

In search of the roots of the *Unione Politica Maltese* (U.P.M.): religion, identity and social consciousness

The Genesis of Maltese Nationalism

The origins of Malta's national consciousness make for a troubled story. Various claims are advanced from time to time about Malta's historical figures, with certain characters dropping out of prominence, others underrated and new ones discovered. In this paper, I would like to study the characters of a number of individuals and analyse how their thinking and ideas influenced Malta's political thought. A rough genealogical line can be traced showing how political principles and ideas have been handed down from generation to generation. The genesis of a number of present-day Maltese politicians can be traced back to the distant past, and I think it can be shown that Edward Fenech Adami, in whose honour this book is being published, has his political ideals and leanings rooted in the origins of Maltese politics and the initiatives of some of its pioneers.

Language and religion were described by the paladin of 'Nationalism', Ernest Renan, as the cornerstone of any Nationalist movement. In Malta, these two concepts played an important role. Religion was omnipresent not only in terms of faith and worship: the priests and the clergy were the prime agents to spread Nationalist theories throughout the 19th century. A close look at Maltese history will show that it was a customary, and accepted practice, for priests to play an active and determining part in politics. One therefore cannot study the genesis of Maltese politics and ignore the positive contribution that members of the clergy gave to the cause of Maltese Nationalism.

In writings on the narrative of our recent past, attention has centred on both the shaping spirit and the personalities behind the Maltese Nationalistic movement, sometimes without appropriate awareness of some of the determining

regional factors. The history of our nation has too often been read within the traditional framework of analysis that focuses too much on events without giving sufficient importance to causation and to what J. H. Hexter calls 'accident in history'. An attempt to rectify this through a differently focused analysis yields a somewhat surprising result. Whilst the linguistic dimension of Nationalism finds its breeding ground in Valletta, the development of religion as a political tool for social reform and resistance against the outsider had the town of Senglea as one of its locations for growth. This town played an important role in the *forma mentis* of Malta's political system and there should be no doubt that its history and its people deeply influenced the formation of the present-day Nationalist Party.

I shall begin by studying the role and importance of Valletta for the origins of the language question through the analysis of some public figures who were involved in it.

Abbé Giuseppe Vella (1749-1814)

Language was a significant focus in the principles of Nationalism and, as is to be expected in a staunch Catholic country, the priests played a major role in fomenting unrest. Arguably, the language issue was discovered in Malta even before that involving religious disputes. At least during the times of the Knights, religion could not be used as a weapon against the foreign ruler as the latter professed the same faith as their subjects. Religion began to assume a major role after the end of the Hospitaller period when Malta came under the influence of two powers France and Britain that, in their own way, expressed anti-Catholic sentiments.



Abbé Giuseppe Vella (1748 - 1814)

During the time of the Knights, teaching was in the hands of the priests. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of priests took the initiative of writing to the Bishop's Curia to be given permission to open grammar schools for the teaching of languages (primarily Latin) and other Humanities subjects. But, it was among the rank and file of the clergy that the local vernacular began to find support at the end of the eighteenth century. There should be no doubt that the clergy would have continued supporting the Maltese language had not the new Anglican rulers resorted to the teaching and learning of Maltese as a medium for proselytising, and for this reason the local clergy began to look suspiciously on the learning of Maltese, with the result that they agitated more and more in favour of the use of the Italian language in Malta.

In the context of the above, it should come as no surprise that the first persons to use and write in the vernacular were priests. Perhaps the best-known figures, in our 18th-century history, are Saverio Ignazio Mifsud and Gio Francesco Agius de Soldanis. Whilst Agius de Soldanis hailed from Gozo,¹ and Mifsud from Valletta,² both were active in the last city. It was in Valletta that the school of Arabic was situated in the eighteenth century. Amongst its patrons, one finds the surnames of Azzopardi, Fenech, Salvatore Bonnici, Mikiel Anton Vassalli, Gregorio Carbone and Giuseppe Calleja.³ Many of these individuals, if not all of them, expressed the vocation to become priests. In my opinion, one of the first persons to have understood the political power hidden within the Maltese vernacular language was none other than Abbé Giuseppe Vella, who used the Maltese language as a political tool. This fact has been long overlooked by historians with the result that it has not been properly analysed.

Vella is mostly known for his forgeries related to the presumed discovery of a series of documents related to the Arab domination of Sicily. These documents were a fraud, having been fabricated by Vella and his Maltese colleague Giuseppe Calleja. This story would go on to acquire international reach.

It should be observed that Vella's purpose was to use history as a political leverage in support of the Viceroy in Sicily in the latter's struggle for political reforms that were being strongly opposed by the indigenous landed gentry. No doubt that this forgery aroused considerable curiosity in Sicily with regard to the history of the Arab period. Michele Amari would eventually undertake to rectify matters, at the turn of the 19th century, by embarking on the writing of an extensive history of the Arab domination of Sicily, based on real documentary evidence.

The presumed discoveries by Vella were published into sets of books, one called the *Codex* and the other the *Diplomatica*. When I read them, I was astonished by the language. It sounded more Maltese than Arabic. For this reason, I strongly believe that these two works need to be re-evaluated and studied as a testimony of the Maltese language. Appraisals of Vella should be more sensitive to his

contribution to the political history of Malta. I am more than convinced that such sensitiveness would lead to the figure of Vella being rehabilitated in history. If his forgeries had been allowed to exert their political influence, the history of Sicily would have taken a different course. These fabrications were aimed at helping in the creation of an environment for the necessary legal and political framework, in support of the monarchy, for the reform of the Latifundia system, through which extensive agrarian estates were exclusively controlled by the nobility and worked by a forced labour recruitment system.

Gaetano Mannarino (1722-1814)

Gaetano Mannarino was another contemporary priest who gave his services to politics and, like Vella, is still struggling to find recognition of his political role in history. The Maltese language was the medium of his political struggle; it was the language of his sermons.⁴ It should be pointed out that during this period Italian was the language of the ruling class. Very few of the ruling class knew the Maltese vernacular, with the consequence that they had to rely on spies or informers to extract knowledge of what the political agitators were talking about.

Perhaps the fact that Mannarino was a priest who dared to rebel against a monastic religious order that ruled Malta with an iron fist can be one of the reasons why he has been denied full historical recognition. To this day, the period of the Knights is still viewed in Malta with nostalgia, and is often romanticised. However, if one reads the basic elements of Mannarino's story, it is significant that he felt compelled to successfully organise a rebellion against the rulers for



Gaetano Mannarino (1722 - 1814)

which some of his compatriots and fellow conspirators were brutally executed after cruel torture and without even being put on trial, whilst Mannarino was imprisoned for life.⁵

The fact that Napoleon Bonaparte, in 1798, freed Mannarino may not have helped his rehabilitation after the Maltese rebelled against the French. Even the fact that Mannarino was held in a dreadful prison and three of his companions were barbarously strangled did not arouse any compassion. Unfortunately for Mannarino and his supporters, this uprising was seen as a complete failure and this is understandable since history, more often than not, is written by the victors. It was thanks to the diffusion of Cesare Beccaria's work that sympathy began to be shown towards the ringleaders of this uprising⁶ at the turn of the nineteenth century. But those who showed sympathy were just a few solitary voices.

Thus, it is not surprising that, in the yearly celebrations held on 8th September to commemorate one of Malta's national feasts, no mention is made of Mannarino. It was exactly on the 8th September 1775 that this man organised a well-planned and efficiently executed attack on the Knights, succeeding in gaining control of two of the three principal fortifications of Valletta, that is, the forts of Saint Elmo and the Cavalier of Saint James. These fortifications had the dual role of guarding against an outside invasion but also of controlling inside disturbances.⁷

Undoubtedly, Mannarino became a victim of character assassination. With the genesis of Maltese nationalism, controversy began to surround his figure as early as the nineteenth century. Nicola Zammit was one of the first writers to express any sympathy towards Mannarino. He described Mannarino as a man of liberal ideas and generous heart who had distributed his discreet wealth to charity.⁸

The Curia records confirm that Mannarino came from a relatively wealthy family from Valletta⁹ and resided within the confines of the parish of Saint Paul's, in the area of *Santa Maria di Gesù*.¹⁰ At home, Mannarino's parents, Giuseppe and Giovanna, could afford the luxury of the services of both a female slave and a servant.¹¹ When in 1756, he decided to join the priesthood, his mother (since by then his father was already dead) gave him two plots of land one situated at *Tal-Barrani*, in the limits of Gudja, and the other at *Ta' Sardinia*, in Bubaqra as *patrimonio sacro*.¹² On becoming a priest, Mannarino was assigned pastoral duties in Floriana and it was here, within the periphery of Valletta, that he found the support of a number of fellow priests and clerics from different parishes, together with a number of lay persons who shared, with him, the same political ideals. Together they planned the rebellion against the Knights.¹³

It should also be pointed out that Mannarino had been physically assaulted by the Knights¹⁴ while undertaking his pastoral duties in the Floriana parish. The reason for such an assault is very clear; members of the Order began to feel very uneasy on witnessing Mannarino turning Floriana into a hub of protest against

the Knights.¹⁵ His main tool of communication was the Maltese vernacular. He was not afraid to criticize the authorities during sermons. Thus, what happened, in 1775, was merely the culmination of a series of events which had gathered momentum earlier. The event that would break the camel's back was the assault by members of the Hospitallers' squadron on the Curia's treasurer at the Marina of Senglea.¹⁶

