTexada, problems facing the Order of St. John during his Grandmastership, 1773-1775 (Bachelor of Arts thesis presented to the History Department, University of Malta in May 1970, unpublished) pp. 79-177.
117 NLM 137, f.84 r.
Soon after the tragic invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the country's prisons were soon crowded with political prisoners. In one prison in Prague prisoners were trying to know more about each other. "I have been here for a little while now because I was against Dubcek," said one to a newcomer: "That's funny", replied the latter, "I have just been rounded up because I was for Dubcek!" "Beat this", came a quiet voice from a corner of the darkened damp cell: "I am Dubcek!"
What is the power of the mind over the body? What is the degree of psychological or psychic manipulation that may be exercised over any person? Selecting numerous cases indicating popular beliefs in the supernatural, and methods of folk medicine — from confessions before the Inquisition Tribunal — FRANCIS CIAPPARA* here throws some light on the dubious faith of the simple man in moments of anguish as well as his ingenuity in moments of pain, including some most weird superstitious practices caused partly by medical insufficiency and partly by an exotic, if not actually magical, disposition to life. We may laugh, but these extreme cases are recorded as having actually happened throughout the Maltese Islands not so many generations ago; nor are beliefs relating to such things as the evil eye and “natural doctors” alien to contemporary Maltese society: and indeed there appears to be no ultimate explanation of the phenomenon other than, possibly, the simplistic disdain for “ignorance.” A more profound analysis of such a variety of anecdotes in the near future would certainly make a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of social history.

Late 18th century Malta was a bizarre world. A whole crowd of lay healers treated patients for various diseases — swollen feet, ringworm, pterygium, warts, jaundice. Even

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people under the effect of the evil-eye and the maghmul resorted to these charlatans; while sorcery was also indulged in to win some lady's hand, to bring a husband back, to find some treasure, to win at gambling. The examples mentioned in the article are taken from the lawsuits of the Inquisition; and hence, as they are based upon statements made under oath, they are a reliable source of information. Nor are they extreme cases either: similar instances could be repeated ad nauseam.

Doctors rendered their services both at the hospitals and in the towns and villages of Malta. But their expertise was frequently supplemented, if not substituted, by popular types of treatment. Pasquale Calafato, nicknamed “Ciausat”, of Casal Attard counselled baths of sea water for swollen feet; while little children “who felt pain in their ribs owing to coagulated milk” were to have a hedgehog cut open and applied (while it was still warm) on the part which hurt them. Giuseppe Falzon, a baptised slave who lived in the prison of Senglea, treated children for ringworm. He first shaved their heads, which he then smeared with gunpowder, lemon juice, crushed date stone, burnt bones of dogs’ heads, and tarred hempen threads all mixed together. Angelo Bonello, a Gozitan who lived in Gudia in 1788, had his three children treated by Falzon. The treatment started a week after the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and continued intermittently for about two months. The slave’s services were asked for in other villages as well — Casal Zurric, Citta’ Pinto, and Casal Zeitun; but according to Catarina Barbara no child was ever cured by him. Falzon even tried to cure Lorenza, an old woman from Gudia, who had been paralysed in bed for a very long time. He bled her hand, changed her clothes, and gave her a bath in which he put boiled orange-leaves, lemon-leaves, rosemary, wild thyme, and grasso di bovemarino. He even fumigated the room with benzoin to remove the offensive smell there was. Lorenza gave him, on different occasions, 16 tari, 8 tari, 1 scudo, and a bed-sheet. But he did not keep all the money to himself since he purchased for the old woman, amongst other things, some beef and a candle, which she was to light before the crucifix she kept in her room.

Indeed, it was natural for a credulous and backward population to resort to the supernatural in their hour of need.
This is, in fact, the psychological basis of religion and the sense of hope and of the ‘Big Brother’ which it instils. Religion still held sway over the people, who with fervent faith prayed to God and the Saints to have mercy on them. When Elena Xerri of Birchircara was ill she put on her chest a ‘small cross of Jerusalem’ her confessor had given her. Maria Agius “ta’ Suffeira” lived in the vicinity of the churches of the Saviour and the Annunciation at Casal Attard. In 1788, she treated an 18-year-old young man, nephew of Fr. Antonio Gristi, of the same village, for pterygium or — as it was called in the village jargon — “octopus”. She passed a ring, which he himself had brought, over his eye, while reciting the following charm she had learnt when still a young girl:

Salip InDeu,
Santu Luca, San Matteu,
handi Hainea tuglalnl.
Mur fdach il Ginlen
imscleltu briglela
saccheltu bi Iddimuh ta’ haineia.
Acta bisblesa hilua
u Imsah biha halneh
u mur fi sciat il Bahar
issip il carnit istaham,
hafen seba hafniet ma seba meuglet,
hasel haineich biesc irisu phal uardlet.
Santa Maria Margarita
tnahi lehbara miI carnita.

Angeluzza treated Catarina, both of Casal Zeitun, for the same eye-disease. She rubbed her eyes with the ring, while they recited together the following singsong:

I treat your eye, and I treat it again,
and I will remove your octopus.
Santa Lucia, Santa Margarita,
remove the octopus
and throw it into the sea,
and don’t let it appear again.
Jesus Christ met his mother, Mary, and asked her, “Tell me, what ails thee?”
“My eye hurts me”, she answered.

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"Go by the seaside
and find a herb watered with my sweat."

St. George on horse-back,
cure this young lady.

Maria Chetcuti, also of Zeitun, had warts on her face. She was advised to seek the services of Antonio, but she decided to be her own doctor. She rubbed the warts with three straws while reciting three creeds in honour of the birth of Our Lord, believing she would be cured by the merit of the straw on which He was born. Then she rubbed them with three small stones, and said three Hail Marys "in honour of those three stones on which David wrote the names of Jesus and Mary, and with which he killed Goliath". Next, she put the straws in a water-basin, and a month later the warts dropped off. Maria treated in like manner five other women, and, on her own testimony, they were all cured. When Maria Agius of Nasciar suffered from tooth-ache, her husband, Michele "ta' Ilhmarr chibir", not only went to see the doctor, but he even asked the services of several priests who read the gospel over her head. Fr. Giuseppe Camilleri "tallacham" of Casal Zebugg, who lived near St. Roque's church, was in the habit of reading to people of all ages who suffered from jaundice. He charged 4 on the time, besides receiving gifts of various sorts. Jaundice was, in fact, a common malady. The above-mentioned Pasquale had his own way of curing it, and his fame spread throughout the Island. He skimmed the patient's bare chest with a flint, which if its movement was obstructed, indicated he had contracted the disease. The two, then, made the sign of the cross, recited five times a Hail Mary, an Our Father, and the Glory Be in honour of the Holy Trinity; a Hail Mary and an Our Father in honour of St. Francis Xavier, St. Joseph, and all the Saints; and a "Salve Regina" in honour of Our Lady. In the meantime, he applied a piece of candle blessed on Candlemas Day (xemgha tal-Kandlora) and another piece of candle used in church on Maundy Thursday (xemgha tat-tniebri) to the patient's forehead, which he removed only at the end of the prayers. He fumigated the patient once every morning with blessed olive-branches, incense, and candles. Then with the ashes, he made three crosses on the forearm, the knees, and the shin-bone, saying each time: "Jesus fili Maria San
The treatment went on for four, fifteen, or twenty days according to the gravity of the illness. By passing again the flint over the chest he knew whether the disease had been lifted or not. The testing-stone was bought by Giuseppe Agius for 100 scudi; but it was worth the price since he took up jaundice-treatment as a profession and brought up a family of eight.

When ten years of age Valenza Agius "ta' Scueiha" — who lived between the parish church of Zebug and the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows — had been taken by her mother to "Ciausat". Though she was cured, she was taken ill again nine years later, and notwithstanding the doctor's treatment she was confined to bed for a whole year. As her face changed colour her friends assured her she had jaundice and she resolved to cure herself the way Pasquale had done. After five days she was able to sit up in bed; and at the end of a fortnight she was cured. Several people started to seek her services, and she showed them not only how to conduct the treatment, but also that they should have faith and recite the prayers with devotion. She also continued to treat people herself: Grazia "ta’ Uersiech", Maria "ta' Cinquina", and Grazia "ta' Bergili" all died in hospital, while Rosa "ta' Tuila" and Grazia "ta' Dora" were both cured.

Anna Gatt, Valenza's sister, was another lay-doctor. Her first experiment was made on two girls whose parents had brought them back from hospital and having succeeded, she was often called upon to cure jaundice. She treated not only people from Citta' Rohan, but wherever her services were called for, being paid 2 tari by each patient. The Vicar General had warned her to desist, but moved by pity, she continued with the treatment. Catarina "ta' Catusi", of the same town, fumigated Rosa "ta' Succett" with olive branches, and as these turned blackish she verified she had contracted the illness. Then, while praying undertone, she blessed her with the twigs' ashes and with a piece of candle. The treatment was repeated four times, but after a few days, Rosa was taken to hospital where she died after eleven days. Catarina also treated Ignazio Camilleri "tal Kajn" and his wife, Anna, and Giuseppe Cascun's wife, Rosa — all of Siggiewi.

Giovanni Maria Mallia, also from Siggiewi, used a lengthy and curious type of treatment. He started by fumigat-
ing the patient three times with blessed olive-branches; then he read from a book he had used at school the “Veni Creator Spiritus”, the creed in honour of the Heart of Jesus, the “Salve Regina” in honour of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the psalm “Nunc Dimittis Servum Tuum” in honour of Holy Jesus. With the ashes of the burnt olive-branches he made five signs of the cross on the forehead, on the hands, and on the knees. Next, he recited the first chapter of St. John’s gospel, and the psalm “Qui Habitat in Adiutorium”. This ritual was repeated five times in honour of the five wounds of Jesus. 13

A man who lived in Valletta at the back of the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene had his own peculiar way of curing people from jaundice. He diagnosed the disease by looking fixedly into their eyes. Then he measured with a piece of string the length and breadth of their bodies keeping their arms outstretched. The remaining part of the string he cut into pieces which he threw on the head, the chest, and on the feet, while looking now at the picture of St. Elia and now at the patient’s eyes, and muttering “Beato Sant Elia, ed in mezzo di Maria.” Maria, wife of Giovanni “ta’ Mastru Bertu”, Francesca “ta’ Caccia”, Catarina, wife of Angelo Muscat “ta’ Scariu”, and Angela, wife of Agostino “tal Paia”, all of Città Pinto went to be treated by him. He demanded 3 tari from each as stipends for masses to be said at the altar of St. Elia; but they even gave him a dozen eggs, and all except Catarina were cured after visiting him more than once. 14

When no remedy could be found the Maltese attributed many of their infirmities to witchcraft rather than to natural causes. They firmly believed, as some still do, in the evil-eye. The Inquisitor, Mgr. Zondadari, tried to understand this belief of the people “tenaciously attached to their various customs”. It was — so was he assured — the effect of poison which passed from people’s eyes into what they looked at. 15

Salvatore Calleja “ta’ Chnanet” of Città Rohan recognised people under the effect of this spell. He put some water and some salt in a white clay plate, blessed it and recited thrice a Holy Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be in honour of the Holy Trinity. Then he put two or three drops of oil into the plate. If these scattered, it was a sign the patient was bewitched, and the same experiment was repeated twice.
more, each time using fresh water, salt and oil. This secret was taught to him by his father, to whom in turn it had been revealed by a Capuchin friar, a relative of his. His daughter, Grazia Vassallo "ta' Prans", who lived in the vicinity of the church of Our Lady of Light, treated Anna's child; Grazia's five-year-old daughter, Teresa, Teresa wife of Francesco "ta' Cantonieri"; and the mare of Giuseppe "ta' Mas", which would neither eat nor rise from the ground, but which later regained its health. Grazia's sister, Lorenza, wife of Francesco "ta' Zeit", treated a child of Domenico "il Gerrei". 16

Maria Teresa of Senglea fumigated patients with blessed olive branches, palm-branches, and incense while reciting the following charm she had been taught by Catarina Coppola: 17

Occiatura, Scantatura,
Sana sia chista creatura
due l'anni innocatu
tri l'anni Sanctu
il Padre, il figlio, lo Spirito Sancto.
Santissima Trinita,
Giusu' Christu colla catina,
questo male si ritira.
Giusu' Christu culla colanna,
questo male mal non torna.
Giusu' Christu culla crucli,
chiestu mali si riduci.

These evil-eye healers, generally women, were to be found in most villages of Malta. At Rabat: Teresa, widow of Tomaso "ta' Rasu", who lived in the region of dar hanzira; Maddalena "ta' Ciacias"; Anna "ta' bsara" from hariescem, and Teresa "ta' Temp" were known to practice this type of healing. 18 While at Nasciar practiced Anna "ta' Cintiu" 19 and Paolica Galea "ta’ Randun” who resided in the area Ta’ Bir il Hut. The latter not only recited a Hail Mary and a "Salve Regina", but she even told the infirm: 20

May God set you free from the evil eye.
May God liberate you from the wicked eye.
May the sea come with velocity and go like a wave.

— 66 —
May the eye as black as mulberry come out like the ringworm.

At Casal Lia, the inhabitants resorted to the help of Anna “ta’ Chetra” and to Anna “ta’ Coggia”, widow of Andrea Fenech. In 1789, the latter treated Maria, wife of Aloisio Mifsud “ta’ Pulitu” whom she fumigated three times, while reciting the “Salve Regina” and a popular saying: 21

ietch il hain hi cahla tmur phal nahla u ietch il hain hi zercha tmur phal berca.

The evil-eye, however, was not the only fear under which the Maltese lived. The maghmul was another kind of spell brought about on a lock of hair, nail-parings, a piece of cloth. It afforded an easy explanation when medicine could bring no relief. Maria Grech “il Pamplona” of Birchircara was in such pain that she threw herself on the ground, screaming: Dr. Perdon and the surgeon Michele Grillet assured her it was calculus; but as they could not cure her, nothing could convince her and her neighbours that it was not the result of witchcraft. She had lived in concubinage with Battista Zarb for fourteen years before settling down with Giovanni “ta’ Mincuzza”; and he must surely have cast a spell on her to avenge himself. She started to be treated by Hammuda, the Turk, even though her confessor, the Capuchin friar Anselmo, forbade her betake herself to him. Such was her faith in him that she did not mind regaining her health even from the devil “now that I would soon be cured”, and when she had already spend 50 scudi. 22

Anna Maria “ta’ Corom” of Burmola threatened to avenge herself on Margarita Schembri and on her sister, Maria, when they turned her friend out of a house they owned. They found a lock of hair hanging from a nail, which Fr. Giovanni removed with a cane and threw into the fire, while he read the Gospel over their head, and encouraged them to fear nothing. But then a series of misfortunes started which made them believe they were really under the effect of a spell. After four months their brother, Angelo Farrugia, drowned after his boat had sunk. Then it was Maria’s turn, followed by her two daughters’, Margarita, aged 16, and 23-year-old Giovanna. Their mattresses were thought to be
infected, and were burnt. The spell had worked. 23 Giuseppe "ta' Seppu l'ahmar" of Città Rohan wished to see his sister, Maria, who lived near the church of Uietchirda, dead. He placed on her door's threshold three nails, a little salt, a piece of fried meat, and a lock of hair, which he then assured her was only a sham, the hair being violin chords. But in 1787, an old woman from Floriana went to visit her and assured her a death spell had been cast on her. She gave her some water of St. Feliciano to drink; but as she refused, the old woman blessed her arms and told her to hang the bottle behind the door. 24 Giuseppe Callus "tal Hut" of Casal Safi had illicit relations with Francesca Bonel "il Haucia" of Casal Gudia. After a while he left her to return to his wife. Francesca made it publicly known she would exterminate both him and his wife. Giuseppe believed her since she went on board the galleys to talk to the convicts and to the Turks, who were wont to cast such spells. Thus, on 15 May 1793, he appeared before the Tribunal of the Inquisition and asked Mgr. Carpegna to protect him. 23 Elisabetta Dorel of Vittoriosa cast a spell ad mortem on her husband, through the services of Palma, a Neapolitan woman. 26

To break these spells all kinds of incomprehensible methods were resorted to, which were, in fact, nothing more than easy means to earn good money. In 1786, Pietro Pace of Casal Lia was assured by a doctor at the Sacra Infermeria there was no remedy for his eye disease. For 24 tari a Turk gave him some ointment to apply to his eyes, which he was also to fumigate with eight pieces of paper. 27 When in 1775 Felice Schembri "ta' Breita" of Casal Musta felt unwell, two Turks gave him a flint with many signs on it. He drank the water into which he had put the stone, but it was all in vain. 28 In 1777, Giovanna Borg of Burmola gave a biscuit to Rosa Stivala. That same night she had a bad stomach ache, which the doctors Seichel, Cerdon, Creni, and Consoli could not diagnose; and, thus, Giuseppe, her husband, suspected it was some piece of witchcraft. Her mother ordered Giovanna leave her daughter in peace; but she kissed the ground, and thanked God that Rosa would never rise up from bed, and would soon die. The Church believed in the power of such spells, and the poor woman was exorcised by the Dominican Fr. Vincenzo Aquilina, and by Fr. Fulgentio, a Franciscan friar.
Maria Mangion, also of Burmola, had been insane for twenty years, and she could regain her health neither by spiritual nor by medicinal means. Her sister, Catarina, widow of Pasquale Carciella, sought the services of a Turk, who fumigated her with benzoin and “cosbor” and passed a sheet of paper over the fire. The outline of a face and some letters soon could be made out on the paper, which drawings had been made by the Spirits who would cure Maria and whom the slave tied to a tree in the outskirts of Zabbar. To pay the Turk for this worthless service, Catarina gave him a hen and 10 scudi after she had pawned her clothes. 