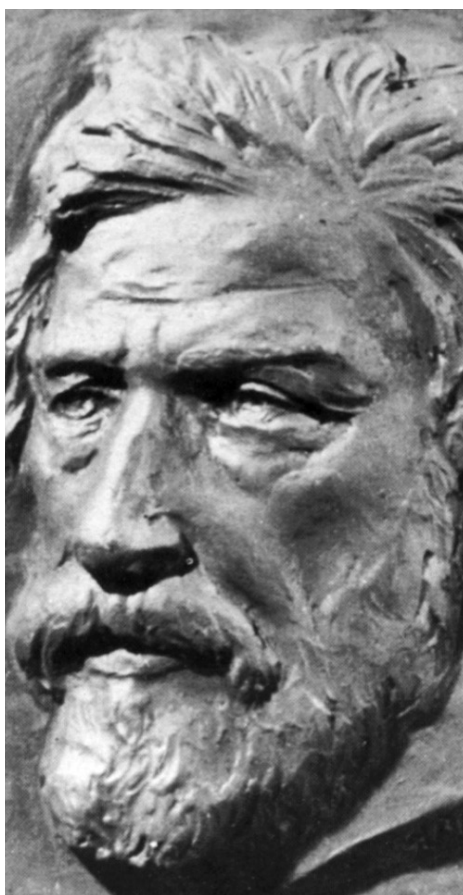
The first to label Mannarino as a sort of social misfit were foreign ecclesiastics residing in Malta. They had a vested interest in supporting the foreign ruler and in launching an attack on individuals who could inspire the development of a national ethos. Gian Anton Vassallo published a document which was a *Relazione* about this uprising written by Inquisitor Mgr. Antonio Maria Lante and sent to Pope Clement XVI. Now this document may have been lost but it once belonged to the Oratory of St. Philip in Birgu. In this document, the Inquisitor took special interest in writing short biographical notes on each one of the clerical protagonists of this revolt.¹⁷ These descriptions are, in my opinion, rather misleading. This man of power was scathing about each and every ecclesiastic who took part.¹⁸ The onus of blame rested with Mannarino and the shadow of guilt continued to loom over him. Once the French were obliged to leave the Island, he had to submit a petition and seek apostolic pardon for his past actions from Palermo.¹⁹ Incidentally, during this period, the Knight Hospitallers were seeking refuge in Sicily.

There is a consensus among various authors that in the second half of the eighteenth century the social situation in Malta was very precarious. Various writers and travellers in particular spoke about the sexual abuses performed by the Knights, including mothers or fathers being forced to prostitute their daughters to members of the Order. This was not the sole form of social repression. Many persons could only relieve their hunger with the fruit of the carob trees, others had no other option but to become beggars and others were so destitute that they literally had no clothes to wear and went about practically naked.²⁰ Peripheral zones, such as Floriana, were destined during this period to feel the pinch of social exclusion because the outskirts of towns were areas inhabited by the poor at this time.

The political intervention undertaken in the following century by the local clergy in favour of the dispossessed masses should be analysed from this perspective. In fact, the first staunch critics of the Knights were members of the local clergy. Mannarino was not the sole person to have voiced a cry of protest. There were at least two other ecclesiastics; the first one was a brilliant mathematician called Giuseppe Zahra and the second was an erudite friar by the name of Padre Costanzo di Malta. They too preached in the vernacular against the rulers.²¹

Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829)

Similar to Mannarino, Mikiel Anton Vassalli was also a political figure and a product of our ecclesiastical milieu²² who became, in popular imagination, Malta's principal voice of the Enlightenment movement. According to the records preserved at the archives of the *Propaganda Fidei* (present-day Urbaniana University) in Rome,²³ Vassalli was one of the students who took his teaching of Arabic very seriously. What emerges from the Urbaniana documentation is that at the end of the eighteenth century this Roman institution was not quite happy with the level of Arabic that was being taught at its school in Malta. And when one reads between the lines of the reports made about the quality of Arabic teaching in Malta, one tends to conclude that perhaps what was really being taught was some type of vernacular Maltese which at this period was very akin to dialectical Arabic rather than a proper Arabic grammar.



Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764 - 1829)

Vassalli's importance perhaps lies more in literary history. It was only comparatively recently that his figure penetrated the pantheon of Maltese heroes. Like Mannarino, Vassalli too was considered more of a traitor by some or many of his contemporaries. In the early nineteenth century, there existed a strong feeling that had he stuck to his academic studies, he would have garnered more social respect. However, like Mannarino, he was preoccupied with the social situation of the lower classes and joined in a conspiracy which featured none other than Hompesch, a prominent member of the Order who eventually became Grand Master, as well as the participation of priests, among them D. Giuseppe Galea.²⁴

As befell Mannarino, all those who had dared voice their protest against the Knights were ostracized at the end of the French occupation. Vassalli committed a further mistake. He had joined the administrative structure of the French forces in 1798 continued to support them and even after the Maltese rose against the French. Once the French were expelled from Malta, Vassalli was imprisoned and later sent into exile as his fellow compatriots considered him a traitor.²⁵

He returned many years later, but the stigma was there. To earn a living he found employment with the American Missionary Society. This did not help him; instead it even weakened his cause for the Maltese language. The fact that he put his knowledge of Maltese at the services of the Anglicans and other Protestant denominations, so that they could proselytise in favour of their Protestant faith made the ecclesiastical circles suspicious as to the nature of Vassalli's work. Worse still, he began to be seen as a collaborator with the regime. Within this dynamic, his work could not be perceived as an expression of nationalism and until another priest, none other than Dun Karm Psaila, rediscovered and reappraised him, perceptions continued to position him as a supporter of the failed British Anglicanisation of Malta.

This image of servitude to the British would be broken by his son Saverio. On Mikiel Anton Vassalli's death in 1820, the care of his two young sons, Saverio and Gabriel, was entrusted to Christof Schlienz, who worked at the Missionary press with the responsibility for the translation of texts into Arabic.²⁶ Schlienz succeeded in finding employment for both lads at the Missionary Printing Press, where Saverio worked as a sort of bookbinder. Like his father, Saverio was a political agitator and, in 1837, he organised a strike at the press followed by a public protest march in Valletta. Quite possibly this was the first strike to be organised in Malta, even if its importance was not comprehended at the time, with the result that many more decades had to pass before the Maltese workers began to organise themselves in unions. The strike failed and the strikers found themselves locked out. Eventually all were dismissed, with the exception of one.²⁷ Saverio was one of the employees to lose his job. This strike was a double defeat for the Church Missionary Press, whose strong Anglican and British leanings made it an organ of the ruling regime. At first, it appeared as a betrayal from

within their own ranks and later it became a humiliation for them in staunchly Catholic Malta. Regrettably, today no one ever remembers Saverio Vassalli for being the first Maltese to organize an industrial action to gain better working conditions for his fellow workers.

Perhaps the origins of the language question in Malta should also be studied within this framework. Whilst the first official plea for the Maltese Language came from Sarah Jane Austin, the wife of the English Commissioner John Austin. He was sent to Malta in 1838 to study, together with the commissioner George Cornwall Lewis, how to improve the administrative and economic structures. The commissioners' reflections on the Maltese language were strongly influenced by the thoughts and ideals of the Protestant establishment, who saw in Maltese a medium through which to learn Arabic in order to spread Protestant beliefs, primarily among the Arabic Christians of North Africa and the Middle East and the Maltese. Thus, Malta became an important centre for the printing and production of books by the Protestant Missionary Societies. Books began to be translated into Arabic, including books of a religious nature. They were then distributed throughout Northern Africa, in particular Egypt and the present area of the Middle East. Within such a scenario, one cannot but envisage the slow build-up of violent reaction by sections of the clergy who perceived in such a deed the slow Anglicanisation of Malta.

The Library of the Philippine Convent

In fact, it was within this context that priests began to play an even more important role in Maltese nineteenth-century politics. Unlike the Knight's period, their political opponent was now clearly situated on the other extreme of the political spectrum. This made it possible for the local clergy to mount concerted resistance against the new rulers.

The local reaction to the spread of Protestantism was threefold. It was first of all manifested through direct resistance, for instance through inflammatory sermons against Protestant beliefs or labelling converts as traitors and subjecting them to physical attack.²⁸ Secondly, political pressure was exerted on the British Governor to forbid distribution of Protestant literature in Malta.²⁹ Thirdly, it was expressed through erudition and scholarship, with priests seeking to increase their theological and philosophical knowledge to be better prepared to mount the counter-argument to Protestant teaching. This required well-equipped libraries furnished with 'Protestant' books. The Library of the Philippine Convent in Senglea would be one of the institutions equipped to meet this new challenge. In turn, this would have a direct effect on the development of Maltese political thought in the nineteenth century.

When I was carrying out my research for this article, I kept discovering remarkable coincidences and a wealth of references relating to Senglea and its

library which convinced me that these two places had a very important role to play in the genesis of Maltese politics and the spread of the new Nationalistic ideals.

The reason for the presence, in Senglea, of what may today appear as an open-minded clergy, is in part due to this library that had a unique collection of books. A number of bishops reserved praise for this library of the Philippine Order, describing it as well furnished with books. Bishop Labini commended it strongly in his pastoral visits.³⁰ It should be pointed out that this library had two rooms. The first one was that of the general library, which had a collection of over 2000 volumes. It had another room, reached only through the main library, which contained volumes that were listed on the Church Index of Prohibited Books. In fact, the Philippine priests had been granted special permission to own copies of books that had been placed on the Index by the Church. In theory, these volumes were stored in the reserved section of the library. In practice they were accessible to anyone who got hold of the key to this library, which was easily obtained, in particular by those elite families in Senglea who had access to ecclesiastical circles.

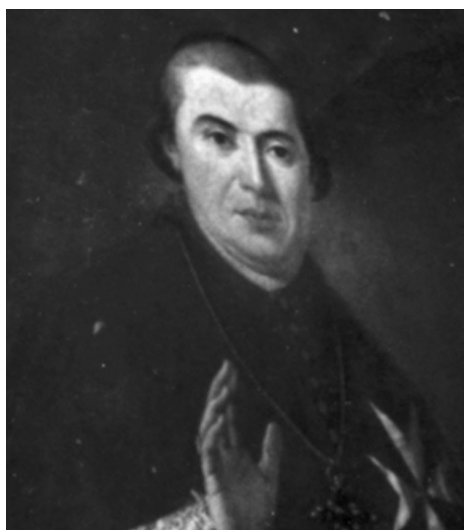
There were three categories of books on the Index present in the library; in total they amounted to around 215 titles. The first type was of a religious nature, primarily books of Protestant or Anglican derivation such as the *Book of Common Prayer*, *The Duty of Christians*, *The Mother's First Book*, and what the catalogue of prohibited books described as *il Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento in Inglese*. Then there were the political and philosophical books. These books can again be subdivided into three categories: those based on principles of the Enlightenment, which usually made reference to French philosophy such as Voltaire's *Trattato della scritture sagra*, or Jean Baptiste Colbert *Istruzioni gentili in forma di catechismo* or Colbert's book *The Political Testament*. The second category was that of books about scientific principles with which the Church's teaching disagreed, such as Alessandro Marchetti's *Della Natura delle Cose*. The third category was books of a contemporary political nature, usually associated with anticlericalism due to the fact that these books espoused a republican ideology. One has to remember that in the nineteenth century in particular, republicanism was considered to be anti-Christian as the Church hierarchy tended to support the monarchical establishments in Europe. Therefore, republicans were automatically considered as the enemy not only of kings but also of the Catholic Church. Among the books of republican inspiration to be put on the Index, and a copy of which was to be found in this library, was *Gloria e Sventura Canti Republican* and the *Vita di Guliermo Kelly*, an American republican whose biography was translated into Italian. Finally, the third and last category of books was placed there because some kind of immorality was implied. These were mostly books that could arouse sexual or 'immoral' desires such as *Novelle piacevole e morali di un viaggiatore incognito* and *Trattato sulla Redenzione del genere umano* and Ferrante Pallavicino's *Scena Retorica*.³¹ Many of these books were in Italian translation.

The Mattei Family

Yet the presence of such an important library, open to the world, needs to be linked, in my opinion, to the fact that at this period Senglea had a number of families who assumed social prestige due to their maritime connections. It was not by mere chance that, by the end of the eighteenth century, Senglea would be the town in Malta where foreign seafarers would seek to take up residence.

The Mattei family was one of the Senglean families to make headway in Malta at the turn of the nineteenth century as a result of its seafaring activity. It reached the epitome of social prestige with the appointment of Ferdinand Mattei as Bishop of Malta. The Matteis established themselves in Malta in the late seventeenth century. Francesco Mattei came from Corsica, in 1680, after travelling in various parts of the Mediterranean.³² Once in Malta, he married Evangelista, daughter of a well-established ship owner, Padron Onorato Cornelio. He thereby forged a matrimonial alliance that allowed his family and descendants to move up the social ladder.³³

The Matteis remained a family open to the world. At a time when travelling was very restricted, one continuously finds members of this family engaged in long-distance travel. Ferdinand Mattei's uncle, Antonio,³⁴ was a businessman who travelled to Valenzia. Antonio's son, Vincenzo, continued in the family tradition and even undertook a voyage, together with other companions, to the *terra nova*.³⁵ The spelling of the last word as written in this document implies that they sailed to Australia.³⁶ He must have been one of the first Maltese to embark on such a long distance voyage and return back.



Bishop Ferdinand Mattei (1761 - 1829)

Ferdinand Mattei³⁷ was appointed Bishop in 1807, becoming the first Maltese to be appointed to the highest rank of the Maltese diocese.³⁸ Ferdinand was the ideal candidate in the eyes of the Roman Curia. He was a former Chaplain to the Hospitallers³⁹ and his appointment was welcomed by all the major powers that had an interest in Malta. He represented the continuation of the Hospitaller tradition for the Knights of Saint John. Documents kept at the Vatican's Secret Archives attest that Mattei's appointment represented a political compromise for France, Britain and Naples, and the Knights of Saint John viewed his appointment favourably.⁴⁰ During the Knights' tenure, the island's Bishops were, more often than not, drawn from the ranks of Conventual Chaplains. The head of these Chaplains, known as Grand Prior, was the ideal candidate to be appointed Malta's bishop. Even if Mattei did not reach the rank of Grand Prior, his appointment represented the last ecclesiastical link in this long history of appointees from the Order of Saint John.

Perhaps it was in the light of this context that Mikiel Anton Vassalli dared write to Bishop Mattei,⁴¹ in an attempt to reintegrate himself within local society upon his return from his exile in Corsica, where he had failed miserably in his attempt to set up a cotton industry. However fortune had completely abandoned Vassalli.⁴² Corsica did not bring him any luck despite the fact that it was the island of origin of the Mattei family.

Vassalli was not the only person from whom Mattei took his distance. Mannarino was another case in point. The fact that Mattei was a member of the Order who continued to associate himself with this institution, even after he had become bishop, could explain, in part, his attitude towards these two individuals. Following an old ecclesiastical custom, bishops hailing from a Religious Order continued to wear the insignia of their Order. In the case of Mattei, he wore a light blue coloured mozetta with a white eight pointed cross on it. Mannarino would be asked to make a formal apology in 1808 for his past behaviour.⁴³ Mattei did not even take into consideration the twenty-three years Mannarino had spent in a dreadful underground cell, which must have negatively affected his psyche, with the result that between 1800 and 1808, he could have committed acts, which again labelled him a criminal. Within the context of the time, one has reservations and doubts whether these accusations⁴⁴ were real or mere fabrications. There should be no doubt that some (if not all) were by individuals who were definitely not his sympathizers. Whatever the case, Mattei's predecessor Labini appears to have been more comprehensive and lenient towards this man.

At face value, the appointment of Mattei can seem to be an affirmation that in Senglea there existed a sort of strong clerical hegemony, very conservative in its outlook. However, the situation was much more complicated than it may appear, even among the members of the clergy themselves. A recent study carried out by David Agius Muscat reveals the existence of an intelligentsia in Senglea

at the end of the eighteenth century, which fully supported Vassalli and to a certain extent reflected his political ideals. This support was due to the fact that by then this town was on the forefront of political evolution. Amongst Vassalli's supporters, there was the first Archpriest of Senglea, Dun Salv Bonnici. Most probably, he had attended the same Arabic school in Valletta with Vassalli. For unknown reasons, Bonnici later distanced himself from Vassalli. It seems that Vassalli had communicated with him when he (Vassalli) was in Rome. Vassalli expected Dun Salv Bonnici to help him in the publication of the second volume of the *Lexicon*. Unfortunately, such assistance failed to materialize with the result that this second volume never saw the light of day.⁴⁵

Dun Ġużepp Ciantar was another person in Senglea who knew Vassalli well. He had even studied Arabic and showed interest in the Maltese language to the extent that he subscribed to Vassalli's *Lexicon*. Bonnici's successor as Senglea's Archpriest, Dun Vinċenz Cachia, was himself erudite and a product of late 18th-century learning. He hailed from Valletta,⁴⁶ had studied Arabic and knew Vassalli well. Once he retired from the headship of the parish, he was made Monsignor and eventually became Vicar General of Malta during the time of Bishop Francesco Saverio Caruana (another clerical figure very prominent in the uprising of the Maltese against the French in 1798).

The Mitrovich Family

Ferdinando Mattei was not the sole figure from Senglea with a migratory background. Giorgio Mitrovich (1795-1885) was another person who would make his voice heard in favour of the political rights of the Maltese, becoming one of the principal figures of Malta's 19th-century Nationalist movement. He was born in Senglea⁴⁷ but eventually his family transferred its residence to Valletta.⁴⁸ However, even if his life and career choice were different, for though he did not become part of the local ecclesiastical order, he still found support from members of the clergy active in Senglea at the time. In parallel with their example, he worked in favour of granting Freedom of the Press and even went to England to defend the rights of the Maltese for a representative government. In this endeavour, he found the support, amongst others, of Senglea's Archpriest Leopoldo Fiteni.⁴⁹

What is less known about the Mitrovich family is that they shared a parallel history with the Matteis. They too were a family of migrants settled in Malta in the middle of the 18th century. The first Mitrovich to come to Malta was Giorgio's grandfather, after whom he was named. Giorgio Mitrovich senior (1739-1810)⁵⁰ came from the island of Saint Stephen in the Gulf of Kotor in Montenegro,⁵¹ known during this period as *Bocche di Cattaro*.⁵² During this period, there were a number of Greeks from this region, in particular from the area of Ragusa (modern day Dubrovnik) who came to Malta and settled in Senglea, such as the Petrovich⁵³ or Simiacovich⁵⁴ families.