Rosaria’s husband, Paolo Gambin of Valletta, was in chains at the mental hospital. His father-in-law, Saverio Savona, took pity on him, and procured for him all medical remedies available, and had readings made over him by many priests. As a last resort, he summoned the help of Gaetano Schembri, a baptised slave, who wrote some letters on a “lampuca”, cut off its head, roasted it and gave it to Paolo, who also drank the wine with which Gaetano had washed the plate. When in 1784, Giuseppe Boneno’s wife, Rosa, of Siggeui was sick with dropsy, Francesco “il Barbir” gave her a jar of honey and spices, and three pieces of paper written with the blood of a chicken Rosa had given him to fumigate herself with.

It seems incredible that the people did not see through the Turks’ machinations, and let themselves be made fun of and robbed time and time again. But desperate as they were they had nobody to turn to except these charlatans, who were their last hope, and in whom they so firmly believed. Lorenzo, son of Catarina Aquilina of Siggeui, was paralysed in the legs. His mother believed this was the sinister work of Maria Anna, her former servant who had given him two “ravioli” to eat. Her brother, Giovanni Maria Balzan, a soldier on the Order’s galleys, asked the help of a Turk, who gave him three pieces of paper with which to fumigate Lorenzo’s legs, while three other sheets of paper were to be put in water and vinegar which the boy was to drink. It was all in vain, though the experiments had cost 9 tarl. He even got worse; and Giuseppe, a neophyte, gave him some ointment to use on his joints, and some blessed olive-leaves to fumigate him while invoking the name of God. Catarina now paid 2 onze, but again without result. Lastly, Agata “Cinclejna” took pity on her, and won the services of another
baptised slave, who gave her some lentils with which to fumigate Lorenzo's legs. He was likewise paid 2 onze. Feliciano Brincat of Valletta was impotent and let himself be fooled several times. The slave Giuseppe “ta’ Karrup” gave him a little piece of lead to put into the water which he had to drink during three days. Another slave gave him seven boiled eggs to eat, and eight written pieces of paper to swallow one at a time. Hibraim gave him some fried dog's meat to throw into a canal; Harabi, two eggs, written on the outside, to eat; Hali, some ground pepper mixed with honey to swallow. The last slave, even gave him some grass roots and a few written pieces of paper to boil and drink, and a heart drawn on a paper to pierce with pins.

In cases when the illness took its natural course, people believed they had been cured by the Turk's power. A slave of Valletta was so sure of his type of treatment that he would be paid only if it succeeded. In 1776, he gave two written pieces of paper and some powder to Clemento Zarb of Gargur, whose son, Luca, was mentally ill. The boy was to be sprinkled with the powder and to drink the hot water in which the writing was dissolved. Luca made some improvement and his chains were removed. Maria Bezzina of Naxar, however, returned to the slave and reprimanded him for having robbed her of 5 scudi. But he knew how to get out of tight corners. The small bottle of red liquid which he had given her to treat her son's eyes with was a good prescription, but another spell had been cast on him, which it was beyond his powers to cure.

These treatments could lead the patients into trouble. Giuseppe Vassallo of Burmola had been married to Rosa “ta’ Hasra” for 35 years; but when he went blind in 1771, she turned him out of the house, and took as her lover Antonio Sultana who lived near St. Paul's church. Michammet, a slave at the “bagno” of Vittoriosa, promised to cure him. He burned a piece of paper, put the ashes into some wine which he gave him to drink, made him swallow a pill, and washed his eyes with water. At once, Giuseppe felt a stomach ache, and his tongue got swollen. He was taken to the Sacra Infermeria where he was treated; but as it was in vain, he made his way to “that Friar Minor who reads the Holy Gospel over people's heads”. He put some oil of St. Anthony on his tongue, pressed it, and at once there issued a stream of blood. Giuseppe felt
relieved. “You need not go to hospital”, the friar told him “go to the Holy Office”. 37

Late 18th century Malta was a strange world. Sorcery was used not only to cure diseases, but for various other purposes. Maria Sayd of Burmola lived near the church of St. John “ta’ Huscia”. Her daughter, Concetta, was badly treated by her husband, Saverio, who abandoned her. Hibraim promised to bring him back and make him give up gambling. He demanded a piece of his clothes and some salt, and put a paper on the fire in which yellow letters appeared. 38 Maria Pavia, of Valletta, was equally disturbed when her husband, Giovanni Battista, left her and their six children for another. In 1788, she asked the help of a Turkish shoe-repairer, who gave her a piece of paper to sew inside her husband’s dress. Of the 30 tari he demanded, she gave him only five; but as it was to no avail, she asked the services of another slave who tried to violate her as payment. 39 Francesca “Iscellughia” of Gudia was badly treated by her parents and by her sister, Maria, who bit her arm and her shoulder. She asked Francesca Bonello, who lived near the Annunciation Church, to make them consent to her marrying a young man who then (in 1788) was away from the Island, and to give her as dowry the piece of land called “ta’ Borriso”. She dissolved some starch in water which she gave them to drink, while she kept some of her own hair in her blouse’s sleeve. 40 Salvatore Saliba of Casal Chercop returned home drunk almost every day and made love to his wife in front of their six daughters and four sons. She always consented since he threatened to kill her; but at last a Turk promised to make him impotent. The slave let her sit down on his knees, whispered something in her ears which she did not understand, and then assured her that she would have the required wish. But it availed nothing. 41 Fortunato Sacchet of Senglea not only could not maintain his family, he even beat his wife, Vincenza, with a stick. His wife had no one to turn to, being an orphan; but one day, as she was in tears at her door’s entrance, a slave passed by. He gave her a scrap of paper with some words written on it to put inside her husband’s pillow. But when Fortunato found it, he beat her badly! 42

Even husbands resorted to the Turks’ help. Giuseppe Moraghes of Valletta was abandoned by his wife when he
went blind. For 20 tari a slave gave him a heart of stone to throw into the sea. 43 Lucio Micallef, who lived in the outskirts of Bir chirara, led a desperate life on account of his wife's infidelity. A slave, who was blind in one eye, succeeded in defrauding him of 15 tari on each of the first two occasions he tried to help Micallef, and a dozen eggs, half a loaf of bread and 13 tari on the third. 44 The cleric, Lorenzo Bugela, of Rabat, was in love with a married woman, Maria "ruch ittaiba" of Mdina. When his wife came to know of the affair, he sought the help of a Turk who gave him a cane filled with salt to throw into the house-well. He was also to fumigate himself with some odoriferous matter, and to burn three pieces of his lover's blouse. 45

Both Lorenzo Muscat "haten berchucin" who lived at Musta near "ta' Cumbo" tower 46 and Francesco Demartino of Valletta 47 asked the help of slaves to win the hand of the lady they loved. Giuseppe Chercop "il Cenacolo" of Casal Chercop tried his own experiment. He put some of his own sperm in a piece of bread just out of the oven, and gave it to his love to eat! A Turk gave Simone Xicluna "ta' Tombu" of Casal Tarxen an egg, and some wine to pour on the ground over which his lady passed. 48 In 1789, Michele Xerri "ta' Tantailo" of St. Roque Street, Valletta, quarrelled with his lover. To make her come back, he held across his face a red handkerchief which a corsair had sprinkled with some powder while he held it over the fire. 49

Sorcery was resorted to for various purposes. Antonio Dimech of Valletta wanted the mare of Baron Pietro Paolo Testaferrata take first prize in the races held annually on the feast of St. John the Baptist. A Turk gave him two pieces of paper to put on its forehead; a second slave went round the animal several times holding a plate with some water; while a third put a paper on the mare's forehead and another on its back. 50 Antonia Magri of Senglea, in order to get rid of the misery she was in, sprinkled a soft-toy with anisette, and beat it with a stick for five consecutive days. 51 Nicola Borg. "ta' Hleila" of Siggeui 52 and Francesco Camilleri of Naxar 53 sought the services of a Turk to win at gambling; while Antonio Mallia of Senglea asked the help of Ibrahim when his ten-year-old daughter, Felicita, lost her golden necklace in church. 54

Palmistry was not unknown. In 1787, on the feast of
Our Lady of Carmel, Teresa, wife of Ignazio Camenzuli, of Rabat, took her children to the house of Maria Vassallo at Mdina, where an unknown woman of Vittoriosa interpreted their hands. Maria who had contracted jaundice twice, looked well after the house and her parents, had suffered three terrible frights, was devoted to Our Lady, had had many suitors, and she would inherit a great sum of money. Anna, who easily lost her patience, had three children and she would give birth to another four. Rosa could earn good money by practising a skill she had. Teresa had brought a fat dowry; and she would give birth to nine boys. Maria Vassallo had been on the point of death, and had extreme unction administered to her. Vincenza, of Casal Chercop, would have a devoted husband, but her newly-born child would die soon after baptism, and even she would be severely ill. Another palmist was Manena of Strait Street. She looked at the hand of Vittoria Ellul and assured her that her son would not be imprisoned. She even had a magic magnet which she had borrowed from Giuseppe, a baptised slave, for 18 tari a month. Vittoria kept it for a night so that her lover would return to her. She placed the magnet under the pillow he used to sleep on.

Treasure-hunting was a common pastime. In 1774, Giovanni Maria Bonello of Casal Naxar was assured by Mahruf, the barber, there was a treasure hidden at hain targa. He was swindled of 60 scudi before he realized that he was being fooled. As proof of her power at treasure-finding, Anna Delicata of Città Pinto prophesied to Rosalia and her husband, Giuseppe Borg, they would hear knocking on their bed chamber door. As all this happened they believed her, but they were defrauded of 5 scudi and a black cockerel. Anna also tricked Grazia, wife of Angelo “ta’ Mascu”, Elisabetta, wife of Giovanni “ta’ Gaitu”, Francesco Grisi and his children, Michele and his wife, Maria Ciangura, and Anna. Both Giovanni Vassallo of Valletta, and Giuseppe Barbara “ta’ Sebha irgiel” of Casal Gudia were likewise taken in, but not Paolo Caruana, the cab-driver of Bailiff Frisani. Antonio Spinella of Augusta, Giuseppe Bugeia “ta’ l’auditur” of Città Pinto, and the latter’s uncle, Fr. Giorgio Tanti of Valletta, went treasure-hunting in an underground cave at hain chalet, limits of Rabat.

It is no wonder that the mass of the people believed in
witchcraft when even priests did. When Fr. Orazio Xicluna’s mother, of Casal Luca, died, his father started an affaire and turned him out of the house. Giovanni Muscat of Casal Tarxen advised him seek the help of some slave, who gave him a written piece of paper to tie round his arm with some green ribbon. In 1788, Fr. Nicola Magri of Città Rohan was falsely charged by his sisters of having robbed them. On that account he even lost the friendship of Fr. Salvatore Tabone, and of Eugenia Moneta. He, thus, commissioned Giovanni Camilleri “ta’ Tajar”, who lived near the church of Our Lady of Light, to find him a slave to prove his innocence. He burned a piece of paper and mixed its ashes with a pinch of snuff which he gave to Fr. Tabone; and he put some powder on the door’s threshold through which Eugenia passed. When in 1780, the Conventual Chaplain Fr. Stefano Caroana wanted to regain the love of a woman, he resorted to the galley-convict, Antonio Vollero, a Neapolitan, to cast a spell upon her. Fr. Michele sought the services of the “forzato” Bernardino Cerfella of Aquila, to make him invisible and avenge himself on the Conventual Prior. The sorcerer smeared the soles of his feet with oil, put the head of a black cat on the floor between two candles while the priest read the divine office, and, as a last resort, he put a genie inside a ring which was to answer all Fra Michele’s wishes.

These experiments were only a means to deceive the common folk, who led a “hand to mouth” existence, Gaetano Schembri cast a spell on Catarina’s lover, but, he said, “I knew very well that was impossible. I did it only to earn 16 tari, being very much in need that day”. Giuseppe Maria was equally frank. He dabbled in palmistry, but only because he was dismally poor: especially in winter when work was so scarce. Giuseppe de Durino assured Nicola Vassallo of Siggeui that there was a treasure hidden in his garden; and he only needed a hen for the experiment which would allegedly lead to its discovery; he ate the hen but failed to find the treasure. This charlatan used a simple device to deceive the Maltese: he made drawings with lemon-juice, which were recognised only when passed over the fire. He delineated the figure of Maria “il Ahchieca” and made Anna Delicata “tal Cubrit” of Casal Curmi believe it had been she who had cast a spell on her. It had been manufactured out of some hair twisted round a comb, which Giuseppe himself hid in the
garden wall. "I did all this to have free access to Anna's house with whom I had illicit relations, while deceiving her husband with vain promises". Moreover, he was supplied with all the vegetables he needed. 69

Although they were often blatantly deceived, the people still regarded these weird experiment as their last hope. The case of Nicola Ciantar of Rabat amply summarises this attitude. He was swindled 1 French oz. by a Turk, but he confessed: "if he had asked me for a higher price, I would have paid it all the same". 70 Superstition, in fact, held the inhabitants firmly in its grip. In 1769, the Capitular Vicar, Fr. Pietro Francesco Gristi, had exhorted all parish priests and confessors to extirpate this "pestiferous venom". At least twice a year, they were to preach to their parishioners about the grave harm which such errors brought to their souls as well as to the Divine cult. 71 But the church's injunction to refrain from such practices carried no weight when the people's misery could end simply by reciting a prayer or by burning a piece of paper. Not that Malta was backward medically: foreigners — Greeks and Sicilians, among others — came here to study. 72 But when medicine proved to no avail, some inhabitants sought the helping hand of lay-healers, generally women, who were invariably, to be found in the towns and villages of the Island.

1 Archives of the (Inquisition), Malta, Processi, Gallarati-Scotti, Lawsuit 99. As this study is based on material taken from the proceedings of the Inquisition, only the name of the Inquisitor and the number of the lawsuit are given.
2 Scotti, 186.
3 Scotti, 85.
5 Zondadari, 224.
6 Zondadari, 68.
7 Carpegna, 1.
8 Lante, 168.
9 Lante, 106.
10 Scotti, 246.
11 Scotti, 99.
12 Scotti, 99.
13 Zondadari, 292.
14 Scotti, 117.
16 Scotti, 236.
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<td>18</td>
<td>Zondadarl, 23.</td>
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<td>Scotti, 190.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Carpegna, 8.</td>
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<td>Scotti, 251.</td>
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<td>Zondadarl, 365.</td>
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<td>Lante, 94.</td>
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<td>Scotti, 126.</td>
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<td>Zondadarl, 246.</td>
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<td>Scotti, 51.</td>
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<td>Lante, 101.</td>
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<td>Scotti, 78.</td>
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<td>Carpegna, 179.</td>
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<td>Lante, 39.</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Scotti, 178.</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Archives of the Archbishop, Malta, Secretariat, Corrispondenza, Vol. XVL f.7 v.</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Lante, 187.</td>
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Il-hobż Malti ilu żmien twil jintghagen fil-biċċa l-kbira tieghu minn qamħ barrani. Sa minn qabel ġew il-Kavalieri ta' San ġwann fl-1530 metta Malta ma kenux iffullata bin-nies bħal-lum (kien hawn mal-20,000 ruħ), il-Maltin ma kenux ikabbru qamħ biżżejjed biex jitimghu lil kuhhadd. U billi l-hobż minn dejjem kien essenzjali għall-ġjhxien tal-Maltin, il-gvern lokali ta' dak ż-żmien, maghruf bħala l-Università, kien ħa f'idejh għal kollox l-importazzjoni tal-qamħ; hekk il-poplu kien żgurat li f'Malta ma jkunx hawn nuqqas ta' dqiq, u li dan jinbiegh bi prezz moderat. 1

Il-Kavalieri għoġbithom dis-sistema: biss il-monopolju tal-qamħ tawh f'idejn l-Università ġdida, immessija minn bord ta' erba' Maltin fil-Belt Valletta, minflok dik ta' l-Imdia. Għad li legalment din kienet kummerċjali indipendenti mill-gvern, il-Granmastru kellu kontroll fuq it-tmexxija taghha. 2 Il-Granmastru Pintu (1741-72), nghidu ahna, darba

* PAUL BARTOLO, li ġhadu kif spiċċa l-kors tal-għaliema gradwati, fl-1975 kiseb First Class fil-B.A. (Hons); huwa għamel sena ighallem l-Istorja u l-Ekonornija f'De La Salle College u bħaltissa qieghed ihejji tieżi għall-M.A. dwar il-finanzi tal-gvern fil-bodu ta' dan is-sektu.

— 77 —
kien ordna l-Università tbiegh il-qamh b’telf ta’ 70% biex il-poplu ma jgergirx. 3 Il-principju ta’ dis-sistema kien li prezz tal-hobż jinżamm bejn wiehed u iehor dejjem l-istess: meta l-prezzijiet tal-qamh barra joghleww, l-Università kienet tbiegh bit-telf, imma kienet ipatti ghalihej meta dawn jinżul. Dan sar wiehed mill-iktar servizzi importanti li gvern kien jaghti ill-poplu. 4


**Konflitti ta’ opinjoni w interessi bejn il-Maltin u l-Inglizi:**

Meta Malta ġiet f’idejn l-Inglizi fl-1800, dis-sistema ta’ kontroll m’ghoġbithomx ghal żewġ raġunijiet. L-ewwelnett ghax f’dak iż-żmien l-Inglizi kienu influenzati hafna mill-kitba ta’ Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations, 1776) dwar il-benefiċċji tal-kummerċ hieles u tal-kompetizzjoni. Infatti wiehed jista’ jinnota kif il-princípio ta’ Smith huma espressi fl-introduzzjoni tal-proklamazzjoni tal-25 ta’ Frar, 1828, li biha l-Inglizi neħhem minn Malta l-mieta tal-10luzz: "His Excellency being persuaded that no measure is better calculated to ensure an abundant supply of provisions of superior quality and at cheap rates, than the removal of all restrictive regulations having the least tendency to the discouragement of competition in the market... all persons may lawfully buy or sell bread at such price as may be agreed upon between the Buyer and Seller..."