Giorgio the elder too undertook long-distance travel. After leaving Montenegro, he went to live in Venice from where he came to Malta, thence to proceed to Marseilles. From Marseilles he sailed in the company of two French friends to America, staying there for sixteen months, at the end of which all three returned back to Marseilles and eventually to Malta, where he took up residence in Senglea at the prestigious Villa Sirena.⁵⁵ It was in Senglea that he married Anna Maria Bigliardelli, in 1767, with whom he had Saverio, Giorgio Mitrovich's father. Giorgio Mitrovich, the elder would be one of those who understood the changing of the times he was living in, and would abandon corsairing in favour of commerce whilst gaining the respectable title and commission of a sea captain.⁵⁶ His son Saverio continued with the family tradition of seafaring.⁵⁷

The figure of Giorgio Mitrovich (junior) is always read in parallel with that of Camillo Sciberras, a contemporary of noble descent, whose children were strongly involved in international politics. His children, in particular his son Emilio, were in Giuseppe Mazzini's inner circle.⁵⁸ Both Giorgio and Camillo are credited with expressing liberal ideals for their time whilst their mentor, Mazzini, was a primary figure in the new Nationalistic movement in Europe. Both Giorgio Mitrovich and Camillo Sciberras fought in favour of the granting of the Liberty of the Press to the



Giorgio Mitrovich (1795 - 1885)

Maltese. It is not clear from where Mitrovich acquired his liberal ideas, or whether the library of the Philippines had any influence on his political formation.

Incidentally, even the Sciberras family had connections with Senglea. As a family, it was principally established in Valletta, where in the 18th century one of its clerical members was already a bishop.⁵⁹ During the period under study, another member, Camillo's brother, Cardinal Fabrizio Sciberras, was making headway in Italy. This family forged links with the rest of the harbour cities; for example, Fabrizio Sciberras had ecclesiastical benefices from the parish church of Senglea.⁶⁰

Crescenzo Galatola (1813-1866)

Amidst this background, one finds also the story of Crescenzo Galatola. He becomes an important figure in Catania for opening a printing press at the *Reale Ospizio di Beneficenza* in 1843⁶¹ and under his direction this press publishes a number of important books. This press became the *sine qua non* press of Catania, to the extent that the researcher Silvana Raffaele thinks that 'Crescenzo Galatola seems to have ended up having in his hands the monopoly of the art of printing at Catania.'⁶²

What is less known is that Crescenzo Galatola was the son of migrants from the parish of San Michele at Proceda, an island near Naples, who went to live in Senglea. Around 1809, a group of people left this island and settled down around the towns of the Cottonera area. Amongst those who left were Michele Galatola⁶³ and Maria Sciano.⁶⁴

On 27 January 1810, Michele Galatola and Maria Sciano were married in Senglea⁶⁵; they were to have a number of children.⁶⁶ It was probably here that Crescenzo, the future promoter of a new printing press in Catania, was born in 1813 and it was in this town that he received his first education.⁶⁷ Again, one wonders whether the presence of this library in Senglea played any role on his *forma mentis*. However, it seems that the family had left Malta for Naples when Crescenzo was still young. Taking advantage of the new political times introduced by the British presence, Michele had decided to settle in Senglea working as a sailor, commuting between Malta and Sicily.⁶⁸

Silvana Raffaele showed that Crescenzo Galatola's activity enters well within the context of the printing world existing in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies at the first half of the nineteenth century. It was an instrument perceived mostly by Galatola as a tool to offer work opportunities to poor and destitute children. They learnt one of the different trades linked to book production to earn a decent living. In Malta, the press began to be seen in a different light. It began to be perceived as a political weapon and a number of individuals began to agitate so that the island would be granted freedom of the press, a legal enactment which finally occurred in 1839. The result was that Malta, like Britain, came to enjoy press

freedom' a rare set of circumstances in the Europe of the day. However, even before this enactment, a number of presses were already being opened, but with the sole difference that they belonged exclusively to Protestant missionaries,⁶⁹ which explains why these individuals succeeded in obtaining special permission from the British Governor to set up a printing press and publish material in Malta. Yet, there were also Maltese families who kept an eye on this provision. Besides the Senglea-born Giorgio Mitrovich, Fortunato Panzavecchia was another personality from Senglea who supported the introduction of the freedom of the press in Malta.

Fortunato Panzavecchia (1797 - 1850)

The Panzavecchia family assumed political prominence during the first half of the nineteenth century thanks to the figure of Fortunato Panzavecchia, who would become Malta's first Director of Education between 1844 and 1849.⁷⁰ The Panzavecchias were also a family of migrants who came to Malta in the middle of the eighteenth century. The first Panzavecchia was Gandolfo Panzavecchia. He had a less illustrious career than the Matteis or the Mitrovichs and his life was more on a par with that of the Garatolas. Gandolfo hailed from Polizzi in Sicily. He was exiled to Pantalleria from where he came to Malta.⁷¹

Fortunato Panzavecchia belonged to the fourth generation of this family in Malta. He was born to Giuliano Panzavecchia and Maria Cremona and was named after his maternal grandmother Fortunata Caruana, wife of Michele Cremona.⁷² Already at an early age, Fortunato was considered a hardworking student. He



Fortunato Panzavecchia (1797 - 1850)

was sent to study at a grammar school run by Don Salvatore Quiglio in Valletta where he learnt rhetoric and studied philosophy,⁷³ and by 1817 he graduated as a lawyer and in 1824 was granted permission to practise as a lawyer at the Bishop's Curia.⁷⁴

Fortunato Panzavecchia is mostly known for writing the most authoritative history book about Malta to be published in the nineteenth century. His intention was to publish a four-volume series covering the whole period of Malta's history but he only succeeded in publishing the last volume, covering the last decade of the Order's rule in Malta.⁷⁵ In this endeavour, he found the help of fellow priests. He states in his diary that the reading of the proofs was done by the Archpriest but fails to mention his name. However, when this statement is read in the context of the time, it is a direct indication that this was made by Leopoldo Fiteni,⁷⁶ whom I shall be shortly discussing in this paper. This was not Panzavecchia's sole friendship within the prominent society of his time. Giorgio Mitrovich, John Hookham Frere, Cleardo Naudi, Francesco Vella, Richard Taylor and Lodovico Mifsud Tommasi were also to be counted among his circle.⁷⁷ These were prominent figures who loved and wrote literature and with the exception of Hookham Frere, the rest all wrote and published in Maltese. It was with Taylor that Panzavecchia started publishing a newspaper, *Lo Spettatore Imparziale*, in 1838,⁷⁸ which was issued even before Malta was officially granted Liberty of the Press. This explains the connections and power that Panzavecchia held with the authorities, as until the law was officially enacted in Malta special authorisation was needed from the Governor to publish works.

Panzavecchia's writings also throw light on the relationship of his family with Vassalli. He came to know much about Vassalli and his work in favour of Maltese, in particular from the Senglean priest Giuseppe Ciantar;⁷⁹ who taught Panzavecchia to respect this Maltese patriot. Fortunato's respect towards Vassalli was also due to the fact that his father, Giuliano, had shared, for a short period of time, the same prison cell with Vassalli. His father seems to have been impressed and influenced by Vassalli's knowledge.⁸⁰

The third connection with Vassalli comes through the publication of his grammar book of Maltese. It was published at the press that was once owned by the Church Missionary Society. The reason for its choice was very simple. It was one of few presses in the whole world at the time that had proper typeface for Arabic characters, which Panzavecchia used in his book to explain a number of grammatical points of the Maltese language. At this press, Panzavecchia also printed booklets on religious themes and Maltese history for use in primary schools.⁸¹ Unfortunately, this press experienced economic problems and in 1842 it was bought by Matthäus Weiss.⁸² Weiss failed to make the press viable and around 1845 it was sold to Vassalli's sons, Saverio and Gabriel. The nemesis of history had its sweets revenge. However they too were unable to prevent it closing

down, and eventually the Vassalli brothers went on to seek new pastures in North Africa, whilst severing all contacts with Malta.⁸³

Vassalli was not the sole historical figure for whom Panzavecchia expresses reverence. Similar appreciation was shown by Panzavecchia towards Mannarino's revolt. In his book, *L'Ultimo Periodo*, he does not attribute to Mannarino the same importance that one is used to when reading the history of this event. He considered the whole story as a misadventure, worked out by a few *sudditti rivoltuosi*.⁸⁴ What was most worrying for Panzavecchia was its aftermath. Perhaps, reading history with the unfair benefit of hindsight, he perceived in the barbarous way the Knights treated members of the clergy, the beginning of the end of the Order's rule in Malta. The humiliation inflicted by the Knights on the arrested priests and clerical members, together with the general climate of hatred that the same Knights began to foment among the clergy, brought a general reaction from the population consisting in the complete aberration of their rulers.⁸⁵

What is less known is the educational background of Fortunato. This background can explain his strong liberal spirit in an age now misleadingly associated with 'ecclesiastical bigotry'. There is no doubt that the presence of a number of erudite priests in Senglea had a positive effect on the town's development and the build up of the Maltese Nationalism. A part of this new spirit is to be credited to the above-mentioned library at the Convent of the Order of the Philipppines.

It is thanks to Fortunato Panzavecchia's diary that one can assess the positive influence that this library was having on education at this particular town. From Panzavecchia's writing we learn that, as a student, he had access to this library and also to the 'prohibited' books.⁸⁶ The exposure to this sort of literature and other books that were placed on the Index must have, in my opinion, helped him in the formation of his political character.

As an adult, Fortunato built up a very impressive library for those days, consisting of 553 published copies besides numerous historical manuscript editions. Some of the books in his possession, such as Machiavelli, Beccaria, Gioberti and Voltaire, were on the Church Index.⁸⁷ Moreover, he began his collection of manuscripts and initiated his own *Dizionario Enciclopedico*, modelled on the French Encyclopaedic philosophers; he sought to create Malta's first encyclopaedia.

Leopoldo Fiteni (1789-1852)

Another contemporary and big friend of Fortunato was Leopoldo Fiteni. He too deserves to be better known in Malta both for his contribution to politics as well as for the study of Maltese history. Fiteni held a doctorate in Philosophy and Thomistic Theology from the school of the Dominican Convent of Porto Salvo in

Valletta.⁸⁸ Due to family constraints, he asked permission to leave the Dominican Order to take care of his old and sick widowed mother.⁸⁹ On 18th April 1817 he was granted permission to join the ranks of the secular clergy.⁹⁰ Attracted by his intelligence, the parish priest at the time, Vincenzo Cachia, urged Fiteni to begin to serve in his home parish⁹¹ and eventually exerted pressure on his fellow priests to have Fiteni succeed him as parish priest when he resigned in 1822.⁹² In this endeavour, he found the full support of Panzavecchia, who helped him overcome the strong resistance exerted by many of Senglea's clergy who opposed the appointment of Fiteni.⁹³

What is less known about Fiteni is that his spiritual mentor was none other than Francesco Xaviero Baldacchino,⁹⁴ who was one of the most eminent persons at the Oratory of the Philippines in Senglea and the custodian and librarian of this important library. Incidentally, Baldacchino remains mostly famous for his sermons, a copy of which was deposited at the Oratory's library. I don't think that it was just a coincidence that Fiteni became parish priest and eventually a politician. As was the case with Fortunato, this library served him as a fountain of knowledge for his political training.

As was the case with Panzavecchia, Fiteni would also start publishing newspapers and once Malta was granted liberty of the press, he began to publish a journal, *Le Conversazioni di Filoteo*, full of historical articles both of local and European interest. This was not the sole publication by Fiteni. He published a number of pamphlets and even a newspaper entitled *Il Trionfo della Religione*.

Fiteni belonged to the group of ecclesiastical priests who were very critical of the Order of Saint John. His journal, *Le Conversazioni di Filoteo*, contained historical articles which were covertly critical to the Hospitaller's rule.⁹⁵ Moreover, Fiteni would express strong political interest and decide to participate in the first election to be held in Malta in 1849 in which he was immediately elected.

Perhaps Fiteni might appear as the antithesis of Panzavecchia. His writings and political stands may appear, today, as dogmatic and anti-liberal. Practically single-handed he pushed before the Council of Government a law wherein the Catholic Faith was declared in Malta the dominant religion.⁹⁶ Seen within a colonial context, this was a major triumph. The religion of the colonised, that is the Maltese, thereby prevailed over that of the colonial rulers whose faith was Christian but Anglican and therefore (during this period) anti-Catholic. Thus, through religion, he transformed the position of Maltese nationhood, achieving at least partial recognition where a quite different dynamic might earlier have conditioned the relations between coloniser and colonised. Within this framework, one can understand why people like Fortunato Panzavecchia would join hands with Fiteni despite the fact that the former was the truer liberal when read in modern terms.

The Adami Family

The Adami family was the next family to make headway in Senglea and this again happened through the ecclesiastical order. This is also another family of migrants but the origins of the family goes back to early seventeenth century at Porto Salvo in Valletta.⁹⁷ By the end of the seventeenth century, members of this family could already be found settling down in Senglea.⁹⁸ By the middle of the nineteenth century, there were two prominent Adami families in Senglea, both related to each other. The family which is of particular interest to this paper is that of Saverio Adami and Maria Scicluna.⁹⁹ Saverio resorted to the use of the Adami surname when recording the birth of his children. However, he was recorded under the surname of Damo¹⁰⁰ in his marriage with Maria Scicluna. Thus he returned to the surname used by his great grandfather, using the Latin genitive structure, to mean 'son of'. In fact, his father¹⁰¹ too was also known by the surname of Damo, whilst his grandfather, Saverio, had an Adamo surname.¹⁰² The origins of the first Adamo family in Malta are clouded in the mists of history. Goffredo Adami thought that his family originated from the City of Venice in 1647.¹⁰³ However, Parish records¹⁰⁴ and the Curia archives¹⁰⁵ point to an earlier presence of this family in Malta.¹⁰⁶

Saverio and Maria Scicluna had a number of children,¹⁰⁷ but those who are of particular interest to this paper are Giorgio, who became a canon at Senglea, Francesco who, as his maternal grandfather, became a medical doctor and Teresa who married a physician, Dottore Francesco Fenech.¹⁰⁸ It was in relation to this marriage that the couple's children coined the surname of Fenech Adami. In other words, they are Edward Fenech Adami's forebears. The family eventually



Giovanni Adami (1886 - 1935)



Luigi Fenech Adami, father of
Edward Fenech Adami

took up residence at Tarxien¹⁰⁹ and it was at this village that the offspring of this couple adopted the double-barrelled surname.¹¹⁰

Saverio Adami had definitely strengthened his social links with this city in particular after marrying Maria, the daughter of Francesco Scicluna, a reputable physician.¹¹¹ Through this marriage, the Adamis had also instituted a strong link with Senglea's parish church since Maria's twin brother was Canon Giuseppe Scicluna.¹¹² Her son Giorgio would eventually acquire the ecclesiastical benefice¹¹³ that belonged to his uncle and became canon in 1840.¹¹⁴ He was to be the first canon with the surname of Adami to be installed in Senglea.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Maria Scicluna's family was related to the family of the intellectual priest Giuseppe Ciantar.

Saverio's next son, Francesco, married Theresa Camilleri¹¹⁶ and had nine children,¹¹⁷ including Goffredo, Giuseppe and Salvatore.¹¹⁸ Goffredo Adami belongs to the extended family of these Senglean *literati* and is the subject of a separate study which is being published in this collection of papers.¹¹⁹ He became a public notary but his importance on a national scale derives from his transcription of baptismal, matrimonial and death records. In fact, in the spirit of the time, Goffredo built up a genealogy of the Maltese families aimed at leaving a record of the origins of the Maltese. This *Giuliana* was eventually acquired by the Public Library and is known today as the Adami Collection. His son, Giovanni, would make it into politics, becoming Minister of Works in 1923 during the first self-government legislature.¹²⁰ I do not think that it was mere coincidence that Giovanni joined the *Unione Politica Maltese* (U.P.M.) created by Ignazio Panzavecchia, another historical figure that I shall be introducing further down in this paper. Giovanni shared Ignazio's political ideals but there can be no doubt that their shared religious and political outlook and family connections bound them together.¹²¹

Two other brothers of Goffredo, Giuseppe and Salvatore, joined the priesthood and as can be expected became canons of Senglea; Salvatore, inherited the canonicate of Giorgio Adami in 1898.¹²² Giuseppe had to wait longer until he was appointed archpriest in 1908¹²³; this new responsibility meant that he was not only installed as a canon but became ipso facto the head of the ecclesiastical order in Senglea. Giuseppe becomes the most prominent member of this family following his appointment as archpriest of Senglea. It was during his tenure that Senglea got the prestigious ecclesiastical title of basilica and the titular statue was solemnly crowned; both events occurring in 1921. He ended up being acclaimed as a hero by his fellow parishioners. I personally recall, during the short period that I lived there in the late 1990s, that some of the homes of elderly people had a large photo of him in their living area.

The pertinent question that needs to be asked is the reason for such a concentration of intellectual priests working in Senglea at the time. The answer

seems to have been given some years later by none other than the British Governor, Charles Bonham Carter, who visiting the parish of Senglea in 1936, made an observation which is unique for he fails to make a similar comment with regard to any other parish that had a collegiate chapter. The high number of *jus patronale laicale* benefices that existed in Senglea impressed Bonham Carter. These followed a widespread practice in Senglea whereby well-off families began to set up ecclesiastical benefices, in particular canonicates, of a lay nature, known as *di jus patronale laicale*, in favour of their children.¹²⁴ It obliquely transpires from Bonham Carter's writings that the local clergy of Senglea felt themselves privileged to have such type of benefices, whereby the benefice-holder was directly determined by the descendants of the person conferring the bequest, quite often to the total exclusion of any prerogatives the Church authorities might otherwise have had in the selection process.

When, at the time of Salvatore Bonnici, the Collegiate Chapter of Senglea was founded, he had the foresight to attach the financial support of families and people of a certain social standing. While other parishes began to emphasise parochial allegiances, Bonnici sought to attract quality and this was achieved by opening the parish's structures to the laity through these particular foundations. It became possible for Senglea's parishioners to set up a canonicate at will to be enjoyed by members of their family. At the same time, the appointment of the parish priest was left open to outsiders, that is, to priests who were not members of the Chapter. This was just one aspect of a bigger project that Bonnici formulated which also included the opening of a school in his parish offering free education to Senglea's children.¹²⁵ Whilst this latter project failed, that of the ecclesiastical benefices was a success. The laity thus came to determine the holders of such benefices as they could only be taken by a male descendent who joined the priesthood. In turn, this benefice guaranteed the holder a good annual revenue. Given that young boys at the age of twelve could become canons, this meant that their parents had extra revenue to invest in the education of their children.