Għalhekk il-kwestjoni tat-tnehhija tal-kontroll minn fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh, kif se naraw, hija biss parti mill-konflitt soċjali-ekonomiku bejn il-Maltin u l-Inglizi. Fit-tradizzjoni ‘paternalista’ tal-Maltin, il-gvern kien mistenni jindahal f’kull haġa li tmis il-poplu: il-kwalità u l-prezz tal-hobż, provediment tal-ilma, xogħlijiet pubbliċi, sptarijiet, karità, edukazzjoni u l-bqijja kienu kollha kkontrollati mill-Kavallieri. L-Inglizi lmentaw li “the people have come to depend on government for all their wants.” 6

Min-naha l-ohra, l-Inglizi riedu jimponu f’Malta s-siste-

L-istess Maitland ikkundanna l-monopolju tal-qamh per prinċipju:

“The first argument, and certainly a very strong one against this [corn] monopoly is first the general argument against all monopolies...”

Għalhekk, kif spjega it-Tezor Ingliż fl-1836, Londra xtaqe li f’Malta:

“the inhabitants should be induced to rely, like those of other British Colonial Possessions, entirely on their own resources and foresight, and on the operations of trade for that supply.”


F’dan l-artiklu se naraw kif u ghaliex f’inqas minn erbghin sena, sa l-1836 in-neguzjanti Ingliż riexxiehom jeqirdu minn Malta kull kontroll tal-gvern fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh.

**Il-qaghdha tal-Maltin rigward il-qamh:**

Tajjebnaraw l-ewwel x’kienet is-sitwazzjoni eżatta tal-Maltin rigward il-qamh. Skond kalkoli moghtija minn osservaturi Ingliż u ohrajn, fid-dhul tas-seklu dsatax, madwar żewż terzi ta’ l-ikel tal-Maltin — li kienu jghoddu minn

* Innota li meta r-riferenza tkun diġa ġiet ikkotata isibha indikata taħt l-istess numru.
100,000 sa 120,000 ruh — kien ji gi minn barra. 20

Tabella 1

MEDJA TAL-KONSUM ANNWALI TA’ QAMH F’MALTA BEJN L-1828 U L-1835 11

(Bis-salma = mal-470 libbra)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qamh</th>
<th>Importat</th>
<th>Ta’ Malta*</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Xghir u qmuh ohra nferjuri</td>
<td>62,857†</td>
<td>13,421</td>
<td>76,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahlut (xghir u qamh)</td>
<td>11,245</td>
<td>13,599</td>
<td>24,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74,102</td>
<td>22,223</td>
<td>123,345</td>
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* Bejn wiehed u iehor.
† Jinkludu xi 5,000 salma ghas-Servizzi Ingliżi.

\[ \text{Bejn turi li 82% tal-qamh użat f’Malta kien impurtaż waqt li jekk tquis kull xorta ta’ qamh u xhir użat mill-Maltin 60% kien barrani f’dan iż-żmien.} \]

Mnejn kien jingieb dal-qamh? Taht il-Kavallieri l-aktar minn Sqallija. 12 Fi żmien l-Ingliżi mbaghad l-bićca l-kbira kien jingieb min-nofs in-nhar tar-Russja (madwar il-Bahar l-Iswed) kif ukoll mill-Egittu u xij ftit mill-Afrīka ta’ Fuq. 13 Bejn l-1822 u l-1832 il-qamh Egizzjan kien jammonta ghal kważi 30% tal-qamh barrani mikul f’Malta. 14 Imma dan kien l-iktar qamh irhis ghaż kien l-aghjar kwalita tal-Mediterran: infatti Maitland ried ibieghu ‘l fqar fi-1820 bhala:

“\text{a cheap and wholesome food... to the poorer classes... who have hitherto been accustomed to eat barley and other inferior kinds of grain}” 15

Billi Malta kienet toqghod tant fuq l-importazzjoni ghall-ikel ewlieni tal-poplu, il-gvern ried jiqghod attent li l-importazzjoni qatt ma tonqos (niftakru li qabel l-1830 kien ghad anqas hawn vapuri jahdmu bl-isteam) u li n-negozjanti — li kienu ftit — ma jinghaqdux flimkien biex jghollu l-preż iktar milli jkun hemm bżonn. 16

Ghalhekk gara li l-osservaturi u amministraturi Ingliżi, fil-waqt li kkundannaw fil-prinċipju l-monopolji tal-gvern
fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh, fil-prattika kollha kienu jaqblu li din is-sistema kienet qed tahdem tajjeb hawn Malta. Il-kummissarji tal-1812, nghidu ahna, fil-waqt li qalu li s-sistema kienet "designated by the odious name of monopoly"
ammettaw li "here for a considerable number of years it [the corn monopoly] appears to have answered the two great political needs of bettering the conditions of the poor, and of procuring an increase of revenue." 17

Il-kummissarji hawnhekk qiesu żewġ vantaġġi tal-monopolju:
(a) li l-prezz tal-qamh seta' jinżamm moderat dejjem b'gid kbir ghall-fqar li kienu hafna
(b) li bil-monopolju, meta l-prezz tal-qamh barrani kien jorhos hafna, il-gvern seta' jaghmel profiti kbar biex ikun jista' jlahhaq ma' l-ispejjeż tal-amministrazzjoni — vantaġġ li bdew jaghmlu uzu regulari minnu l-Ingliżi u li meta tnehha l-monopolju fl-1822, żvilupa fit-taxxa fuq il-qamh.

Barra dan, il-poplu Malti kien dara b'din is-sistema ta' prezz stabbli ghall-ikel ewlieni tieghu. Maitland qal li l-Maltin kienu "highly alive" ghal dak li kien jiğri dwar l-qamh, u kien jibża' li jekk jitnehha l-monopolju "an alarm would be general among the people". 18

Ghalhekk il-gvernaturi Maitland, Hastings (1824-26) u Ponsonby (1827-35), u Hankey is-Segretarju prinċipali (1821-38) kollha qiesu li jehtieg jinżamm xi kontroll fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh. Imma dawn, kif se naraw, kellhom jikkambattu mal-Colonial Office f'Londra għax, barra li dan kien favur il-kummerċ hieles, Londra kienu dejjem jaslu l-ilamenti tan-negużjanti Ingliżi f'Malta.

Il-Monopolju Jitnehha fl-1822:

Maitland, mill-esperjenza ta' l-Ingliżi bejn l-1800 u l-1812, kien iqis li, mhabba l-monopolju, il-qamh kien jinġieb Malta bi prezz aktar gholi milli kieku kien kompetittiv. Għahlekk kien lest li jneħħi l-monopolju, basta n-negużjanti jassiguraw li qamh iġibu dejjem u bi prezz moderat. Imma l-ebda negużjant ma kien lest għal dan, Darba biss, fl-ahhar xhur tal-1815, kien inghata kuntratt biex tinqieb kunsinna
ta' qamh bi prezz ifissat — u hawn in-neguzjant kien ghamel qliegh esagerat u l-gvern xejn ma swielu. Ghalhekk Maitland kien iddečieda li la l-gvern kellu jibqa' responsabbli biex il-poplu jkun fornut bl-ikel kontinwament u bi prezz moderat, il-gvern ukoll messu jibqa' jgawd j-profitti li setghu jinkisbu mill-monopolju. 19 Infatti Maitland stess stqarr f'Jannar, 1816, li mhux biss kien ser ikompli bil-monopolju, imma kien ukoll hadu minn taht idejn 1-Università biex jikkontollah direttament, għax ma kienx jafda l-Maltin:

“I have in substance taken the whole of this concern [the corn monopoly] entirely out of the hands of the Maltese and placed it, in its principal parts, directly under government...” 20

Fl-1818, imbaghad, Maitland illegalizza dawn il-miżuri billi qiegħed il-monopolju f’idejn dipartiment tal-gvern imsejjjah il-‘Board of Supply’.

Imma dal-monopolju tneħħa fi żmien qasir imħabba l-pressjoni tal-qagħda mwieghra tal-kummerċ f’Malta. Maitland, li ghalih l-aktar importanti kien il-bilanc tal-budget tal-gvern, fl-1819 kien qajjem ħafna tgergir fost in-neguzjanti b’dazji ġodda fuq ix-xgħir u qmugh ohra ta’ kwalità inferjuri li ma kenux maħkuma mill-monopolju. 21 U mbaghad, kif ikkummenta Hankey, “came the Greek Revolution of 1821, which completed the destruction of the trade of Malta”. 22

In-neguzjanti Inglizi, li kienu ilhom jipprotestaw għal xejn kontra l-miżuri skabruż ta’ Maitland, fl-1821 ifformu-law petizzjoni għall-Parlament Ingliż. Skond Mitrovich 23 din iffirmawha n-negozjanti Inglizi u Maltin kollha, kif ukoll nies ohra Maltin ta’ min jorbot fuqhom, imma l-istill tagħha huwa kollu Ingliż. Dawn talbu fost l-ohrajn it-tneħħija tal-monopolju għax qalu li

“this Board [of Supply] is not only unnecessary, but, as now constituted [as a government department], highly prejudicial to commerce, and destructive to the welfare of the Island.”

Fil-fatt din il-petizzjoni ntbagħtet lis-Segretarju tal-Kolonji, Lord Bathurst, li ddiskutieha ma’ Maitland billi dak 2-żmien kien Londra; u n-neguzjanti aċċettaw li jirtirawha bil-kun-dizzjoni li jittieħdu xi miżuri favur il-kummerċ. 24 Maitland haddem rasu: l-ewwel habbar il-ħsieb tiegħu li jneħħi l-monopolju tal-qamh (Government Minute, 22 September 1821) u xahrejn wara stieden suggeriment dwar x’kel- lu jsir, bil-miktub jew bil-kelma, minn ghand kull sezzjoni
ta’ nies (Government Minute, 7 December). B’hekk heles mill-possibiltà ta’ xi storbju kontra l-miżuri ġodda.


Il-proklamazzjoni tidher li kienet studjata tajjeb biex tkun milquha mill-poplu. L-ewwelnett it-tnehhija tal-monopolju antik gie ppreżentat bhalq esperiment biss:

"His Excellency the Governor having most maturely and deliberately considered the question how far the corn monopoly which has existed for centuries in these possessions should be done away with, and having called to his aid the opinions of all such persons in these islands who thought themselves competent to give any opinion on the subject, he feels himself disposed, though with considerable doubt and difficulty on his part, to try the experiment of throwing open the commerce in this most important article of necessity. His Excellency does it with doubt and difficulty because he is convinced, generally speaking, that the wisest system of Government is to adhere to what has been practically ascertained to be beneficial to the people in lieu of setting up novel theoretical speculation."

Imbaghad Maitland semma x’benefiċċji kienu mistennija:

"Anxious, however, ... to give a fair trial to what is thought may prove ultimately beneficial to these islands, and equally alive to the necessity of stretching any point at the present moment that even bears the appearance of increasing the commerce, or of giving employment to the lower classes of the people, he is pleased to proclaim..."

U fl-ahharnett assigura lill-Maltin li l-Gvern kien se jkompli jipproteġihom minn xi nuqqas ta’ qamh jew prezzijiet esagerati:

"... It is not his intention that government should interfere... with the commerce in grain so long as the poorer classes of the inhabitants be supplied with bread at a fair and moderate rate. But as the Government must keep a stock in hand to prevent any scarcity, or any sudden, or excessive rise in the price of corn, and as it must continue its assistance in providing for the inhabitants should such scarcity or high prices be of any duration, he deems it necessary, with a view to secure the interests of Government on the one hand, and to protect the agricultural interests of these island on the other, to adopt the following regulations and restrictions on this head..."

Maitland hekk stabilixxa taxxa fuq il-qamh ta’ madwar 25%.
Din baqghet tghakkes il-fqar Maltin sal-1939 u fiha storja interessanti hafna. Hawnhekk se naraw biss kif in-neguzjanti Ingliż rênxxielhom jegirdu 1-ftit kontroll li 1-proklamazzjoni halliet f'idejn il-gvern billi wqqfet 'Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern' u tat il-gvern id-dritt li jipproxbixxi ir-re-exportazzjoni ta’ qamħ minn Malta jekk l-hażna tan-neguzjanti tkun inqas minn 15,000 salma.

Ir-Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern:

Ir-Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern kellha tkun ta’ madwar 30,000 salma li setghu jaqdu l-bżonnijiet ta’ Malta ghal xi 5 xhur. L-ewwel htiega tar-Riserva kienet biex Malta qatt ma jkun jongosha qamħ ghall-gharrieda. Dan il-periklu iktar kien jolqot il-Maltin meta kien fi gwerri kontinwa kontra t-Torok. L-Ingliż kellhom qawwa kbira fuq il-bahar ta’ min jorbot fuqha. Imma ta’ min isemmi li fil-kriżi internazzjonali tal-qamħ tal-1899, reġa ssemma “the risk of not being able to buy at all” il-qamħ mehtieg. Imma 1-biżna ta’ skarsezza totali naqset u nfatti d-dritt tal-gvern li jwaqqaf ir-riesportazzjoni qatt ma ntuża. Fl-1824, meta n-neguzjanti ma baqghux jimportaw qamħ bhal qabel, 1-Agent tal-Qamħ tal-gvern qal li ma kien hemm, “no real cause of alarm in case of actual want for then shipments from various parts of the Mediterranean will be brought”. Kellu raġun ghalhekk is-Segretarju tal-Kolonji, Lord Glenelg, jghid fl-1836 li f’Malta ma kienx hawn iktar riskju ta’ skarsezza totali ta’ qamħ:

“when trade is daily expanding its multifarious channels... Malta, as a constituent portion of the British Empire, can have nothing to dread from sudden attack or overwhelming emergency.”

Imma r-Riserva Qamħ kella skop ieħor iktar importanti. Kien intenzjonat li l-gvern ma jhallix skarsezza artiċjali li setghu joholqu n-neguzjanti, 1-aktar billi jiżtiehu, biex imbaghad ibieghu bl-għoli żejjed. Skarsezza artiċjali f’Malta setghet tinkoloq faċiliment 1-aktar ghax kien hemm ftit incertezza dwar 1-importazzjoni: fi-Ĕgįttu, il-Pasha seta’ jagħmel li jrid u ġie li gholla l-preżziżiet iżżejjed — u fil-fatt fl-ahħar tas-snin 1820 l-Ĕgįzzijanj kienu qed ikabbru l-qoton flos il-qamħ; Ħuallażja kienet qed timporta daqs kemm tesporta fisi-seklu dsaħx; u madwar il-Bahar l-Iswed fix-xitwa l-maltemp kien ifiżkel il-kummerċ, u malajr seta’ jinqala xi

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nkwieta politiku li jwaqqaf il-kummerċ jew jgholl li l-prezzijiet. Ghalhekk Calvert, l-Agent tal-Gvern, sostna li r-Reserva kien messa tikber ghal bejn 50,000 jew 60,000 salma (forsi ghax kellu kummissjoni ta' 1% fuq ix-xiri u l-bejgh). 29

Min-naha l-ohra n-neguzjanti kienu mdejqa ghax bil-bejgh tal-qamh tar-Riserva l-gvern seta' jikkontrolla l-prezzijiet u ma jghallix ċans ghall-ispekulazzjoni. F'ilmenti li baghtu lill-Gvern, it-tliet kumpaniji Ingliżi ta' M. Fletcher, J. Hunter u J. Ranking, sostnew li fl żmien ta' paċi ma kienx hemm ghalfejn il-gvern jindahal fil-kummerċ tal-qamh ghax skond il-principji tal-kummerċ tieles, “any combination of merchants can have no other permanent effect than to ensure a larger and cheaper supply.” 30

Hankey weġibhom li kienet propju “this very fluctuation that would be insupportable to the population,” u li l-gvern kien wieghed li ma jhallix li tigri. 31 Ponsonby wkoll qal li l-gvern kellu juża r-Riserva biex ma jhallix il-prezzijiet joghew ghal dak l-“unknown interval of time” qabel ma l-kompetizzjoni terga’ tniżilhom ghans-normal. 32

Il-gvern kien iqis serjament il-possibbiltà ta’ ftehim bejn in-neguzjanti li setghu jġibu l-gvern dahru mal-hajt, Maitland kien ġa qies dan fi-1816. U fi-1899, ghad li kien hemm kompetizzjoni ohra bejn n-neguzjanti tal-qamh u tad-dqiq, meta l-prezzijiet tal-qamh kienu joghlew, kemm n-neguzjanti tad-dqiq kif ukoll tat-thin setghu jagħmlu qliegh esagerat — “and they naturally do so without hesitation,” irrapporta kumitat mwaqqaf t'apposta. 26


In-neguzjanti tal-qamħ u l-indhil tal-gvern fil-kummerċ fl żmien ir-Riserva — 1822-36:

X’gara fil-fatt meta tnehha l-monopolju f’Lulju, 1822? Għal bidu n-neguzjanti ġabu qamħ bżżejjed biex jinqeda l-poplu, il-prezzijiet mal-Mediterran kienu baxxi, u l-gvern

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ma ndahalx fil-kummerċ. 27 Imma fil-harifa ta’ l-1824, min-flok żiedu l-hażna taghhom ghax-xitwa kif kien mistenni, in-neguzjanti kienu baqghalhom biss 1,000 salma li kienet isservi ghal ġimgħa. 34 Ir-raġuni ta’ dan mhix ċara.