This explains why, generation after generation, the parish clergy in Senglea had a strong academic preparation. This also explains why a person who came from a religious order, as did Fiteni, could make headway in Senglea. He could acquire a church benefice through these structures. This would have been very difficult in other collegiate churches, as he had to be a member of the chapter.

A number of families established such ecclesiastical benefices so that one of their male descendants could carry the title of canon whilst assuring him an annual revenue and the possibility of becoming one of the Chapter's dignitaries. Donna Theresa, widow of the late Giorgio Ciantar, had established the benefice acquired by Giorgio Adami in 1815.¹²⁶ Fortunato Panzavecchia's father, Giuliano, set up a canonicate in favour of his only son and future members who could claim consanguinity with his family in 1812.

Yet these canonicates were not without problems. The presence of these ecclesiastical benefices of a civil nature became, in the 19th century, the cause of a number of civil legal battles. What is of interest is that prominent names in local politics crop up in the records and can be seen supporting one ecclesiastical candidate over another.

The claim made by Theresa's brother, Canon Giorgio Adami, for the rights to the rents on ecclesiastical property would involve him in a major clash with none other than Gerald Strickland. In 1885, a *juspatronato laicale* benefice instituted in 1624 by a certain Ugolino Cumbo Navarra was vacated upon the death of its holder Don Nicola Vassallo.¹²⁷ The Adami family claimed the right to this benefice which consisted of land at Ta' Fons in Gozo and at Tal-Hamrija in Bahrija after Count Giuseppe Stagno Navarra Muscati, who claimed to be a direct descendent of the Cumbo Navarra, nominated in 1885 Canon Giorgio Adami as the new title holder.

However, Gaudenzio Zammit, a carpenter from Żebbuġ, contended the right over this benefice in favour of his underage son Salvatore. He secured the support of Gerald Strickland, who claimed the right of nomination on the premise that the Bologna side of his family was collaterally related to the Cumbo Navarra.¹²⁸ A legal battle ensued, culminating in hundreds of pages of family information and claims by both sides for the rightful allocation of this benefice in front of the civil tribunal. Notary Goffredo Adami recorded the whole case in one volume of documents entitled 'Beneficiaries', running to over 800 pages.

Without entering into the merits of the case, Strickland's claims appear to have been unjustified. What is more important, however, is that such an intrusion in ecclesiastical affairs did not help Strickland in the eyes of the Curia and the Senglean priests. Perhaps, it was an eye-opener for many as to the meddlesome character and aspirations of this individual. It is clear that clerical antagonism towards Strickland went beyond his political ideas. Intruding in clerical affairs would become a sort of Strickland hallmark. Strickland would lose his case before the civil court and Giorgio Adami would eventually be nominated to this benefice.

A similar conflict would ensue in connection with Giorgio's relative, Giuseppe, as he too, when still a young cleric, had to fight for his right to a similar benefice. His father, Dott. Francesco Adami, instituted a lawsuit at the civil courts in 1876 to guarantee Giuseppe's right to an ecclesiastical benefice of a *jus patronale*. This title was contested by architect Nicola Scifo in favour of Giuseppe, his underage son.¹²⁹

Besides the financial implications that these benefices and canonicates carried at the time, there is no doubt that they helped foster a sort of family clannishness - even though, at times, members of the same family could come to loggerheads, as brothers could end up fighting each other in favour of their

respective children to obtain a benefice or a canonicate. At the same time, these disputes also helped to strengthen fraternity within families, as members began to assist other members in their claims over the right to obtaining a benefice.

Within this sphere, the genealogical work of the Notary Goffredo Adami assumes unparalleled importance. Unlike today, family lineages had a greater importance and Goffredo helped in one way or another to create a sort of bondage amongst the ecclesiastical milieu. By establishing genealogical trees to affirm claims for *jus patronato* titles, they got to know how they were related to each other. This was one way how the bondages of kinship were affirmed and strengthened as his work helped them to understand that they were not only tied by faith but also by blood. Goffredo Adami was not the sole person seeking to have a broad view of his family networks.

Fortunato Panzavecchia also created his own family tree, seeking to find common ancestors with the emerging families. The Adami family was particularly targeted by Panzavecchia when the latter found that his family was related to the former from his maternal side.¹³⁰ In fact, if one begins to analyse the various ecclesiastical records related to these *jus laicale*, whether those preserved at the Curia or those at the Public Library, one comes across a network of connections that were intensified by the claimants.

In other words, this historical narrative demonstrates that Edward Fenech Adami, to whom this book is dedicated, is distantly related to a number of 19th-century politicians, and it can now also be ascertained that the Adamis were therefore related to Fortunato's grand-nephew, Ignazio Panzavecchia.

Ignazio Panzavecchia (1855-1925)

Ignazio Panzavecchia is mostly remembered today for his political charisma and his campaigning for social justice. Yet, his ascendancy to power is partly due also to these ecclesiastical titles. The existence of a private canonicate of *jus patronale* gave this family the chance to access the core of the parish administration. It was only natural that when Ignazio Panzavecchia expressed his wish to join the clergy, his father Francesco would put forward claims, in favour of Ignazio, to the right to the Panzavecchian canonicate that had been set up by Giuliano in 1812.¹³¹

However, this time this was not an easy endeavour. The Panzavecchia family was now much more extended, with the result that, by the second half of the 19th century, it had more than one contender for this post. Francesco's brother, Liborio, made a similar claim in favour of his son, Fortunato. Liborio sought to annul Francesco's claim by pointing out that Ignazio was illegitimate. This was a very strong claim, at a time, when illegitimate children could be debarred from joining the priesthood. However, Francesco succeeded in waiving this argument by insisting that Ignazio's birth had been legitimised by his eventual marriage.¹³²

The civil court accepted this argument and settled the lawsuit in favour of Ignazio.¹³³ This civil victory may have eased the way for Ignazio to make it to the priesthood and be accepted at the major seminary without much ado. Perhaps it is of particular significance that Don Joseph Borg Olivieri published this sentence in favour of Ignazio on 17 June 1872.¹³⁴

I am more than convinced that this biographical information about Ignazio Panzavecchia as well as the background of his family and its links with various families of Senglea was the force that drove him to found the *Comitato Patriottico* in 1910 clamouring for the grant of a liberal Constitution for Malta. It was also for this reason that he set up the *Unione Politica Maltese* (U.P.M.) so that there was a big political force on the island which could successfully contest the elections of 1921 under the new Self-Government Constitution.

Ignazio Panzavecchia was the heir to a long political tradition: he was related to Fortunato Panzavecchia through a collateral descent. Thus, if there is one person who could claim an intellectual relationship with the 18th-century intellectuals, such as Vassalli and others following the Enlightenment spirit, it is Ignazio Panzavecchia, who also had the resources to keep that tradition alive. In fact, he acquired Fortunato's manuscripts and continued to enrich his collection with new



Ignazio Panzavecchia (1855 - 1925)

acquisitions. Eventually this priceless collection was donated to the Metropolitan Cathedral and now forms part of the so-called Panzavecchia Collection.¹³⁵

Reading the history of the Nationalist Party within this genealogical perspective, one can rightly conclude that the roots of the U.P.M. are more deeply entrenched in history than has been sometimes assumed.

In the 1921 elections held under the Amery Constitution, Panzavecchia succeeded in drawing together the different factions into one party, or union. His efforts bore fruit. The party founded by Panzavecchia obtained the highest number of votes in that election. The importance of this victory increases when one remembers that during this election the highest turnout until then was recorded.

Because of his national importance, I strongly believe that there is a need for this figure to be taken out of the niche of parochialism and placed into the cycle, to use an expression of the French History Ferdinand Braudel, of the *Grande Histoire* through a scholarly biographical study. His success should also be read with this historical backdrop in mind. Panzavecchia attracted some of the most prominent political personalities of the time, in particular the young Ugo Mifsud, who would become Malta's third Prime Minister and also leader of the U.P.M. after Panzavecchia's death in 1925. Eventually, when the U.P.M. and the *Partito Democratico Nazionalista* (P.D.N.) fused themselves into one, he was chosen as the undisputed party leader.

This was a period where politicians took up politics to put forward an ideal. Some of these politicians can be described as ingenious but they had one aim, that of giving Malta some form of liberal and democratic constitution with a Christian ethos. The road was a long one. Sacrifices had to be made, in particular, if they did not want to put their political principles at risk. As has been pointed out by Dominic Fenech, in his book *Endemic Democracy*, the politicians of this period worked really hard to achieve their goals but sometimes, to succeed, they were even ready to accept, without knowing, political compromises and in doing so they played into the hands of the foreign ruling class.

When the priest Panzavecchia set up his political movement, he acted independently but in parallel with similar actions being taken by another priest in Italy, Don Luigi Sturzo, who set up his political movement in 1920, calling it the *Partito Popolare Italiano* or Italy's Popular Party. It was on the basis of this Panzavecchian heritage that the present Nationalist party could and still can identify itself, first with the Popular Party in Italy and now with the rest of the Popular Parties in Europe to the extent that it is now a member of this major European popular movement. Then, after the Second World War, Don Luigi Sturzo's political movement transformed itself into the Christian Democratic Party. Christian Democracy was at that time a major source of inspiration and guidance to many political parties in Europe.