Il-gvern kellu bífors jaqdī lill-poplu mir-Riserva tieghu u jixtri l-qamħ mill-gdid biex dejjem jibqghalu Riserva taż- ba. 34 Billi l-ebda neguzjant ma ha l-offerta ghall-importazzjoni li ħareġ il-gvern f’Ottubru, 1824, dan irnexxielu jixtri 20,000 salma direttament mill-Ġegittu u Sqallija eżatt qabel ma l-prezzijiet ir-duppjaw. 35 Kieku m’għamilx ċekk il-Gvern kien jidhol fi spejjeż akbar. Bil-prezzijiet telghin u r-Riserva bi prezz baxx li kellu l-Gvern, in-neguzjanti ma ġabux iżjed qamħ fl-1825 u ċekk il-gvern qisu reġa’ ha l-monopolju tal-qamħ kif ilmentaw in-neguzjanti Inglizi. 36

Ma tistax toqghod taghtti t-tort lin-neguzjanti jew lill-gvern. Biss in-neguzjanti Inglizi donnhom riedu jsibu f’hiex jaqbdul biex jehilsu mir-Riserva tal-gvern halli ġkunu jistgħu jispekulaw u jaghmlu qliegh kbir. Infatti G. Ward, is-Supretendent tar-Riserva, ġnnota li, ghad li n-neżjanti barranin kellhom ġħallsu 1s. 8d. iżjed dazju fuq kull salma minn dak li kienu ġħallsu l-Ingliz (xi 10s.), u ghad li dawn kienu jingħataw tant attenzjoni mill-gvern, in-neguzjanti Inglizi ġkien ġnportaw biss 4,386 salma matul is-sena l-1825, fil-waqt li l-barranin ġabu 3,000 iżjed minn ħekk. 37

Billi raw li kien diffiċli li jeqerd ċi għal kollox ir-Riserva tal-gvern, fl-1825 in-neguzjanti talbu li l-gvern ma jibqax jixtri u jibegh il-qamħ f’kompetizzjoni magħhom. Minflok il-gvern kellu jixtri l-qamħ għar-Riserva ta’ mhux jktar minn 35,000 salma (daqs konsum ghal sitt xhur) bi-offerta, u mbagħad ġibegħu biss meta ġknun se jistħassar jew meta l-prezz tal-qamħ joghla aktar minn 40 skud (66s.) is-salma. 36

Is-Segretarju tal-Kolonji għalhekk ordna lill-gvern ta’ Malta biex fil-waqt li jieħu ħsieb l-interessi ta’ l-amministrazzjoni, jara wkoll li r-Riserva Qamħ tieghu tkun amministrata b’mod li kemm jista’ ġknun ma tflkkilx il-kummerċ tan-neguzjanti. 22

Imma billi l-gvern ħassu fil-bżonn li jkompli jibegħ u jixtri ftitt jew wisq għal rasu, in-neguzjanti rneżxielhom jip-pehrsawodu lil Kummissarji ta’ l-1830 (li għamlu rapport dwar il-finanzi tal-gvern mingħajr ma ġew hawn Malta), li l-gvern ma messux jibqa’ “acting as a merchant” fi-amministrazzjoni tar-Riserva tal-Qamħ. 38 Din id-darba l-Uffiċċju tal-Kolonji
ordna lil Ponsonby biex ma jixtrix iżjed qamħ permezz ta’ aġenti tal-gvern barra minn Malta. 39


Mit-tabella jidher li minn total ta’ 722,488 salma ta’ qamħ barrani kunsmat f’Malta bejn l-1825 u l-1836, kwart minnhom (180,694 salma) kienu fornuti mir-Riserva tal-gvern. Bili 63,507 salma minn dawn il-gvern kien xtrahom minghand in-neguzjanti f’Malta, il-gvern kien importa biss 13% tat-total ta’ qamħ barrani. B’kuntrast ma’ dan, fl-ahhar 7½ snin tal-monopolju (1815-June 1822) il-gvern kien importa xi 83% tal-qamħ li tqieghed fil-fosos u xurt biss 16% minn ghand in-neguzjanti. 41

Jidher ċar ukoll kif bejn l-1825 u l-1830 il-gvern indahal sewwa fil-kummerċ ghax il-bejgh ta’ qamħ mir-Riserva — li kienet il-biċċa i-ktabra mixtrija direttament minn barra — kien jammonta ghal 31% tal-qamħ barrani kunsmat f’Malta. Imma wara l-1830, imhabba l-insistenza minn Londra kif semmejna, il-gvern kien iforni inqas minn 20% — u hafna minn dan kienu importawh in-neguzjati.


In-neguzjanti Ingliżi donnhom kienu determinati li jaraw

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### Tabella 2

**MIN KIEN IFORNI L-QAMĦ GHALL-MALTIN BEJN L-1825 U L-1836**

(Bis-salma = mal-470 libbra)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Min-N. ghall-konsum lokali (a)</th>
<th>Min-N. ghall-G. (b)</th>
<th>Mill-G. ghar-Riserva (c)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Prezz salma qamh, C.I.F. Malta (d)</th>
<th>Bejjg mill-G. (e)</th>
<th>Bejjg min-N. (f)</th>
<th>Mill-ħasad lokali (g)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>37,626</td>
<td>8,516</td>
<td>23,007</td>
<td>69,149</td>
<td>37,626</td>
<td>22,228</td>
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<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>51,261</td>
<td>18,661</td>
<td>30- 4</td>
<td>75,699</td>
<td>51,261</td>
<td>16,496</td>
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<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>32,871</td>
<td>21,316</td>
<td>36- 1½</td>
<td>64,839</td>
<td>32,871</td>
<td>18,676</td>
<td>25,977</td>
<td>75,977</td>
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<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>31,667</td>
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<td>35-10¼</td>
<td>42,443</td>
<td>31,667</td>
<td>16,293</td>
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<tr>
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<td>34,248</td>
<td>8,685</td>
<td>29- 2½</td>
<td>42,933</td>
<td>34,248</td>
<td>15,657</td>
<td>23,317</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48,597</td>
<td>13,572</td>
<td>32- 5½</td>
<td>62,169</td>
<td>48,597</td>
<td>18,663</td>
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<td>6,844</td>
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<td>62,779</td>
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<td>44,354</td>
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<td>53,665</td>
<td>44,354</td>
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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>43,096</td>
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<td>63,764</td>
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<td>8,500</td>
<td>21,088</td>
<td>81,374</td>
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</table>

Ir-Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern, fit-tmiem ta' kull 3 xhur, kienet tammonta għall-medja ta' 27,955 salma; kellha massimu ta’ 51,098 salma fl-1828, u minimu ta’ 9,506 salma fl-1833.

**Tifsir:** N. = Neguzjanti; G. = Gvern; C.I.F. = Cash-Insurance-Freight.
is-sistema tfalli biex ma titkompliex. Dan jidher mill-fatt li meta nxexxielhom jiksbu t-tneħħija tar-Riserva tal-gvern fl-1837, kif se naraw, riedu konferma uffiċċjali biex donnu jidhlu b’ruhhom u ġisimhom f’dan-negozju.


Sadattant, fil-waqt li ghamlet possibbli ftit jew wisq il-helsien tal-kummerċ tal-qamħ, is-sistema ta’ Riserva kienet ħarset ill-poplu minn tibdil kbir fil-prezzijiet. Fil-bidu ta’ l-1831, nghidu ahna, billi l-prezzijiet fl-Ingilterra gholew hafna, in-neguzjanti baghtu l-qamħ taghhom kollu ‘l hemm, u kiek u mhux ghaix kien hawn ir-Riserva, il-Maltin kien ikollom ġhallsu prezz għoli wisq għall-nobż ta’ kuljum. 32

Il-kontroll fuq il-qamħ importat jispiċċa għal kollox fl-1837:

Il-mod kif tneħħa l-ftit kontroll li kien baqaghlu l-gvern fuq in-neguzjanti tal-qamħ huwa interessanti ferm ghaix jikkxeft il-verità; il-kontroll tneħħa ghal ‘ftit’ neguzjanti kontra r-rīeda tal-Maltin u tal-amministrazzjoni Ingliża f’Malta. 34

Meta l-Kummissarji tal-1830, minn Londra qalu li l-gvern ma messux ikompli jindahal fil-kummerċ tal-qamħ, Ponsonby u l-uffiċċjali tieghu haduha magħhom qattgha bla habel. Hankey infatti tela’ Londra biex jiddiskuti sewwa dan is-sugġett — ‘the most important branch of the administration’. 46 Kif wera l-awditur Thornton, ma kienx veru daq li qalu l-Kummissarji li r-Riserva kienet qed tinżamm bit-telf. 47 Is-suggeriment taghhom li jekk kien hemm bżonn ta’ Riserva,

“this can be most conveniently and fitly done by directing the Commissariat to make the purchase in the usual manner
Infatti Goderich kibet lit-Teżor Ingliż li s-sistema ta' Riserva kella tibqa' ghax

“there is no calamity which the people of Malta would view with greater dread than the suspension of the control of government over that important branch of their internal economy.”

Ghalhekk fil-waqt li wissa lil-Ponsonby ma jifiklíx lin-neguzjanti billi jixtri l-qamh minn ghandhom, l-affarijiet baqghu bhal qabel.

Numru ta’ Maltin attivi fil-pulitka fl-1832 u fl-1836 baghtu żewġ petizzjonijiet lill-Parlament Ingliż ghal riformi fil-gvern ta’ Malta u fost l-ohrajn talbu t-tmAqqis tad-dazju fuq il-qamh u biex jinghataw sehem fit-tmexxija tad-Dipartiment tal-Qamh li minnu kien ilhom imċaħħda sa mill-1815.

Fuq dawn it-talbiet ikkummenta Peter Smith, awtorita dwar Malta fl-Uffċju tal-Kolonji. Huwa qal li dak li talbu l-Maltin kien “perfectly intelligible and fair”, u sostnali kienu jaghmu

“a singular contrast to the object [li allura ma kienx ggest] which the few British merchants engaged in trade with Malta have during the last twenty years never ceased to press upon the consideration of Government: namely... the absolute cessation of all interference on the part of Government with the supply of [corn to] the Island.”

Imma dak li riedu “the few British merchants” sar fil-fatt.

Meta fl-1836, kienu ġejjin Austin u Lewis bħala Kummissarji biex jstudjaw il-problemi ta’ Malta, Lord Glenelg,
is-segretarju tal-Kolonji, fuq talba tan-neguzjanti, qalilhom jirrapurtaw ukoll dwar il-kwistjoni tar-Riserva tal-Qamħ u s-‘sliding scale’ tad-dazju. İn-neguzjanti Ingliżi malajr ippubblikaw din l-informzazzjoni f’Malta. U l-mexxejja Maltin ipprotestaw kontra t-tneħħija tal-kontroll tal-gvern mill-kummerċ tal-qamħ ghax l-interessi taghhom kienu se ibatu biex igawdu n-neguzjanti. İmma kif jidher mir-rapport taghhom, Austin u Lewis kienu favur hafna l-kummerċ hieles.


Imma Glenelg baqa’ deciż favur in-neguzjanti u fis-7 ta’ Novembru, 1836, ordna l-ħruġ ta’ avviż li l-gvern ma kienx se jixtri iżjed qamħ. Sadattant f’Ottubru kien lahaq Gvernatur ġdid, Sir H. Bouverie (1837-43) li milli jidher kien iktar lest jogħob ix-xewqat ta’ Londo bla ma jaghtti każ wisq tal-Maltin. Dan malajr laqqa’ l-Kunsill dwar l-ordni ta’ Glenelg u kif irraporta hu stess:

“the Council at once saw that the steps to be taken appertained to the executive authority and therefore expressed their wish to leave entirely to me the adoption of these executive measures necessary to give full effect to the orders of His Majesty’s Government.”

JigWeri l-Kunsill ma riedx ikollu x’jaqsam, u kien ikun kollu ta’ xejn. Tassew kif gergru l-Maltin li l-Kunsill

“cannot in any way contribute to the relief of the deplorable state of the Island.’


Jidher li Glenelg kien servili ghall-interessi tan-neguzjanti Ingliżi f’did-deċiżjonij mill-ittra li bagħat fil-15 ta’ Jan-
“for the assurance of the merchants who are still in doubt.”

Hobż il-Maltin minghajr ħarsien mill-Gvern:

Ftit wara li nbiegh il-qamh li, kien baqa’ tar-Riserva f’Novembru 1838, kien hawn skarsezza internazzjonali tal-qamh u n-neguzjanti f’Malta hallex 5,000 salma biss (li kienet isservi ghal 20 jum). Imma wiehed jinnota r-rejazzjoni differenti tal-Gvernatur il-ġdid. Fil-waqt li stqarr li din kienet sitwazzjoni “of great anxiety”, Bouverie m’ghamel xejn blief ittama li xi taghbijiet qamh li kienu ġejjin mill-Bahar l-Iswed jinbieghu Malta fejn il-prezzijiet kenu gholew bhal f'postijiet ohra:

“It is not my intention to lay an embargo upon corn in port unless the stock shall be reduced to within a few days consumption being fully aware of the impolicy of interfering with the trade.”

Xahar wara Bouverie qies il-possibilità li jbaxxi d-dazju jekk il-prezzijiet joghlew ġżied; imma, ghaddli fis-sitwazzjoni l-uniku rimedju li ra kien li l-gvern ġerja’ jiehu l-monopolju tal-qamh, xorta sostna li, la dan kien spiċċa sittax-li sena qabel,

“It is better to leave the trade to itself than to interfere with it by any measure of inadequate efficiency.”

Sadattant ghall-Maltin dan kien ifisser miżerja akbar ghax il-prezzijiet gholew daqs ta’ l-Ingilterra, Leghorn u Genoa. Ma kienet argument li dawn kienu prezzijiet kompetttivji, ghax il-pagi f’Malta jidher li kienu baxxi ġdejn postijiet ohra: J. Davy fl-1842 osserva li l-pagi fil-Ionian Islands “are rather more than twice as high as in Malta”. Jekk fl-1836 ġa kien ġemm xi nies li mietu bil-ġuh, nistghu nimmaġinaw x’ghaks inholaq meta gholew il-prezzijiet tal-lobż, ghax dan mhux biss kien jinhass direttament minn dawk li ma kellhomx biex jixtru loqma, imma anki dawk li kienu jaqilghu xi ġaġa, ma kienx possibli ghalihom li jaghtu karità ġill-eluf ta’ tallaba li kien hawn Malta f’dak ġż-żmien. Imma l-Ufficju ta’ Londra kienu mitlufa fi kwestjonijiet ta’ prinċipju, Meta Bouverie kien kiteit dwar il-qagħda anżuża ta’ Malta f’Novembru, 1838, Glenelg kien issuggerixxwa ssoluzzjoni tal-Kummissarji tal-1830 li l-Kummissarjat tas-
Servizzi Inglizi f'Malta jżomm Riserva hu: dan issa ntbaghat lit-Teżor Ingliż. Imma t-Teżor wieġeb li dan kien imur kontra l-principju tal-kummerċ hiëli fuqu (jew imhabba l-interessi?) kien tnehha l-kontroll ta’ qabel:

“if a reserve stock is held by the Commissariat in the event of a temporary short supply and enhancement of the price, the whole principle of those arrangements would be subverted.”

U tassew: kieku l-gvern indaha b’xi mod kienu jergghu jinqalghu l-istess problemi ta’ qabel man-neguzjanti.

It-Teżor ta biss il-permess lill-Gvernatur li f’każ ta’ emergenza li ma jkunx hemm qamh Malta, dan seta’ juża terz tar-Riserva tal-Kummissarjat (xi 200 salma li sservi ghaļ jumejn ghall-poplu) — u anke din kella tinbiegh bi prezzi-jiet kompetittivi.

Dan il-każ ma ġarax ghax il-Maltin qaghdu għal prezzi-jiet kompetittivi u n-neguzjanti allura ġabu l-qamh Malta.


Billi l-Gvern ma mpurtahx mill-qaghda ta’ Malta, xi Maltin ippruvaw isolvu l-problema minn jeddhom. Hasbu biex iwaqqfu speċi ta’ koperattiva fuq l-istil ta’ l-Università li qabel kienet tmexxi l-monopolju.


denza jaqbel mal-gvern ma nafux x'interessi ohra seta' kellu f'dil-biċċa.

U l-poplu Malti kellu bhal ħmar ibati l-konsegwenzi, ghax kien “a much enduring and patient race” iktar milli haseb Hankey. Meta ftit snin wara, bejn 1-1845 u 1-1847 il-prezzijiet tal-qamħ gholew b’xi 30% imhabba n-nixfa kbira li ħakmet lil Malta u l-bżonn ta’ iktar hluq ma’ l-Ewropa ghall-qamħ tal-Mediterran, il-Maltin sofrew immensament min-nuqqas ta’ ikel. L-Ingilterra, li f’dak iż-żmien kienet qed tixtri l-qamħ ghall-Irelanda (fejn ukoll mietu hafna nies bil-ğuh), lill-Gvernatur P. Stuart ma hallitux jixtri l-qamħ ghall-Maltin ghax “such an indefensible departure from general [free-trade] principle” ma setghetx issir qabel ma l-gvern ikun inkuraggixxa “the exertions of private traders” billi jissuspendi d-dazju fuq il-qamħ. Stuart, min-naha tieghu, ma riedx jaghmel dan ghax beża’ jhalli barra dhul tant impportanti ghall-kaxxa tal-gvern — xi 38% tat-total tal-budget. Ṣix U l-poplu żugraga fin-nofs!