In his political thought, Panzavecchia gave less importance to the language question, in particular the use of the Italian language in Malta, in comparison to the other politicians active during this time. What was of primary importance to Panzavecchia and his party was the need to safeguard the Catholic Religion in Malta and the Church - and this was in direct reflection of Sturzo's actions in Italy in favour of the social progress of the poor and the destitute. This was part and parcel of the pastoral mission of the priest. In other words, he wanted to establish a movement that gathered into its folds all the Catholics who wanted to give their services to politics. In fact, the party of Panzavecchia was foremost amongst all parties of the twenties to express the greatest social commitment. The fact that it originated in the harbour area expressed the need for such a commitment. Ironically, both Panzavecchia's party and the Labour Party originated in the same place, Senglea. In other words, they did not develop at the heart of Malta's capital city, which primarily was a centre of bureaucracy and administration, but in an area that was experiencing the advantages and disadvantages of industrialisation but still an area with a concentration, as I tried to outline in this paper, of a strong middle class with a liberal tradition. The presence of the Dockyard in the area made the surroundings Malta's first victims of industrialisation. Panzavecchia was quick to realise this and sought to be one of the first politicians to act as the voice of the lower classes.

Ignazio Panzavecchia merged social aspirations with cultural vision. Culture was not a tool for someone to form part of an elite group but a service to educate society. The language question came in as a second option. Until recently, the question of the Italian language was approached through the dimensions of geography (Malta being close to Italy): however, Italian as a language had less relevance in terms of religion, as officially the language of the Church was Latin, even if the day to day administration was undertaken in Italian. However, there was another issue linked to these two factors and this was the issue of marriages to Italian families. Many families of middle-class background were married to Italians. It was natural for them to use Italian. It was assimilated naturally from their parents or one of their grandparents. Priests were not excluded from this structure. All the prominent families studied in this paper, such as the Panzavecchia, Adamis and Fitenis (just to mention a few) had ancestors who hailed from Italy or were married to Italians.¹³⁶ Language was as much a family issue as a political tool. It became and continued to be a political weapon in Malta against Colonial rule, even after a unified Italy became a staunch anti-Clerical state. Under Panzavecchia, the U.P.M. did not allow the language issue to cloud its political vision, perhaps, it was more an issue linked to a family upbringing by one of the parents or grand parents of Italian origin, with the result that social reform remained on the forefront of the party's political agenda.

This raises questions about the origin and development of the drive to social justice. In my opinion, its origins had to be sought in the individual background of the politicians concerned. The most important aspect is that the founder of the U.P.M. had a difficult childhood when one considers that he was born out of wedlock. In Malta as elsewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century, this carried a very deep social stigma. Probably, this was an important factor which determined his social conscience at a period when this was not part of the social agenda of the country. I think that it was not a mere coincidence that the party founded by Panzavecchia was the one that put to the fore of the party agenda social improvement and between 1921 and 1924, during the first legislature of self-government, this party strongly lobbied for a number of laws of a social nature.

I strongly believe that this social commitment has failed to attract the deserved attention of Maltese historians. This shortcoming could lead to a somewhat distorted evaluation of the role played by the small faction of 'Mizzjani' and their *Partito Democratico Nazionalista* (P.D.N.) and the 'Panzavecchjani' (U.P.M) in the eventual formation of the *Partito Nazionalista* (P.N.). Perhaps these two different positions can explain the presence, conscious or unconscious, of certain political currents even within the present-day Nationalist Party. Memory of the U.P.M. was still very strong in the thirties and politicians were still being differentiated between those who originated from Mizzi's P.D.N. party and those who belonged to Panzavecchia's U.P.M. The former were perceived by exponents of the British administration in Malta as difficult to deal with and were considered extremist. The Panzavecchian were thought to be liberals and considered as the people who truly embodied the nationalist spirit.¹³⁷

Undoubtedly after the Second World War the rescue of the *Partit Nazzjonalista* from total oblivion should be attributed to the existence of a Panzavecchian faction that helped a number of Nationalists to come out and express their political beliefs despite the fact that history was dead-set against them, as under the strong influence of Mizzi the P.N. associated itself with Italy.

Many in Malta saw in the P.N. a party backing a political ideology inspired by their Christian faith and values as well as a movement that favoured social reform. In other words, Nerik Mizzi could rely on the Panzavecchian inheritance to re-organize the party and contest, though with great difficulty, the post-1945 elections – in particular the harbour cities, then partly or completely in rubble – and muster sufficient votes to permit the PN to continue moving forward. Thanks to the social positions taken by Ignazio Panzavecchia and the roots installed by his party, the *Partit Nazzjonalista*, as it began to be called, could slowly distance itself from its historical identification with Fascist Italy.

Conclusion

Informed by Christian principles, the U.P.M. asserted the essential goodness of human nature to the extent that they laboured for free and compulsory education and therefore established a cause that has its origins in Senglea, right down to the pioneering work of Dun Salv. Bonnici. It continued to be propagated through different generations, in particular by Fortunato and Ignazio Panzavecchia.

In the true spirit of Romanticism, they considered education as the cornerstone on which society rests and the spring of political change.¹³⁸ Moreover, the Christian principles of social reform governed the party's interaction with their erstwhile opponents. This gained them the respect of the British as well as politicians from the opposite front. Their political principles were motivated by this principle to the extent that they were minded to balancing off political pressures in order to achieve change. At the same time they knew how to tone down their rhetoric and compromise whenever political expediency dictated. This is not only a question of strategy but of understanding the people's mindset to produce something unique and lasting. When emotions started to run high, as the events of 1919 amply prove, U.P.M. politicians were able to play down a 'crescendo' tune and pacified the people. When the union of the U.P.M. and P.D.N. came about, the leadership fell on a U.P.M. member even though the political stalwart of the late twenties and 1930s politics was Nerik Mizzi, the leader of the *Partito Democratico Nazionale*. The reason for this choice is not difficult to fathom; Mizzi openly supported Mussolini's militaristic rhetoric rather than Britain's claim for partial democracy.

What is historically remarkable is the fact that despite his strong pro-Italian leanings, Mizzi still succeeded in gaining British respect. In a recent publication of the Bonham Carter Diaries, this Governor of Malta more than once describes Mizzi as a pleasant person to meet and talk with.¹³⁹ Paradoxically, the British establishment identified Gerald Strickland, the imperialist and arch-opponent of the U.P.M., as the *enfant terrible* and a source of trouble. Bonham Carter uses strong words to describe Strickland: 'terribly prolix',¹⁴⁰ 'mischievous',¹⁴¹ 'impossible'¹⁴² and 'madly quarrelsome'.¹⁴³

The Borg Olivier period was a period of transition. Perhaps the best person to represent the U.P.M. ideals in the P.N. was Herbert Ganado, who incidentally was also directly descended from one of the families discussed above. His grandfather was Camillo's grandson, Filippo Sceberras.¹⁴⁴ However, Ganado lost some political credibility in the post-war scenario. His love for Italian culture meant he was caught up in the polemics of the Italian Language question. The mean politics of the thirties, extensively based on character assassination, did the rest. Unjustly, he became heavily associated with Fascism and in part this contributed to make him lose the battle for the leadership of the P.N. upon the death of Nerik Mizzi.

In the election of Edward Fenech Adami to the leadership of the P.N., I discern the return of the U.P.M. faction to the helm of the party. Once again, the party began to pay attention to the dynamics of change. Social reforms were on the forefront of the party's political agenda. It achieved a clear articulation of its political message and strove to achieve sound direction in all its political projects. It would be correct to say that Fenech Adami's political career was focused on achieving the very best for Malta and his party. He never aimed for second best as whenever this happened, it meant that Malta and his party were the losers.

It has not been the aim of this paper to discuss Edward Fenech Adami's achievements and political merits, as they are being dealt with by various other studies in this collection of essays in his honour. However, on the basis of the research carried out in connection with this paper, it could be said that Fenech Adami's political soul, consciously or unconsciously, is the product of a Christian formation that owes its origins to the history of the individuals described above. He too is linked, both through familial descent and affiliations in political outlook, to the figures discussed in this paper.

References:

- 1 Joseph Cassar Pullicino, *Gio Pietro Francesco Agius De Soldanis 17.12.1770: Commemorative Lecture by the Malta Historical Society 1996*, The Malta Historical Society, 1996.
- 2 William Zammit, *Ignazio Saverio Mifsud 1722-1773: Commemoration by the Malta Historical Society 1997*, The Malta Historic Society, 1997 pp. 1-26.
- 3 A(rchivum) C(athedralis) M(elitensis). (Mdina) Pan(zavecchia Manuscripts) 123, p. 138.
- 4 Nicola Zammit, 'D. Gaetano Mannarino', *L'Arte*, No. 80, 1866, Year IV, p. 7.
- 5 Nicola Zammit, 'D. Gaetano Mannarino', *L'Arte*, No. 82, 1866, Year IV, p. 6.
- 6 Ibid. p. 5. There is no doubt that the way Nicola Zammit concludes his account of Mannarino's story expresses the influence of Cesare Beccaria's book on the state of prisons and practices of torture in Europe.
- 7 Simon Mercieca, 'Spazi pubblici e controllo sociale: uno studio di alcuni aspetti demografici e urbanistici a La Valletta', a forthcoming paper which will be published in Bari in a book that is being edited by Giovanna Da Molin.
- 8 Nicola Zammit, 'D. Gaetano Mannarino', *L'Arte*, no. 80, 1866, Year IV, p. 7.
- 9 The first Mannarino came to Malta in 1614. He was the 33 year-old Giovanni Mannarino from Calabria and worked as a sailor. A.A.M. *Stati Liberi*, Box 10, Year 1614/5, no. 116.
- 10 A(rchivum). A(rcivescovilis). M(elitensis) (Floriana). *Status Animarum*, Box 23A No. 79. p.64.