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In a liberal adaptation of aspects of his Oxford D. Phil. Thesis (which was presented last year), DR. HENRY J. FRENDO here summarizes some of his major conclusions with regard to the origins, formation and development of political parties in the Maltese Islands during the nationalist colonial era. He notes, in particular, both the social and the political aspects of the typical colonial setting, indicating a dialectic forming between what he calls “the Patriotic Mentality” (tradition-resistance-autonomy) and “the Colonial Dynamic” (domination-modernisation-assimilation) from which a new situation very slowly arises. Although it is made evident that partizan rivalry became entrenched as early as the 1880s, it was still possible to rally communal feeling in the patriotic cause when critical situations developed. Partly because of this process — in a society where class differences were not so accentuated as elsewhere — the parties influenced one another in what the author presents as a theory of alternating succession. DR. FRENDO’s conclusion may be interpreted as an appeal to the citizen and politician of post-colonial Malta radically to change the traditionally partisan intransigence bred by past conditions into a broadening of political commitment throughout society in the light of a civic disposition. At the end of the article, the author sets out in brief the first reconstruction ever made of party alignments in Malta before the beginnings of parliamentary government.
Il-politika hi, kullimkien, dwar l-użi u l-abużi tal-poter, ghaliex hemm universalità kurjuża fl-imgieba tal-bnedmin, irrispettivament mill-kulturi nazzjonali u tribali, għalkemm ftit isir qbil dwar fejn jispiċċa l-użu u jidhol l-abbuż, fi kliem ieħor dwar x'inhu użu tajeb u użu hażin jew inkomplet. Iċ-ċirkostanzi partikolari ta' statji u soċjetajiet f'perijodi differenti ta' żmien jikkontribwixxu attivament għall-iżvilupp ta' xejjriet speċjali u distinti f'inhawi diversi, u anki b'manjieri jew metodi li jidhru, u forsi jkunu, almenu fil-wiċċ, uniċi.

"Yes but not in Malta", kienu jghidu l-Ingliż, u jirrepetu warajhom il-Maltin b'xuffejhom imqarrsa, b'riferenza għall-qagħda speċjali li kellha Malta bħala kolonja-fortizza fl-imperu u li, minhabba f'hekk, niesha ma tantx setguhit jitqiesu bħala poplu, imma biss bħala l-abitant deindigu tal-art. Ir-romantiċiżmu diżappuntat kien jithallat fl-istess nifs ma' patrijottizmu insulari, forsi biex xahrab bl-immaġinazzjoni minn dak li l-ġurnal Malta kien isejjah "iċ-ċirku tan-nar u

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Biex nibdew nifħmu xi ħaġa dwar il-ħmira li minnha tin-tgħaġen il-politika Maltija manistghux ma nħarsux lejn tensjoniżet socjiżali u rivaltażiet partijżani f’kuntest storiiku, vuoldiri f’kuntest li, s’issa, ghadu mċajpar ħafna u jirrikjedi attenzjoni kbira u immedjata. Irridu nħarsu mhux biss lejn il-politikanti fl-ambitu kostituzzjonali (waral kolloxs, kostituzzjoni mhix biċċa karta ġiża formula ħajja li tintuża u tinbidel minn min ġjuxxa skond kif ġiża); lanqaż ma rridu nqisu sempliċiment l-ideoloġiżi li jħaddnu (jew jistqarrri li jħaddn) l-partiti politiċi. Ghal kemm dawn huma fatturi indispensabbli fl-eżami ta’ x’inh l-politika, ħemm ukoll fatturi oħrajn, iżjed mohbijja — imma forsi iżjed rejali — li jiddeterminaw x’sura tieħu l-politika Maltija. Hawnhekk nistgħu niddistingwu żewġ aspetti ta’ politika li però jintraħtu ma’ xulxin fil-prattika: (a) IL-POLITIKA NAZZJONALI, iġifieri l-imgieba tal-partiti fuq il-livell ammistrattiv-legislattiv; u (b) IL-POLITIKA PARROKKJALI, iġifieri l-iejaltajiet u r-rivaltażiet, ftit jew wiq emottivi jew interessati, x’aktarx personali u/jew tradizzjonali, f’naħa jew oħra f’dawk l-ibljiet, subbord, villaggi u ruħa hekk ċekjknin, marusin u kważi-familjari bhalma kienu f’Malta u Għawdex, u fl-gżejn oħra fil-Mediterran bi klima, temperament u ħajja “fil-berah” bhal tagħna. Malta kienet pajjiż f’qir fejn ħaxx ir-riżorsri kienu li-miċżati l-kompetizzjoni ghalihom kienet ħarxa; kienet ukoll gżira żgħira b’popolazzjoni kbira u qegħda tikber u ssir iżjed kumplessa, u għalhekk bi problemi socjiżali u kulturali intellectu milli negliġibbli. Ma’ dan kollu kien hemm, fl-ġrajjetna, fattur vitali li serża, biex inghid hekk, bhalma l-qafas li minnu u fiħ faqsetter u istituzzjonallizzat ruha l-mobilizzazzjoni politika u l-polariżazzjoni partijżana: dan kien IL-KOLONJAJIZMU INGLIZ.

Fil-kundizzjoni socjiżali li kienet fiha Malta fit-tieni nofs tas-seklu l-iehor, wara r-Risorgiment taljan, fit-tielet ġenerazzjoni ta’ Maltin influwenzati u kkundizzjonati mill-ħakma ngliżu, u fl-żmien l-izvolta aggressiva u espansjonista li ħa
l-imperjalizmu ewropew, inkluż dak ingliż, is-sitwazzjoni kolonjali produċiet u pprovokat ćaqlieqa radikali, fuq livell politiku. L-oriġini tal-agruppamenti partigjani, li bdew f'din il-habta u komplew wara b'dozi intermittenti ta' linejarità, kien jinvolvi mhux biss konfitt akut (ghad li mohbi) ta' interessi fost klassijiet u setturi differenti tal-popolazzjoni, iżda wkoll kriżi ta' valuri, ta' gibdiet, ta' direzzjoni. Il-konfrontazzjoni nistghu nharsu lejha, b'mod ġenerali hafna, taħt tlett irju: (a) MODERNIZAZZJONI kontra TRADIZZJONI; (b) ASSIMILAZZJONI kontra RE-ZISTENZA; u (ċ) DOMINAZZJONI kontra AWTONOMIJA.

F'sens iżjud ġenerali dawn it-tlett temi litant ikkaratterizzaw il-hakma kolonjali fostna nistghu nigbruhom f' żewġ tendenzi ewlenin: wahda nsejţulha d-DINAMIKA KOLONJALI (=dominazzjoni-modernizzazzjoni-assimilazzjoni), ġigifieri l-esigenzi u l-bidliet ikkawżati primarjament mill-okku-pazzjoni ingliżu u l-funziżjoni ta' Malta bħala kolonja-fortizza fl-interess imperjali; l-ohra nistghu nsejţulha l-MENTALITA PATRJOJTIKKA (=tradizzjoni-reżistenza-awtonomija). ġigifieri s-sentiment pjuttost embrjjonilku ta' nazzjonalità separatata (forsi speċjalment fost in-nies edukati) u konse-gwement l-aspirazzjoni għal miziżuri ta' libertà politika u konservazzjoni tal-“patrimonju” lokali bl-affinitajiet kollha li kien jimplika. Minn dawn iż-żewġ għejjun sbukkaw l-“imperjalisti” u n-“nazzjonalisti” ta’ Malta u ġhawdex. Fid-Dinamika Kolonjali l-emfażi kien fuq l-utilità, il-pratticità u l-progress materjali; fil-Mentalità Patrijottika l-emfajżi kien fuq il-kollettività, ċiò il-“patria”, kif murija l-iżjud fil-valuri tal-borgeżija italjanizzata u anke tad-drawwiet religjużi popolari.

Fis-snin 70 tas-seklu l-ieħor ġara li l-gvern ingliż, li kien ilu erbghin sena ma jaghmel inkjesta uffiċjal dwar l-affarijiet ta’ Malta, inkariga tlett kummissarji ingliżi, wiehed wara l-ieħor, biex iġigu hawn u jeżaminaw l-amministrassjoni pubblika, il-qratì, il-finanzi u l-edukazzjoni. Dawn kellhom jaghmju r-rakkomandazzjonijiet awtorevoli dwar dak li seta’ jinbidel sabiex, fost affarijiet ohra, jekk jista’ jkun jitneħħa kull ħjieł ta’ tariffi “protettivi” mit-tassazzjoni permezz ta’ tibdila radikali fis-sistema fiskali f’konformità mal-principju tal-kummerċ hieles; biex tiġi riveduta l-ispiża pubblika u fl-istess ħin biex tikkber l-effiċjenza fl-amministrassjoni permezz ta’ riformi fil-proċeduri u tnaqqis fl-infieg; u biex issir


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Fost il-kandidati li kkontestaw l-elezzjoni tal-1880 f’isem il-Partito Antiriformista kien hemm, ġhall-kostitwenza ta’ Għawdex, l-avukaż Fortunato Mizzi.


L-idea ta’ Malta bhala nazzjon u potenzjalment stat awtonомн harġet bil-mod u evolviet minn — u permezz ta’ — dan il-konflikt ta’ dispersizzjonijiet u orjentamenti; hekk kif evolviet l-istess lingwa maltija matul il-ġlieda twila bejn l-Ingliż u t-Taljan f’Malta, u permezz tagħha; u hekk ukoll evolvew il-partitii nfushom fi proċess ta’ interazzjoni tali li meta tarah f’perspettiva, u tinjora r-rettorika u l-passjoni ta’ ċikku l-poplu ssib li l-Maltin ma kinux u ma kellhomx għal-fejn ikunu, bhala abitanti indigeni tal-istess art mahkuma, il-bogħod minn xulxin daqskemm ġdew jidhru f’ghajnejn il-partitarji. Kien, sa ċertu punt, vittmi ugwali tat-tensionijiet li bilfors iżgib sistema kolonjali; kienu wkoll effettwati minn manipulazzjoni ta’ politikanti barranin u Maltin li riedu jiksbu l-poter u li għalhekk għarfu jinqdew b’rivaltażiet par-rokkjali diga eżistenti biex iżewxu u ἡ faḥna drabi jaljenaw lill-popolin fuq pikij u preġudizzji.

Hekk hu li l-Politika Parrokkjali baqghet staqtuna f’immaturità liema bhala f’relazzjoni mal-Politika Nazzjonal; dan ma setax jonqos li jkollu effett fuq il-ħsieb politiku (jew il-mankanza tieghu) u l-istrateġija elettoral ta’ politikanti barranin u Maltin li riedu jiksbu l-poter u li għalhekk għarfu jinqdew b’rivaltażiet par-rokkjali diga eżistenti biex iżewxu u ἡ faḥna drabi jaljenaw lill-popolin fuq pikij u preġudizzji.

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F'dawn ie-ċirkustanzi ssib li l-liġijiet tas-simpatija u tal-antipatija, "ta' maghma" u "ta' kontra taghma," jahdmu wlsq iżjed minn xi-djælettika dwar il-ġlieda tal-klassi jew xi dibattitu dwar ideologiżji politiċi: xi-djælettika u xi-ideologiżja tkun fejn tal-Arcipiergu jeħedu kontra tal-Mandraġġ, ta' Bormla kontra tal-Belt, tar-Rahal ta' Fuq kontra tar-Rahal t'Isfel, ta' San Gorg kontra ta' San Bastja? 

L-imgieba li sikwit tiltaqa' maghha f'sitwazzjonijiet bhal dawn tfakkrek f'dak li qaj Sibbes f'kuntest iehor, illi "opposition is bittrest betwixt those that are nearest"; tfakkrek fir-rivaltà akkanita bejn familja u offra-fl-istess belt bhal dik li ssatrizza Shakespeare f'Romeo and Juliet (II, ii):

— Deny thy father and refuse thy name; 
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, 
And I'Il no longer be a Capulet. —

........................................................
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
........................................................
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot, 
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part 
Belonging to a man .........................
........................................................ By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am...

L-ironija tikber u ssir kważi tad-dahk meta tara kif, per eżempju, Mizzi u Savona kienu ġirien, jowghodu litteralment f'tit bibien 'il boghod minn xulxin, u, jekk niġu f'dan, it-tnejn imgnammdin San Dumjinku.


Ma rridx nghid li minghajr il-kolonjaliżmu ma kenux xorta wahda jqumu differenzi soċjali fuq livell politiku. Il-fatt li Mizzi kien bin maġistrat u Savona bin biljettinar

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f'tejatru diġa kienet xi haġa tal-“klassijiet il-qodma”; imma lanqas hemm dubju li l-kolonjalizmu aċċentwa u sfoka d-differenzi bit-tixjir ta' bandieri ta' stati barranin u bl-introduzzjoni ta' tabelli terminologjic u influwenzi psikologjic li rrendew il-hajja pubblika glieda grottessa bejn “tradituri” u “salvaturi”, bejn “mixtrija” u “xewwiexa” ... min idoqq it-trumbun, u min idoqq il-bugle, min jahraq il-murtal u minn igholli l-istandard.

Issa li ghandna idea vaga tal-kuntest kolonjali nistghu nharsu ftit iżjed mill-qrib lejn il-partiti, nippruvaw naraw is-similaritajiet u d-differenzi ta' bejnejhom f'dak li hu komposizzjoni, distribuzzjoni ta' appoġġ f'Malta u Ghawdex, stili ta' tmexxija u ta' propaganda; fuq kolekx, irridu naraw kif dawn evolwe mill-bidu originali taghhom fir-Riformismo u l-Antiriformismo tas-snin 80.


Malta żgħira u niesha maghrufa: kienet issir ħafna diskussjoni fuq affarijet pubbliċi, p.e. it-taxxi, f'kafejiet u każini, u ġieli kien hemm attendenzi enormi għal dimostrazzjonijiet u meetings pubbliċi. L-ewwel okkażjoni grandjuż ta' din ix-xorta kienet id-dimostrazzjoni tar-rebha antiriformista tal-4 ta' ġunju 1884 meta l-pulizija kkalkolat li għad-dimostrazzjoni fi Strada Rjali, b'Baned, torċi u bandolori, kien hemm madwar 30,000 ruh, vuoldiri tielt darbiet iżjed mit-total ta' dawk kollha li kienu intitolati għall-vot. Dan kien ftit wara li beda t-tren (fl-1883) u ghalhekk il-villaggi kollha fuq il-linja tal-ferrovija setghu jmorru l-Bejt b'faċilittà ferm ikbar minn qabel: il-ferrovija kienet, fil-fatt wiehed mill-mezzi ta' modernizzazzjoni li servew, indirettament, għal politiċizzazzjoni ikbar.

F'din il-konkorrenza għal manifestazzjoni politika fil-belt kapitali naraw kemm dak li kien NAZZJONAL, kif ukoll dak li kien PARROKKJALI, fil-politika Maltija. Min-naha,


Sal-1889, meta dahlun għall-ewwel darba d-distrettijiet elettorali, ma tantx tista’ titkellem dwar distribuzzjonijiet ta’ appogg għal partiti jew iehor f’Malta; f’Ghawdex, li kienet sa mill-
1849 kostitwenza ghaliha, Mizzi kien jegħleb li kull avversar­ju, meta n-nomina tieghu kienet tiġi kkontestata. Anke wara li bdew id-distrettij elettoralli, hu diffiċli li tit­kellem b’xi ċertezza “statistika”, minhabba l-fluwdità tas­sitwazzjoni, is-sehem tal-personalitajiet, u t-transizzjoni li kienet ghaddejja fil-partiti nfushom, imma wiehed jista’ forsi jghid b’mod ġenerali li Savona kellu appoġġ akbar fil-Kot­tonera milli kellu Mizzi, filwaqt li Mizzi kellu appoġġ akbar fil­kampanja u s-subbordi milli fl-ibliet, ghalkemm il-belt Val­etta — minkejja “floating vote” qawwi rigward personalita­jiet — kienet nazzjonali, tant li Faurè, fl-istorja popolari tieghu, jirreferi ghal “partit tal-Belt.”

Il-politika tal-personalitajiet kienet tghallem: per eżem­pjju, Monsinjur Ignazio Panzavecchia (1855-1926) u anke l­avukat Alfredo Mattei kienu popolari bhala sengleani, ghal­kemm fil-Kottonera kien hemm, l-iżjed minhabba t-tarzna, proletarjar incipjenti li kien jara fl-okkupazzjoni nghliża l-meżz ta’ ghejxien u sigurtà, anke jekk kien jistmerr id­diskriminazzjoni fil-pagi u trattament inferjuri: hawnhekk il­lingwa taljana kienet barra minn postha. F’Valletta, għall­kuntrarju, kien hemm iċ-ċentru amministrattiv, legali, kummerċjali u rikrejattiv, b’sotto-proletarjar shih madwaru.

Ebda partit ma kien organizzat wisq, imma kull wiehed kellu bżżejjet organizzażjoni biex ikun identifikabbli bhala partit u jikkontesta l-elezzjoni: ċio ġe, kap, kemitat (formali jew informalji) u organu ġurnalistiku għall-propaganda. Fil­1887 Savona irriżenja minn mal-gvern, ha r-Reform Party taht idejh u beda johroġ mill-ġdid il-Public Opinion, il-ġaz­getta li kellu qabel; f’nofs is-snin 90 il-partit tieghu beda wkoll organu effettiv bil-Malti, Malta Tagħna: din il-ġazetta sensazzjonali anticiżpat bi ftit snin l-ewwel organu bil-Malti tal-P.N., Il Poplu Malti, fil-bidu nett ta’ dan is-seklu, Id­Daily Malta Chronicle, tal-familja Bartolo, li beda fl-1887, kien aktarx favur il-gvern milli marbut ma’ xi partit parti­kolari; dan sar iżjed sinifkanti wara l-ewwel gwerra mond­jual meta Dr. Augusto Bartolo, bin il-fundatur tieghu, hareg għall-politika u ingħaqad mal-partit tal-Konti Gerald Strick­land (1891-1940). Mill-1883 ‘il quddiem l-organu prinċipali nazzjonali kienet il-ġazetta ta’ kuljum Malta, imwaqqfa u editjata minn Fortunato Mizzi: ftit-13 ta’ Marzu 1902 dan il-ġurnal beda jsejjah lilu nnifsu “Organo del Partito Nazio­nale”. Il-ġurnalì huma importanti għaliex ħafna mill-ghawi


B’danakollu kien hemm mumenti meta l-partiti qablu bejniethom u kkoperaw flimkien, hekk kif kien hemm żmenijiet meta qalbu s-sehem taghhom u prattikament ittrasferewh lil xulxin, immodiifikaw u biddlu l-impronta taghhom u, minghajr ma ammettw, u forsi minghajr ma ntebħu, influwenzaw wieħed lill-iehor, kif, wara kollox, ġene­ralment jagħmel l-partiti politiċi kull fejn jeżistu, fil-gvern jew fl-oppożizzjoni.

Jekk taraw l-iskeda li wieħed nippiżentu biex nindika

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kif bdew u żviluppaw l-allinejamenti partigjani ewlenin f'paj-jiżna, issibu li kien hemm iżjed minn okkażjoni wahda fejn saret fużjoni ta' fazzjonijiet u partit, hekk kif kien hemm ukoll okkażjonijiet meta partit inqasam f'fazzjonijiet, in-għaqad u inbidel fl-ism, iżda imbagħad, wara fitt snin, reţghu ħardu d-differenzzi u l-fazzjonijiet bhal qabel. Fil-waqt li hemm tendenza qawwija ghal sitwazzjoni bipartita, hemm ukoll tendenza għall-għaqda nazzjonali fi zminijiet ta' kriżi.

li kienu l-lingwa, ir-religjon, u l-kostituzzjoni, almenu ghal bosta politikanti.

Ideologikament il-partit Savonian u l-partit Mizzjan donnhom resqu lejn xulxin iżjed ma ghadda ż-żmien: aktarx li l-izjed fattur li kien jiddistingwihom kien l-atteġġjament lejn il-funzjoni tal-lingwa ingliża u taljana. Is-Savonjani (u warajhom l-Istricklandjani u l-Laburisti) kienu favur li tkun imghalma l-lingwa Maltija fl-iskjejjel. Differenzi oħrajn, per eżempju dwar politika fiskali, kienu mmoderati biż-żmien u, sa ċerti punt, anke ittieħdu minn kunsillieri fuq in-naħa l-oħra. Ghalhekk id-differenza primarja bejniethom baqghet, fuq il-livell ideologiku, dik ta' disposizzjoni lejn il-presenza ingliża f'Malta u konsegwentement lejn l-aspirazzjoni ghal xi futur differenti, imma b'danakollu xorta wahda riedu jappello fuq kollox ghas-sentimenti popolari u ghalhekk l-Iħfef u l- iqsrar triq ħassida ta' "patra u religjjon" — amor patriae religio est — imma bi prijoritijiet differenti f'ċerti aspetti minuri, u, ċertament, b'appelli kuntrastanti f'dak li kellu x'jaqsam ma' indirizz partiżjan lejn l-awtorità, il-poter, u l-massa.

Minhabba li l-gvern kien wiehed strangier, iċċentralizzat, burokratiku, ihares l-ewwelnett lejn il-fortizza u l- gwarnjjon, il-qasma bejn kollaborazzjoni u reżistenza kienet profonda: biex tinstema ridt tghajjat b'kemm kellke garġi ghax il-vuči riedet twassal sa Londra, jew almenu sa Ruma. F'dan l-istat isteriku, fejn il-poplu qisu ma kien iżgħod ghal xejn blief biex jaqla' x'jiekol billi jakkomoda l-interessi tal-gvern, ftit seta' jkun hemm evoluzzjoni razzjonali u programmati; fi kliem ieħor, it-tattika kienet iżjed neċesserja mill-ideologija; tnejhi t-tigbid fl-aċċettazzjoni tal-Mentalità Patrijottika. Hekk hu kif il-ġibda patrijottika għall-ghanqda nazzjonali għall front komuni, minhabba s-sahha sproprorzjona tal-gvern versu ċ-ċittadin, kienet kultan tibbah fuq il-ġibda naturali lejn il-partiti, (ghax kull fejn hemm il-hajja hemm id-differenzi u interessi konfliggenti). F'dan id-dawl tifhim kif Mizzi; fl-1891, wasal biex aċċetta li jitla' fuq il-palk waqt meeting pubbliku u jiehu b'idejn Savona. Hekk sar, f'żewġ meetings kbar wara xulxin, il-Partito Unionista, f'mument meta l-gvern kien qieghed ħhedded li jikser sfaċċatament il-kostituzzjoni. Il-Partito Unionista malajr kien siġillat, ghal ftit żmien, bl-atroċità tas-Sej Maggio (1891) meta l-pulizija maltin, kif ri-organizzati mill-amministrazzjoni Strickland,


Sal-1921, meta sar riallinejament definitiv tal-forzi par-

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Sadanittant baqghet ġifforma d-djalettika bejn Dinamika Kolonjali u Mentalità Patrijottika fil-kuntest soċjjo-psikologiżiku lokali. Imma l-bidla, sa fejn setgħet issir, kienet akarx stagnata jew sfurzata sakemm baqghet l-inciżezza fil-qasam kostituzzjonali: bil-gvern ġinliż ma jimpurtahx mill-veduti tal-magggoranza tal-elettorat jekk dawn, skond hu, ma kinux fl-interess imperjali u allura ta’ Malta stess (is-sospensjoni
tal-Gvern Risponsabbli fl-1930 u r-revoka tieghu fl-1933 huma xhieda biżejjed ta' dan). Bqajna bil-manja jingwisti­
ka-kulturali-psikologika, it-tixjir ta’ bandierj mhux Maltin, il-karba ghal żewġ ommijiet li ma jwelldux; bil-piki u l-pre-
gudizji tal-kampanilizzmu ta’ min ma jarax ’il boghod ċżejd miz-zuntier u l-każin, u tal-klijentilizzmu, ta’ min ma jarax
’il boghod ċżejd mill-obbligu u l-intric. Bil-persuna fi
glieda mal-principj, l-interess fi ċglieda mar-raġuni, il-par­
roċca fi ċglieda man-nazzjon, in-nazzjon fi ċglieda mal-imperu, baqghet l-istess firda infatwata, aċċentwata mill-isfukar u
l-kuntradizzjonijiet inerenti fil-qaghda kolonjali, minghajr
ebda integrażzjoni radikali ta’ interessi reċiproc u d-diskus­
sjoni matura ta’ priċoritajiet soċjali u nazzjonali.

Tista’ tara l-aspetti pożittivi tal-kolonjaliZZmu ngliż
f’Malta billi thars lejn il-moderniZZjoni, specjalment fil-
qasam teknoloġija: titjib sanitarju, bħad-drenagġ; komuni-
kazzjoni abjar, bħall-ferrovija; faċilitajiet navali u merkan­
titi moderni, bħall-breakwater u d-dry docks; fil-qasam am­
ministrattiv, legali u edukattiv, proceduri ċżejd eċċjenti mil­
lat organizattiv u, ġenerally, forsi sens abjar ta’ ko-ordi­
nament fil-hajja pubblika, inkluż sens ta’ dixxiplina, mhux
biss f’oqsi ma militari. Imma qabel ma tfahħar jew tiskuża,
trid tiddistwingwi t-teknoloġija mill-kultura, iċ-ċentraZZ-
joni mill-effiċjenzza, il-kummerċ hielės mill-kapitaliZZmu
individualista, ix-xjenza mill-ambjent, id-dixxiplina mis-ser-
vilizzmu u r-regimentazzjoni, mill-pappagalliZZmu l-edukazzjoni
u l-edukazzjoni mil-lingwa. Ghalix filwaqt li min xtaq
iżomm mal-gvern kellu x’jappoġġja, specjalment jekk kien
jara lill-ingliżi jipprovduł x-xoghol u jonqfu l-flus ħawn-
hekk, b’danakollu l-kolonjaliZZmu anke għaliġ — u forsi speċ­
jalment għalin — kien biss il-ħobż għal min m’għandux, u ma
jħosx jew ma Ċirrejaliżzax l’għandu gheruq f’artu, fost
niesu, li għandu l-mod ta’ għajxien tieghu, li artu ma setghejt
lappartjeni lil pajjż ċieħu u titmexxha minn eluf ta’ mill
boghod fl-interess ta’ pajaran li jahkem fuq inhawi oħra taddi­
numa, u titmexxha hekk — bħala pont tal-imperju fuq il-linja
lejn is-subkontinent indjan — minn nies li, għalkemm bżiż­
żmien ħafna Maltin saru jirrispettawhom u anke jhobbuhom,
kienu, fir-rejaltà, poplu differenti għal kollox mill-Maltin. Il-
Maltin u l-Ingliżi f’Malta kienu żewġ razeż: b’sura, tempera­
ment, religjjon, atteggiament u drawwiet tant differenti, u fi
stat ta’ inugwaljanza assoluta. Il-kolonjaliZZmu kien ħażin
mill-qiegħ imma fl gzira żgħira u fqira, li niesża kienu raw suċċessjoni interminabbli ta' dominazzjonijiet, dan sab art fertili ghall-applikazzjoni tieghu. Il-kolonjaliżmu ingliż kien sottli biżżejjed biex ighammex ghajnejn eluf ta' ħaddiem indigeni bl-illusjoni li l-paga fl-ahħar tal-ġimgħa kienet biż-żejjed biex tagħmilhom ħneqmin. Hekk qarraq bil-massa tant li din setget tiddefendih kontra min opponih, u, fost dawk li opponewh, kien hemm ukoll uhud li kienu lesti jintefghu tant l-umbrella ta’ imperjaliżmu ieħor, hekk kif ghamlu l-Maltin fl-1800, meta wara li mietu biex jehilsu minn hakiem barranji fil-pront stiednu ieħor sabiex jipprotegihom...


Kif osserva (per eżempju) Shils f’Political Development in the New States, (Mouton, W 166, 6), l-istess mexxejja u gruppi li jippretendu li jirranġaw l-affarijiiet sikwit ikunu, bla ma jafu, prodotti tas-sistema kolonjali li magħha dejjem kellhom ħabbu wiċċhom fl-imghoddi, u li ċiha, u taħta, kienu mdorrijin jaħdmu; u allura mhux għalkemm tghib f’daqqa wahda — 117 —
SKEDA ORIGINALI LI TINDIKA KIF BDEW U ZVULUPPAW
L-ALLINEJAMENTI PARTIGJANI EWLENIN TA’ PAJJIZNA
(1880–1926)

Ismijiet ta' Fazzjonijiet u Partiti fuq in-naha tax-xellug igifieri “Moderates” versus r-Regim Kolonjali u/jew versus l-Fazjoni jew il-Partit l-iehor: ismijiet ta' Fazzjonijiet u Partiti fuq in-naha tal-lemin igifieri “Extremists” versus r-Regim Kolonjali u/jew versus l-Fazjoni jew il-Partit l-iehor.

1880
REFORM PARTY (-c. 1891)
(S. Savona, Dr. P. Mifsud, F.S. De Cesare)

1887
PARTITO NAZIONALE
(Dr. F. Mizzi, Dr. O. Grech Mifsud, Ct. G. Strickland)

1889
PARTITO UNIONISTA
(R.P. + P.N.: S. Savona, E. Castaldi)

1891
PARTITO DELL’ORDINE
(Count G. Strickland, Dr. A1f. Naudi, E. Ciantar)

1893
PARTITO NAZIONALE (Malta)
(Dr. F. Mizzi, E. Castaldi, Mgr. A. Mifsud)

1895
PARTITO POPOLARE
(S. Savona, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia, A. Dalli, Dr. A. Pullicino)

1897
PARTITO NAZIONALE
(Dr. F. Mizzi)

1899-1905
P.N./ASSOCIAZIONE POLITICA MALTESE
(Dr. F. Mizzi, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia, Dr. F. Sceberras, F. Azzopardi)

1905-1910
P.N.
(F. Azzopardi)

1910
PARTITO POPOLARE (Malta Taghna)
(S. Savona, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia)

1911
COMITATO PATRIOTTICO astensionista
(P.P. + P.N.: Mgr. I. Panzavecchia)

1914
PARTITO POPOLARE (Malta)
(S. Savona, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia)

1921
CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY
(COUNT Sir G. Strickland)

1926
PARTITO POPOLARE/UNIONE POLITICA MALTESE
(Panzavecchia)

1926
C.P. (Strickland) + L.P. (Lt. Col. M. Dundon,
Dr. (Sir) P. Boffa) = “Compact”

l-imgiba ta’ qabel — hekk imdahhla fl-usanzi u l-psikologiżja
tan-nies f’pajjiz — sempliċement ghalix dan ikun ghadu
ekemm heles mill-madmad tal-barrani. La hu hekk, trid tara
jekk in-nies infushom jinbidlux, u jekk l-istrutturi ta’ poter
— politiku u ekonomiku — jibqghux bhal qabel; b’mod
speċjali trid tara kif u kemm tinbidel l-imgiba tal-“ex-
natives” ma’ xulxin, kif u kemm tista’ tkun ġdida r-relaz-
zjoni li tghaddi bejn in-nies “tal-poter” u n-nies “tal-popol-
lin,” kemm tista’ tintrefa’ l-Politika Parrokkjali f’relazjoni
mal-Politika Nazzjonali, u kif tista’ tiġi modifikata radikal-
ment il-polarizzazzjoni li tkun ġiet ritwalizzata fi żmien ġehor.
Sa fejn il-partiti politiċi kienu kkundizzjonati mill-
kolonjaliżmu fl-operazzjoni tiegħu fis-socjetà maltija suppost
li, bid-dekolonjaliżazzjoni, dawn jevolvu minn kwazi-tribujiet
tal-infatwati f’mezzi kemm jista’ jkun razzjonati u effiċjenti ghad-distribuzzjoni tal-poter u tal-ġid billi jservu l-funzjoni
li jiċċekkjaw (bl-effett li jtejbu) wieħed lill-ċehor fl-ahjar
interess tal-publiku in ġenerali,
Trid tara, iżda, jekk dan ikunx qiegħed isir, jew inkella
jejk iżjed ma l-partiti jersqu lejn xulxin fil-politika iżjed tkber (jew titkabbar) ir-rivalità bejn il-partitarji akkaniti.
Meta l-istorici (u l-polittkanti) tal-futur forsi jippruvaw
iwieġbu dawn il-mostqsijiet diffiċi, nittama li ikunu jistghu
jiggwidaw ruħhom xi ffitt mill-esperjenza tal-passat li ppuru-
vajt nirrikostruwixxi, ninterpretta u nfiehem hawnhekk.
L-ARĊISQOF GONZI
INTERVISTAT MIR-RIVISTA STORJA


SUNT BIJOGRAFIKU


Hawnhekk nistgiiu ngiidi li tibda l-hajja pubblika ta’ Gonzi, mhux biss bhala ghalliem, imma wkoll bhala dinjitarju ekkleżjastiku b’relazzjoniżiet ta’jbin mal-isqof Mauro Caruana; u anki, sa ċertu punq, bhala politikant, meta fl-1921 huwa aċ-ċettà li jikkontesta l-elezzjoni ghas-Senat fl-interessi tal-Labour Party.


Fl-1943, wara ħafna attivitajiet pastorali u amministrattivi,


Bhala arċisqof, Gonzi ha sehem f’kważi kull okkażjoni uffiċjali ta’ Żmien importanta u ha wkoll diversi inizjattivi fil-qasam ekkleżjastiku, imma x’aktarx li fl-istorja riċenti jibqża’ magħruż prinċipalment in konnessjoni mal-ġlida hekk imsejha “politiko-reliġjuża” ta’ żmien is-sittinijiet (li llum ma tantx hu moda li ssemmiha, imqar bl-żiżjed intenzjoni retta, u dan “biex ma nqajmux kadavi”).


GONZI JIFTAKAR

RIFLESSJONIJET DWAR EPISODJI U PERSONALITAJJET MATUL ĠŻJED MINN NOFS SEKLU TA’ EPISKOPAT F’GHAWDEX U F’MALTA.

L-ewwel mistoqsija ta’ Storja lil Monsinjur Gonzi kienet dwar l-influwenzi formattivi li kellu fil-bidu tal-karriera spet-takolari tieghu. Mir-risposti tieghu jidher li żgur żewġ persuni li influwenzawh kienu l-isqof Mauro Caruana u l-konfessur u konsulent tieghu: minghand dawn kien sikwit jiehu pariri u jidher li magħhom kien jikkondividu l- ġżjed sentimenti u ħsibi-jjet privati tieghu. L-Arċisqof tana rakkont ta’ ħajtu, f’mu-menti miżewwaq bi kwotazzjonijiet ftit jew wisq kelma b’kelma, sew bil-Malti kemm bl-Ingliż. F’din l-intervista qegħdin appos-
ta nIRRISTRINGU kemm nistghu l-interpretazzjoni storika u nhall-lill-Arcisqof innifsu jiftakar u jikkummenta dwar il-passat tieghu u ta' Malta, b’ton karakteristiku, awtobijografiiku.

Mahtur Professur fl-Università


Magħżul Isqof ta’ Għawdex


— ‘Sar l-isqof t’Għawdex!’
— ‘U x’jimpurtani mill-isqof t’Għawdex jien... ghandi wgiegh ta’ ras.’
— ‘Ma ssaqsinix min sar?’
— ‘X’jimpurtani!’
— ‘Sirt int.’
— ‘Sirt jien? Jien ma naċċettax.’
— ‘Kif ma taċċettax? Ghandek hila tirrifjuta hawn li ghandek il-firma tal-papa, Pio XI?’
— ‘Jiena ma naċċettax. Ma nhossninx kapaċi ghal din il-biċċa. Jien kuntent kif jien...’
— ‘X’se tagħmel?’
— ‘Ma nafx.’
— ‘Almenu mur hu parir.’

Hekk għamel: “Krejt karrozzin — dak iż-żmien! — xi s-satghejn, u mort ghand id-direttur spiritwali, il-konfessur tieghi:

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— ‘Dun, mhux biex inqerr ġejt, biex ittini parir.’
— ‘Fuq hix ... ma naghmlux li sirt isqof t’Ghawdex, hux?’
— ‘Ghalhekk ġejt ... ma naċċetta! L-isqof baghtni nieħu parir, il-parir tieghek.’
— ‘Ghamlek il-Papa, kif tista’ tirrifjuta?’
— ‘Ma nhossnix kapaċi, u lanqas denn li nsir ...’
— ‘Ara inti ġejt ghall-parir tieghi bhala konfessur tieghek?’
— ‘Iva.’
— ‘Ara, Alla jghinek; inti mhux int fittixtha; tahilek Alla u Alla jghinek. Aċċettaha.’
— ‘Mela naċċetta ...’
U ġejt ħawn u lill-isqof ghedtlu: ‘Naċċetta.’ Niftakar qalli: ‘Mela l-kelma tieghi ma swietx; ta’ dak swiet!’ Dik kienet.’

**Elett Membru tal-Parlament**

*Mistoqsija:* Tahseb, Eccellenza, li l-pożizzjoni tieghek fis-senat parlamentari, meta kont membru tal-Partit tal-Haddiema, ghenitek fil-mixja tieghek ‘il quddiem, f’ghajnejn is-Santa Sede. biex imbghad inti lhaqt l-ewwel isqof ta’ Ghawdex, imbghad arċisqof ta’ Malta?


**Kif Dahal fil-Partit tal-Haddiema**

*Mistoqsija:* Imma inti dhalt hekk fil-politika — minn rajk — jew imbuttawk? Xtaqt inti, kont tinterssra ruhek ħafna fil-politika, jew sibt ruhek li speċi mbuttawk?

**Tgewiba:** Jiena l-haddiema kont — dak li jidhirli ġust — niddefendihom; imma nuża moderazzjoni eh ... U fis-senat — issa la ġie l-kljem, imma qalghulieli: ‘inti, avolja tal-Labour, moderat; ma tagħmilix differenza.’ Ghedt: ‘jiena kulħadd Malti ghalija.’

*Mistoqsija:* Kif dhalt fil-politika inti?

**Tgewiba:** Ara dan: kont il-Kalkara; kien il-Hadd — kont


Fil-Funerali tal-Vittmj tas-Sette Giugno

Mistqsi dwar l-iżjed esperjenzi memorabbli ta’ ħajtu, fit-tajjeb ġew hażin, l-Arċisqof Gonzi semma l-ewwelnett is-Sette Giugno: “Wahda mill-hwejjeg li kienet ghamlet kjass kbir f’Malta, u li kienet qangliet il kull min ihobb lill-poplu, u qan-qlitni kienet, kienet is-Sette Giugno; meta anke miextu xi nies. Indifnu f’funeral li ħad partit fih l-Addolorata; u bqajt ghal snin immur ninvistahom. Dak kien wiehed mill-iktar hwejjeg li rratristaw il-qalb ta’ kull min ihobb lil Malta...”

Fil-Kungress Ewkaristiku tal-1913:

Mill-aspett reliġjuż, Gonzi ftakar partikolarment fil-Kungress Ewkaristiku li kien sar f’Malta fl-1913. “Dan kien irnexxa mad-dinja kollha, u kkonsidrat bhala wiehed mill-aqwa kong-

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Mistoqsija: Rigward l-Isqof Portelli, li semmejt, tiftakar xi ħaġa dwar is-Sette Giugno?


L-Arċisqof Gonzi dwar Nerik Mizzi u Lord Strickland

Mistoqsija: Inti li tiftakar lil Nerik Mizzi u lil Lord Strickland, tista tesprimi l-impressjonijiet tieghek dwarhom? X’jid-hirlek minn dawn iż-żewġ persunajġi kbar fl-istorja politika ta’ Malta?

Mistoqsi x'jidhirlu dwar il-pamflet miktub minn student dwar "The Making of Archbishop Gonzi"*, l-arċisqof Gonzi qal li hu kien qrah iżda kkummenta li min kiteit dak il-booklet ma kien resaq qatt lejh u, fi kliem Gonzi: "rigward lili qal ħafna ħmerijiet; ħafna affarijiet li huma veri u importanti ma semmi- hom xejn." Mitlub biex ifisser ruha ahjar, Mgr. Gonzi wara li reġa' ħmenta min-nuqqas ta' konsultazzjoni miegħu da parti ta' l-awtur, ghadda biex jikkjarifika xi aspetti storiċi li jolqtu r-re- putazzjoni u l-karriera tieghu:


F'Għawdex u f'Malta
Hawnhekk Mgr. Gonzi osserva li hu kien dam isqof ta' Għawdex għal għoxrin sena — u bħala eżempju tal-hidma past- torali tiegħu hemm, semma' kungress ewkaristiku li kien "tri- jonf kbir għal Għawdex". Tkellem b'għożża dwar l-Għawdxin: "Għawdex qatt ma kelli x'nilminta, għaliex il-poplu dejjem kien obbidjenti, ossekwijus, lejn l-isqof, habib tal-kleru, m'ghandix xi nghid ..." Huwa irrilieva, iżda li għall-ahhar seba' snin fl-episkopat tiegħu hemmhekk, kien jassisti lill-isqof Caruana f'Malta, u li dan kien jagħmlu fuq it-talba espresso tal-Papa, ‘Il-Papa stess — dan hu sigriet li nista nimmanisfestah — meta l-Ingilterra, mghomija minn Strickland, qalu li jiena

anti-English, ghamluli l-oppożizzjoni, il-Papa, ftit wara li saret dil-biċċa, f'udjenza kien qalli: 'Ara, taf li Monsinjur Caruana ma jiflahx, Mur-oqgħod Malta, Ċinu kemm tista. Ibaq- isqof t'Ghawdex, s'intendi, imma għinu f'kull ma tista, ghax ma jiflahx.' U ghamilt seba' snin — biċċa minnhom is-snin tal-gwerra — qisni kont isqof ta' Malta jien. Id-diffikoltajiet kollha Monsinjur Caruana kien jafdahom f'idejja ghax ma kienx jiflah — hafna snin minnhom għamilhom ghand is-sorijiet 'Blue Sister'. Il-Papa riedni; u jien għedtlu 'almenu darba fil-ġimgħa niġi-Malta u naghmel jew ġurnata jew jumejn u ġara x'ikunu d-diffikoltajiet. Dak li nista nсолvi, nсолvi; u dak li ma nистax niktiblek.'

**Kif lahaq Aréisqof ta' Malta**

**Mistoqsija:** Allura kif tbiddlet is-sitwazzjoni biex sirt persona grata u sirt aréisqof. Ia qabel kienu jghidu li kont anti-English?

—— 'Jiena hawnhekk, ma' ġenbek, ghandi l-ikbar għadu tieghi.'

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— ’Who is that?’
— ’Sir Harry Luke.’
— Why didn’t you tell me that before? Why didn’t you tell me that before? I am afraid it’s too late now!’


Fl-Ghotoj tal-’George Cross’


Kif il-Bdiewa Għawdxin salvaw lil Malta min-Naţi . . .

’Konna hu, jiena, il-Lieutenant Governor, ċertu Mr. Ward
“I beg your pardon Sir; it’s not a question of months, it’s a question of days. I have flour for only about one month. I’m not sure whether that will last for one month . . . ” Il-gvernatur ghamel ‘What can we do? We cannot let the Maltese die of hunger. We must find . . . ’

Ghedtlu: ‘May I say a word?’ (kien is-Sibt dan.) Ghedtlu: ‘I could find a remedy . . . I’ll get wheat from Gozo. It’s the time of the harvest.’ Qalli ‘taghmilha?’ Ghedtlu: ‘naghmilha.’

— ‘Jirnexxilek?’

— ‘Sa ċertu punt, tirnexxi. Imma biex naghmilha: on two conditions. Inti ghedtîlna li dan top secret. I mean to ask the farmers of Gozo to give us the wheat. How can I persuade them unless I lay before them the situation?’

— ‘Alright. Tell them what the situation is like. What is your second condition?’

— ‘Give me petrol, I have only one can of petrol per week as bishop of Gozo.’

— ‘You will have as much as you need.’


Fiż-żjara ta’-Re George VI

Chief Justice, u l-kap tal-Air Force ingliż, li kienu ghamluhom Knights. Ir-re tahom il-pussess bix-xabla, imbghad wara il-gvernatur qalilna: 'irid jismaghkom wiehed wiehed.' Ghedltlu: 'Monsinjur Caruana m'hux kapaci; rajtuh kif ġab ruhu fil-pranzu: marid; ma jiflahx'; u rxnxilna nipperswaduh li jmur fil-palazz. (U, in parenteżi, dik in-nhar stess fil-hamsa u nofs ta' wara nofs in-nhar, ghamlulu l-grizma tal-morda, ġasbu li se jmut; imbghad irpilja.) Allura dhalt jien: ir-re hawn, jiena quddiemu, Lord Gort hawn. Qallu: Your Majesty, had it not been for the great help I received from the bishop of Gozo, I wouldn't have been able to save Malta. And, Your Majesty wouldn't have been here today.' Meta qal hekk il-gvernatur, ferahli u rringrazzjani r-re. Mar 1-Ingilterra u — sirt naf — qalhom: 'x'intom tghidu u temmnu dak li ntqal? Il-gvernatur qal-li li kieku ma kienx hu ma kienx isalva 'l Malta! Ara, iktbu malajr Ruma and withdraw your opposition!' Hekk ghamlu. Malajr mar il-High Commissioner; qalhom: The King is sorry to say that he made a mistake, because he was badly informed. He withdraws the opposition, the veto, and wishes to appoint Mgr. Gonzi archbishop of Malta,' Spiccat.


Dwar il-kwistjon "tal-Caravaggio"


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Dwar il-Vjolenza Politika

Mistoqsija: F'wiehed mill-ahhar diskorsi tieghek bhala Arċiṣqof Metropolita, ġinti deherż imhasseb ħafna dwar il-futur ta' Malta, imma b'danakollu ftit wara ghedt pubblikament li nies kriminali li kkommnettew atti ta' vjolenza politika kien jisthōq-qilhom il-mahfra. Tista taghti spjegazzjoni ta' dan?

Tweġiba: Jiena kont ippublikajt pastorali qasira fejn ghedt li jiena kuntent li qed nara 1-kwit u 1-paċi. Kont ghadni kif qrajt li 1-Papa kien ghamel rakkomandazzjoni: kien hemm wiehed li kienu kkunddanaww ghall-mewt, u dan il-Papa talab ghal-li, u kienu laqghuha sa ċertu punt. Dak inkoraggini... Jiena kkundannajt dak il-hsarat li saru fil-pastorali li ktibt ta' qabel dik; ghedt però: dawk kien hemm ħafna żgħażagħ li lanqas età m'ghandhom — dawn jekk tibghatuhom il-habs jithassru iżjed hemmhekk. Dawn, naturalment, kienu fil-gioventù tagħhom, f'dak 1-entużjażmu, dawn lanqas kienu jafu x'inhuma jaghmlu; wiehed juża moderazzjoni magghom. Inkoraggjet minn dak li 1-Papa stess ghamel... Din ġiet minn xi whud ininterpreta ħażin. Jien m'ghedlux jahfer lil dawk li kissru 1-każini u ghamlu — 1-irġiel li kienu; imma dawn iż-żgħażagħ lanqas kienu jafu, mfலkelmin minn dak 1-entużjażmu; dik kienet. Ma stajtx napprova dak li ghamlu jien — ma jfissirxi lapprovaju — imma jiltaqgħu ma' ħafna brikkuni hemm fil-habs, u jagħmlu xi sena hemm, jikkorrompu ruħhom...

Dwar iż-Zwieġ ċivill

Mistoqsija: Ma talsibx li jista' jkun hemm, sa ċertu punt, separazzjoni legali bejn dak li hu dover religjuż u dritt sekulari f'dawn iż-żminijiet, bhal, per eżempju, fil-każ ta' żwieġ ċivili? Jekk taqbel ma' dan, sa fejn tahseb li hu possibbli f'Malta?


**Dwar dak li hu Essenzjali fil-Hajja ta' Poplu...**


Spiro Mizzi: Il-Karriera Twila Ta’ l-Industrijalista
Numru Wiehed ta’ Malta


L-iżjed fattur importanti li ghen u sahansitra għamel pos-
sibbli l-izvilupp tal-personalità intraprendenti ta’ Mizzi kien, bla dubju, n-navy; fi kliemu stess: “il-presenza tan-navy — hi kienet is-success tieghi.”


* F'nofs is-seklu dl-datax lil Ġlanaq Miżzi l-Inglilha kienu bdew isejelu “Frank”; allura dan malajr iddecieda li jibdel ismu, u hekk sejjaħ lill-kumpanija FRANK MIZZI & SONS.
servizz li kienu joffru; u dan kien servizz rari ghax f’Malta wara l-ewwel gwerra ma kienx hawn izjed minn tużza karrozz bhal dawn. (Wiehed mill-fttit nies f’Malta li kellhom karrozza kien, per eżempju, Sir Gerald Strickland.) Il-klijentela ta’ Mizzi malajr saret mill-ġdid il-flotta, b’mod speċjali l-uffiċjali tan-navy Ingliża, filwaqt li mill-banda l-ohra kompla ghaddej ukoll l-linkarigu fit-trasport pubbliku.

Lil Spiro Mizzi xejn ma kont tghaddih mill-għajn il-labra: b’perseveranza liema bhala baqa’ ghaddej iżid u jkabbar fuq li kien ġrnexxiel jagħmel. Kien determinat li ma jhall lil ġidhak bih u li kemm jista’ jkun ma jkollu ghalfejn jiddependi fuq ġadd; ghalhekk beda jqara kemm jiflaħ rivisti amerikani u ġinliżi dwar il-karrozz u l-mekkanika.


* Genoveffa née Moncada minn Bormla, li żewġet lil Mizzi fl-1916, kienet bint inginer ta’ dixxendenza nobbli li kien ġarab lejn Malta minn Catania.
fil-Birgu.


Mizzi jammetti li fi żmienu “ma tantx kien hawn kompetizzjoni, mentri ġllum hawn kompetizzjoni qawwija”. Għalkemm dan hu jarah bħala sinqal tajjeb, l-implikazzjoni ta’ kliemu li li kien iżjed faċli tinnexxi fin-negozju qabel milli ġllum!


It-tifel imqareb li ried jirnexxi u ma jibqax fejn kien we ra x’isarraf meta kien għadu jattendi l-kulleġġ ta’ Flores — mnejn spiċċa ħażin, jew ahjar spiċċa bit-tajjeb: għaliex meta nduna li kien qieghed jiġi kkastigat waqt il-ħin tal-pranzu semplici-ment biex is-surmaż kien jiffranka li jixtri l-frotta għad-diżerta. Spiru irrabja u telghalu, qaleb il-mejda għal fuq is-surmaż, u minn dak in-nhar ma marx iżjed skola . . .
RESEARCH WORK AND PUBLICATIONS
CLAIRE SAMUT*
HISTORY THESES AND DISSERTATIONS
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IN RECENT YEARS

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SCIBERRAS Saviour: The Council of Government during World War II, 1940-1943, (B.A. Gen., 1973);
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Why is the 14th century known as the Dark Ages? Too many Knights!
Although by no means complete or precise, this list, made-available to us by MICHAEL SANT, * makes several minor research works known to the public. The projects listed here are presently based in the History Room (Room 25, Third Floor), Department of Education Studies, M.C.A.S.T., Msida, and they may be consulted by arrangement with the said Department.

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* MICHAEL SANT, M.A., teaches history at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, where he also heads the Department of Educational Studies.
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Archaeology is the science of digging around to
find another civilization to blame ours on.

Jack Wasserman.
A B.A. graduate, NORA SAMMUT is in charge of the Melitensia section of the University of Malta Library at Tal-Qroqq.
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JOURNALS AVAILABLE AT
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Readers, students, local residents, and visitors to Malta are asked to note that the following are some of the journals that may be consulted in the University Library at Tal-Qroqq:

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Ray Bondin: Events Leading to the Internment and Deportation of Maltese Nationalists, 1940-1942

In May and June of 1940 more than a hundred Maltese were interned in a local camp. Forty-five of these were deported to Uganda in February of 1942. These persons were deported without ever having been accused publicly for any reason whatsoever. They were interned "for security reasons" and never told precisely why each one of them was interned.

The thesis studies the events that might have influenced the British Authorities in Malta to take such drastic action. The whole matter of internment and deportation has previously been ignored by all contemporary historians even though it is such an important incident in the social and political contemporary history of our islands.

The thesis studies the political atmosphere of those years, in particular the growing fear among the pro-British and the British of the Nationalists and the Italian sympathisers.

The conclusion reached by this study is that the British Authorities would never have acted as they did were it not for the insistence of certain Maltese. To prove this, one whole long Chapter is dedicated to the incitement of the Constitutionalist press, particularly in the months preceding internment. In another chapter the part played by the Constitutionalisits in the Council of Government is recorded, particularly a speech of Major Roger Strickland calling for internment and deportation.

The involvement of the Constitutionalisits is further documented through their contact with the Security Officer, Colonel Bertram Ede, who seems to have been a very powerful personality in the British ranks in the island.

Part of the research for the thesis was done at the Public Records Office in London. Almost everything that had to do with these incidents was "destroyed under statute". This of course means that we could never know fully the British side to the story.

The thesis is far from a complete history of these incidents. Much more research has still to be done on the subject. It is
after all extremely difficult to try and understand why the British authorities wanted to deport persons who varied from an ex-Chief Justice to an ordinary Dockyard worker. Some are still alive but even they never knew exactly why they were deported; they only know of the hatred that certain other Maltese had for them. For some, the war was a good excuse to get rid of certain opposition politicians.

An important part of the thesis regards the deportees' defence against the order for deportation. It was possible for the Government, through the Malta Defence Regulations, to intern persons in Malta but deportation was something altogether different. It was condemned even by British constitutional principles. For these reasons, on receiving the order for deportation the deportees presented a case in court. They won the case but on the following day the Council of Government met and passed Ordinance No. 1 of 1942 giving the Governor the right to intern Maltese in other parts of the Commonwealth. The deportees presented another case in court, which they lost. They appealed from this sentence, but by the time the case came to an end in May of 1942 they had already been in Uganda for nearly three months.

Anton Quintano: Fort Ricasoli: A Historical Survey, 1670-1798

The main object of the dissertation is to present a picture of the seventeenth-century fort under the Hospitallers' rule. The research involved was carried out in the National Library of Malta, mainly from manuscripts in the Archives of the Order of Malta. The registers of the Congregation of Fortifications is the particular section which provided the bulk of the material used.

The dissertation has five chapters. In Chapter I it discusses the history of Rinella Point before 1670, the year in which the fort was built, explaining how the site became known as 'Gallows' Point'; the role Gallows' Point played during the siege of 1565; the building of Orsi Tower at its point in 1629; as well as the proposals for the building of a fort there.
The second chapter deals with the arrival of the principal military architect of the House of Savoy, Count Antonio Maurizio Valperga; his plans for the fort; Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli’s donation of 20,000 scudi for its erection; and a study of the fort’s plan, as constructed between 1670 and 1674.

Chapter III is a study of various stages in the building of, and extensions to, the fort, as could be deduced from the reports of the military engineers, which commented on the state of Fort Ricasoli. About twenty-five engineers including Don Carlos de Grunembergh, Jacob de Tigne’ and Francois Charles de Montdion commented on the fort.

Chapter IV deals with the garrison inside the fort and its work in case of an invasion. It covers the data available for the artillery extant in the fort during the eighteenth century, and Orsi Tower’s function in the prevention of the escape of slaves; the Fondazione Cotoner, which was a fund instituted by Grand Master Nicola Cotoner for the maintenance of the garrison, is also discussed.

The last chapter deals with the history of the Church of St. Nicholas, which served the fort, and with the social history of the fort, especially by means of tables which give data regarding incomes of the garrison and the workers on the walls of the fort. Mikiel Anton Vassalli’s imprisonment in the fort in 1797 is also covered in this chapter.

The main cause for building the fort had been the need to defend the entrance to the harbour, to guarantee shelter for the relief upon which the island ultimately depended in case of siege. The dissertation considers how such protection was provided for the Christian navies by means of Fort Ricasoli.

**KOTBA TAS-SENA/BOOK REVIEWS**


496 pp., 8 appendices, index, supplementary notes and corrections, maps, photographs and illustrations — £M6.

The most cursory glance through this book will show that it is very much a work written by a soldier for soldiers. Indeed
it originally appeared as a series of articles in the *Armed Forces of Malta Quarterly Journal* between 14 and 147. It contains a great mass of detail which really can only be fully appreciated by those with some experience of the army. In parts therefore the layman will find the going rather heavy. The sheer weight of data — this is a long book with narrow margins — is most impressive and informative but impossible to absorb in one or two sittings. Extracts such as the one reproduced below thankfully do liven the text occasionally:

"I have recently received the command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Major General Layard, to direct that you will give the necessary orders to Lieutenant A. Beamish . . . under your command to restore the daughter of Signor Nicolò Attard to him immediately upon his application for her." (p. 79)

It makes a most welcome change from:

"— All duties will be performed in Cloth Tunics and Chacos (or Busbies), except fatigues, which will be performed in white frocks and forage caps.
— Regiments in possession of the Norfolk Jacket may wear it on those occasions, on which the Shell Jacket was worn, when that article formed a part of the soldiers' dress at this Station." (p. 223)

But apart from merely being the painstaking accumulation and presentation of minutiae — and to be fair most of it is useful for reference purposes — the book does succeed in its theme of tracing the evolution of the Royal Malta Artillery. The Brigadier tells the story of the ancestry of his regiment from its conception with the Maltese Light Infantry of 1800–1802, through the various short lived units raised in the period 1803–1815 — such as the Malta Coast Artillery, to the Royal Malta Fencible Regiment created in 1815 and converted into an Artillery Corps in 1861. The term Fencible (i.e. for defensive purposes only) was dropped in view of the regiment's service in Egypt and from 1889 the corps was designated the 'Royal Malta Artillery'. For the history of these units this book supersedes the accounts in Major A.G. Chesney, *Historical Records of the Maltese Corps of the British Army* (London 1897).

Brigadier Samut-Tagliaferro has delved deeper and attempted to examine the attitude of the British authorities in Malta and (more important) that of the War Office in London towards the units raised in Malta. The picture that emerges is of signi-
ficance generally to the student of Anglo-Maltese relations during the colonial period. The Maltese corps was caught in a vicious circle. The men were quite prepared to serve abroad provided they were given treatment equal to that of general service units. This the War Office refused to sanction. Then the corps was obliged to serve in Malta only and to accept a lower status as regards pay, rights and conditions of service (eg. pensions) even though it carried out the same duties as other units stationed in Malta. Officers found it next to impossible to obtain promotion and periodically the units had to be rejuvenated through the simple but cruel expedient of axeing the ageing officers corps and shedding worn out troops. Since the British authorities in Malta were normally satisfied with the quality of the Maltese units the situation was clearly frustrating and tragic.

There are two points about this book which the academic will not like. Though the author has depended almost entirely on primary source materials and very laudably gives us very generous extracts from original documents, he does not clearly identify the location of his sources. To take an example at random; a reference to War Office letter 4822/1/165 of 20th December 1896 (p. 317) does not tell the reader where he can look at the original; is it in a private collection, a public Archive, in Malta or in London. A footnote must not only give the authority for a statement of fact or opinion; it must also give the location (in the case of unpublished material) of the authority cited.

Secondly while the author is in complete command of the history of the R.M.A. there are a few irritating errors in some of his essays into wider fields. For example (p. 318) H.M.S. Victoria did not blow up after colliding with the Camperdown; she capsized as a result of a second terrible mistake by Admiral Teyon. He ordered the vessel to move forward and the extra pressure on her submerged bows tipped her over.

These matters must not be allowed to detract from the importance of this book. I for one am very much looking forward to the second volume.

Roger Vella Bonavita

Much ado about something — could well be the initial comment passed by readers of "Hal Millieri — A Maltese Casale, its Churches and Paintings". A somewhat harsh, cynical — and in some cases typical — but, for all that, correct judgment.

Correct, only if the reader belongs to that class affected by intellectual affectation, a not uncommon local condition among a few of those who somehow made it to tertiary level of education, occasionally not even as far as that but who have been catapulted by some mysterious force by means which are equally mystifying and mind-boggling, to the (to them) exhilarating heights (metaphorically speaking of course) where they cannot be but seen, hear or read (small thanks to modern methods of communication to lecture to us (one should say at us!) poor long-suffering reading, listening and viewing public, on any and every subject they may, in their wisdom, care to file under the much abused term 'culture'. All this to such an extent that when contrary to expectations a really worthwhile contribution is projected by our communications media its brilliance if more often than not dulled and blunted by the surrounding trivia. The reader of the above intellectual calibre, who excels through the quality and quantity of his mediocrity is invariably harsh and cynical in his appraisal of a book like "Hal Millieri — A Maltese Casale . . .".

Correct, only if the reader allows himself to drift into a dark ugly mood and broods with each page read on the price, which ever since the purchase he has decided to be prohibitive to say the last, especially in the light of the present crazy age of stringent economies. The atmosphere becomes too oppressive and unbearable — at least as far as further reading is concerned — and paves the way to a cruel, negative, statistical analysis of the work itself. The findings are appalling: besides forty unnumbered pages of photos of questionable technical and artistic quality, the book boasts of no less than forty three pages taken up with footnotes (too technical decides the reader); plans and outlines (which look as if they were lifted out of a child-
ren's drawing book — scoffs the reader!); appendices — some
of which are in Latin (what use is a dead language in this day
and age demands the reader!); introductory pages which are
either blank or contain an orgy of thank-yous, proskets and well-
dones (never from so few to so many muses the reader caught
in a rare moment of comiseration with the editor!). A quick
substraction from a total of one hundred and forty three pages
and placed against the price of the book convinces the reader
beyond reasonable doubt that he has been had. Even if one is
prepared to take into account, and the reader does so very
reluctantly, the excellent printing, efficient binding and attrac-
tive jacket, the price still remains pretty steep for a collection of
studies about a pretty little church in a pretty little spot near a
pretty little village on a pretty little island and to cap it all, the
whole thing is about a pretty little settlement which in its hey-
day numbered fewer than sixty households all of which have
disappeared centuries ago. In the light of the above, claims that
the book has a “significance (that) goes beyond the island it-
self” and that “the whole work represents a contribution to Me-
diterranean studies in general and to its island life in particular”
seem somewhat pretentious to say the last.

But are they? Even if one goes as far as accepting some of
the foregoing criticisms and he must also accept the true worth
of the book. This is so when one considers the fact that the bulk
of historical publications have to date followed two main trends:
accounts of what foreign powers ruling Malta accomplished or
failed to accomplish, and folklore. Because the former has
largely failed to quench the thirst for a history that is founded
on a purely Maltese nationalistic identity, the latter has alas
been allowed to become synonymous with that identity, result-
ing in projecting folklore as the only ‘discipline’ to the exclu-
sion of all others that together should make up that identity.
“Ha! Millieri: A Maltese Casale . . .” goes a long way to re-
vealing that identity by making use of a data available and creat-
ing a global picture of medieval Malta in all its aspects be they
economic, social, religious or artistic, not forgetting to incor-
porate folklore to complete the scene. The contributions made
by Anthony Luttrell (who is also the editor), Godfrey Wettinger,
Mario Buhagiar, Genevieve Bautier Bresc, Paola Zanolini, Tony
Mangion and others are most worthy of note if only because
they evaluate their findings on two levels running parallel. For
instance they conclude that the paintings of the Church of the
Annunciation at Hal Millieri are Byzantinesque in style, Catalan and Valencian in influence and Italian in execution. In other words “at the heart of Malta’s artistic history, the Hal Millieri paintings possibly reflect a Norman-Byzantine iconography while foreshadowing the predominance in Malta of a Sicilian school, the establishment of which was probably connected in some way with the apparent Maltese origin of Antonello da Messina’s Saliba kinsmen. Malta was thus associated with Sicily in a common artistic experience and development”.

The book itself is the result of an unusual and unique cooperation between the Ecclesiastical Authorities, the State and a leading public voluntary organization, Din l-Art Helwa, in salvaging from total destruction by the two relentless enemies of all historical monuments — the weather and vandalism, and restoring and preserving what was left of one of the very few examples of medieval buildings still standing. That this building still stands is in itself a marvel since according to experts a building, given normal weather conditions, and made of the local soft limestone has a maximum lifespan of only about seven centuries. The book comes into its own when one appreciates that it incorporates all the material and records that have been compiled about Hal Millieri and the surrounding area thus making available a sound basis for further investigations. In fact soon after publication the Museums Department conducted (in April) extensive excavations leading to new discoveries besides confirming what was already known but only through the local parish and notarial archives.

In the words of the Editor, Dr. Luttrell: “The aim (of the book) was to provide something more than technical reports and guide to the Church; it was hoped to make a modest contribution to Maltese, and even perhaps Mediterranean history, through a work which would form an introduction to an essentially Maltese aspect of the island’s past ... it seemed valuable not merely to study a single village but also to test theories on a narrow front, to produce a particular case study in depth and detail which might provide fresh insights and suggest new materials and methods of approach”. This clearly shows that the book is not intended to be the last word on anything. It may be regarded as an essential cog in a wheel full of incentives and initiatives on its way to opening a global vista of the hitherto largely unknown medieval history of the Maltese Islands.

George Attard
Dr. Paul Cassar, who may be said to have established himself as Malta's leading social historian by his *Medical History of Malta* (published in 1965) has now tried his hand at an exercise in diplomatic history. As two more far removed aspects of the same subject as social and diplomatic history it is difficult to contemplate, what happened in fact was that the author used Consular Despatches (1801-1906) while keeping a keen eye for data that had a social relevance and especially for that having a 'medical' character. Dr. Cassar is understandably conscious of his own inclination: "This association of illness and navigation", he writes (on p. 73), "is familiar to the medical historian for whom the story of sea communications is but one aspect of the history of the spread of disease from one country to another."

The book is meticulously written, carefully documented, and indeed it could not have been more detailed than it is. One wonders, at some points, what the historical significance of certain facts is. For example (p. 29): "Most probably the first occasion on which the American flag flew on this flagstaff was the feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven which falls on the 15th August." Or (p. 38): "On the 7th September 1848 Mr. Winthrop married Emma, daughter of Sir William Curtis, at the Collegiate church of St. Paul in Valletta. At about this time he resided at 76 Kingsway Valletta."

The book brings to light some very noteworthy documentary evidence relating both to international relations in commerce and politics as well as to social and political conditions in Malta itself. There are at least two despatches which clearly illustrate Malta's utility with regard to U.S. interests in the Mediterranean and simultaneously Malta's interests arising from this American presence. The elaborate proposals made by M. de Maisonneuve (Malta's Minister Plenipotentiary at Berlin and Warsaw) to Mr. Thomas Pinckney (Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in England) in 1794 are stunning. They lay out a *quid pro quo* in the form of "a treaty of union and alliance between the United States and the Grand Master of Malta" at a
time when the Order’s relations with France were deteriorating and the U.S.A.’s interest in the Mediterranean was increasing. In exchange for American security and finance, the Malta government offered, inter alia, the use of “a free port”, “the shipyards”, “the arsenals”, “the stores”, “a free medical service”, “excellent sailors” and galley convoys for American merchantmen. The document is reproduced in full (unfortunately in the same type-print as the text) on pages 5-8, but without comment. This early functional view of Malta’s strategic location as an entrepot which could be “patronized” by the U.S.A. ties up with the ideas expressed by Mr. John Worthington (American Consul in Malta from 1882 to 1894) who envisaged Malta as potentially “the headquarters for a central Mediterranean trade depot for introducing and distributing (American) goods into Sicily and North Africa.” “It is remarkable,” Cassar observes (p. 52), “that Worthington’s advice cannot be bettered after the lapse of almost a century.”

*Early Relations between Malta and U.S.A.* treats particularly of various incidents associated with major events — such as the Tripolitan War (1801-1805), the Anglo-American War (1812-1814), the Crimean War (1854-1856) and the American Civil War (1860-1865) — that directly or indirectly affected Malta, or that at least attracted the attention of the local American consul. In doing so, it often makes use of the consul’s despatches — giving views or eye-witness accounts — to describe facets of the Maltese situation. For example, we get vivid descriptions of popular festivities to mark the fall of Sebastopol in October 1855 (p. 35); rival newspaper accusations regarding freemason practices (pp. 39-40); demonstrations by “pro” and “anti” factions during Giuseppe Garibaldi’s visit in 1864 (pp. 41-44); and the continuing slave business during the 1870s, via Malta, in negro women and children — including the “best looking girls” captured from tribes inhabiting the territory around Khartoum (pp. 46-47).

In writing on trade relations — and often enough the Anglo-American rivalry in this field — Dr. Cassar provides us with some useful information on factors influencing the fluctuating fortunes of local crafts and produce: lace, tobacco, cotton, wheat.

The ingenious, straightforward William Winthrop Andrews (American Consul from 1834 to 1869) was quite a character and his personality dominates the book. This causes some
slight repetition at times since Dr. Cassar has (rightly in my view) tried to avoid a strictly chronological, “consul-by-consul” methodology, preferring instead to concentrate on themes: “The American Navy and Malta”; “Trade”; “Emigration”, etc. As for our dear departed friend Winthrop, suffice it to record that his versatility comprised actions ranging from mistaking an invitation card from Governor More O’Ferrall for “a lady’s handwriting” (p. 33) to successfully advocating “the creation of the postal money order system in the United States” (p. 59).

The chapter on “Emigration” is only four pages long but it is arguably the most stimulating; in this I may be prejudiced however owing to my own modest (if growing) interest in the field of migration studies. He has been on the look-out for conspicuous Maltese surnames in U.S. history but apart from individual names here and there he does not attempt to look further for the causes or patterns of emigration, which is clearly not his task here.

Cassar has an uncomplicated style of writing and he is obviously capable of a nice sense of balance. For example (p. 83):

With regard to the Maltese political scene, Sir Richard More O’Ferrall had to steer a middle course between the currents of liberalism and the waves of reactionary opposition. On one hand he was accused of treating the unfortunate with inhospitable harshness and inhumanity; on the other he was urged to keep the refugees away from the Island.

Beautifully printed and bound at Interprint (Malta) Limited, this second Midsea publication is reasonably priced: it is an original, sober and specialized study. It should certainly be on the shelf of anybody with a “Maltese-American” connection, as well as in every Melitensia library.

The book ends with a hilarious scene which truly deserves to be called by that untranslatable Maltese cultural stereotype term “amerikanata”, or the exploits of Rufus Wells, “an American ‘Professor of aeronautism’”, who in 1870 thrice failed in his attempt to give a public show outside Valletta in a gas balloon and ended up in jail after being pelted with stones and other missiles by the many angry spectators. Charlie Chaplin, who came later, might have been inspired.

More seriously now, I venture to hope that perhaps the
British High Commission and the Italian Embassy in Malta may be inspired by the praiseworthy initiative taken by the American Embassy—making a century's consular despatches available in microfilm at the University of Malta Library: theirs would, of course, be a more expensive process but also one more relevant to the brass tacks of Maltese colonial history.

Henry Frendo
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