- 11 A.A.M. *Status Animarum* Box 23A No. 79. p.64.
- 12 A.A.M. *Patrimonio Sacro*, Vol. 54A. No. 10. Giuseppe Mannarino was the son of the late Nicola Mannarino.
- 13 Gio. Antonio Vassallo, 'Cose Storiche Nostrali intorno alla cos' detta Ribellione dei Preti nel 1775', *L'Arte*, no. 86, 1866, Year IV, pp. 4-5.
- 14 Gio. Antonio Vassallo, 'Cose Storiche Nostrali intorno alla cos' detta Ribellione dei Preti nel 1775', *L'Arte*, no. 85, 1866, Year IV, p. 4.
- 15 Nicola Zammit, 'D. Gaetano Mannarino', *L'Arte*, no. 81, 1866, Year IV. p. 5.
- 16 Gio. Antonio Vassallo, 'Cose Storiche Nostrali intorno alla cos' detta Ribellione dei Preti nel 1775', *L'Arte*, no. 84, 1866, Year IV, p. 7. According to Vassallo, the incident that sparked off Mannarino's uprising took place at the Marina of Senglea in August 1774. On the specific orders of the Captain of the Galleys, Cav. Monsú Rosier, his soldiers arrested Bishop Pellerano's Treasurer (*Alario*) at Senglea's Marina, dragged him onto Monsú's galley, tied him to a cannon and proceeded to savagely scourge him. The reason behind this act seems to have been Captain Monsú's personal revenge, because the previous year; the Bishop had arrested one of his men. The Bishop retaliated by arresting the sailors involved in this illegal arrest and put them behind bars in his prison in Birgu. When some Knights in Valletta heard what had happened they went to Birgu and, with the help of their slaves, attacked the Bishop's palace, broke into the prison cells and freed their men.
- 17 Gio. Antonio Vassallo, 'Cose Storiche Nostrali intorno alla cos' detta Ribellione dei Preti nel 1775', *L'Arte*, no. 84, 1866, Year IV, p. 6.
- 18 Ibid. p. 2.
- 19 A.A.M. *Suppliche*, Vol. 12. p. 560.
- 20 Gio. Antonio Vassallo, 'Cose Storiche Nostrali intorno alla cos' detta Ribellione dei Preti nel 1775', *L'Arte*, no. 87, 1866, Year IV, p. 7.
- 21 Nicola Zammit, 'D. Gaetano Mannarino', *L'Arte*, no. 80, 1866, Year IV, p. 7.
- 22 Michael Anton Vassalli had originally planned to become a priest. He received the first tonsure and was admitted into the Major Seminary, as can be attested through his *patrimonio sagro* which consisted of three pieces of lands, one deriving from the property of his deceased father and the other two donated by his in-laws Saverio Camilleri and Maria Delicata. A.A.M. *Patrimonio Sacro*, Vol. 69A, 1785 No. 3. Michaelangelo Vassallo, 23 Aprile 1785, 7 Luglio 1785. Vide Also Frans Ciappara, 'Mikiel Anton Vassalli, A Preliminary Survey', *Melita Historica*, Vol. X, no. 2, 1989, pp.145-155.
- 23 Archivio Propaganda Fidei, Università Urbaniana, *Fondo Malta*, Vol. 1. For more information about this school vide Frans Ciappara, 'The School of Arabic in Malta (1722-1795)', *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 3rd July 1983, p. 9.
- 24 David Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, Ex Dictis Vassalli', *Il-Mument*, 4 Lulju 2004, p. 16.
- 25 For more information vide Simon Mercieca, 'Émigrés bonapartistes maltais en Corse (1800-1852)', *Dictionnaire Historique Corse*, ed. Antoine Laurent Serpentine, Albania, 2006, pp. 338-339 and Eugène Fenech, *Mémoires d'un officier de santé maltais dans l'armée française. (1786-1839)*, edited and annotated by Richard Spiteri, La Vouivre, Paris, 2001, 201p
- 26 Geoffrey Roper, *Arabic printing in Malta 1825-1845: its history and its place in the development of print culture in the Arab Middle East*, Ph.D. Thesis (University of Durham, 1988), p. 231.
- 27 Roper, p. 151.
- 28 For example, after becoming a Methodist, Cleardo Naudi was physically attacked in Bormla, presumably after attending their church there in 1825. (David Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanonku Fortunato Panzavecchia (1797-1850): il-lingwista u l-edukatur*, unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 1995, pp 61-62.) Protestant and Anglican places of worship, including the Anglican Cathedral, were sometimes subject to attack.
- 29 J.E. Ryland, *Memoirs of John Kitto, D.D., F.S.A.*, Edinburgh, 1856, p. 276. 'the priests and people are very jealous of the missionaries; and although we have leave to distribute tracts printed in England, this permission is of very little avail. We had an edition of John's Gospel,

- printed in London, one column in Italian and the opposite in Maltese. When this was known, the alarm was immediately taken, and the Archbishop, Bishop of Malta, absolutely forbade its being distributed among his people. Now, therefore, it lies useless upon our hands'.
- 30 Bishop Labini visited the Senglea monastery in the afternoon of 9th September 1783. According to Labini, '*the library was well provided with a sufficient number of books*'. Labini would use similar words of praise for this library on his following visits, effected in 1786, 1788, 1790 and 1792. A.A.M. Vis(itatio). Pas(toralis). Labini, (1783-84) Vol. XL, f. 225r, 'cellas patrum, cappellam ac bibliothecam invenitque nitidas et bene detentas. Provisam bibliothecam de sufficienti numero librorum'; A.A.M. Vis. Pas. Labini, (1785) Vol. XLI, f. 173, 'cellas partum, cappellam et bibliothecam ac optime inventit detentos'; A.A.M. Vis. Pas. Labini, (1788) Vol. XLII, f. 160v, 'Omnias invenit bene detenta'; A.A. M. Vis. Pas. Labini, (1788) Vol. XLII, f. 160v, 'Omnias invenit bene detenta'; A.A.M. Vis. Pas. Labini, (1790) Vol. XLIII, f. 136r, 'Bibliothecam omnia bene detenta invenit'; A.A.M. Vis. Pas. Labini, (1792) Vol. XLIV, f. 158v, 'Invenit omnia bene detenta'.
 - 31 Antoinette Schembri, *The library of the Philippine Congregation in Senglea: a cursory look at its past history and aspects of its books' and manuscripts' conservation*, Unpublished dissertation presented to the University of Malta for the Diploma in Library and Information Studies, 2005.
 - 32 A.C.M. C(uria).E(piscopis). M(elitensis). Dictum A(cta) O(riginaria) 579 (1680) case 201.
 - 33 Simon Mercieca, '*Mattei Francesco*', *Dictionnaire Historique Corse*, ed. Antoine Laurent Serpentine, Albania, 2006. p. 616-7.
 - 34 A.C:M. C.E.M. A.O. 800, (1760) 2/3, f. 217r. He was the son of Aloisio and Maria Mattei. Aloisio was the son of Francesco Mattei.
 - 35 A.C.M. C.E.M. A.O. 835, 1791-93, f. 77r. The word was written in miniscule letters, meaning that the scribe was not referring to any country in particular but simply indicating a geographical location.
 - 36 During this period, both Australia and Newfoundland were called *terra nova*. The American Continent was already known by its proper name by then. Moreover, the fact that *terra nova* was written in small letters implied that he must have visited Australia. Newfoundland became a proper name. Thus, if the author was referring to it, the scribe would have written it in majuscule letters.
 - 37 A(rchivum) P(arrochialis), Senglea *Liber Baptizatorum*, Vol. V, 1775-1796, ff. 147-148. Ferdinand Mattei was born in Senglea on 24 July 1761. He was the son of Carlo Mattei and Philippa Scarplon. They married in Senglea on 27th November 1751. A.P. *Liber Matrimonium*. 1715-1773, Vol. II, p. 466.
 - 38 Francesco was the grandfather of Carlo Mattei, Ferdinand's father. Carlo was born to Aloisio, one of Francesco's two sons.
 - 39 A.A.M. *Dimissorae*, Vol. 18, no. 17. Ferdinando Mattei became priest or cappellano of the Venerandi Linguae Aragonis in 1782.
 - 40 Archivo Segreto Vaticano, *Fondo Malta*. (volume and page mislaid).
 - 41 David Agius Muscat, 'The Bishop who Bore Vassalli a Grudge', *The Sunday Times*, 19-12-2004, p. 55.
 - 42 Spiteri, pp. 151 -152.
 - 43 A.A.M. *Suppliche*, Vol. 12. pp. 559v-560r.
 - 44 Giovanni Bonello, 'Don Gaetano Mannarino: false and deceitful idol', *Sunday Times*, 8 and 15-12-2009.
 - 45 David Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, Mi Faccio Turco', *il-Mument*, 25 Lulju 2004, p. 16.
 - 46 Alexander Bonnici, *L-Isla*, Vol. III, Parroċċa ta' L-Isla, 1991, pp. 37-88.
 - 47 Giorgio Mitrovich's parents were Saverio and Adeodata Bandone. He was baptised in Senglea Parish church on 27th August 1795. A.P. Bapt. Senglea, Vol. V, 1775-1796, f. 452.
 - 48 A.A.M. *Pubblicationes 1811-1822*, f. 252.
 - 49 Bonnici, p. 39.
 - 50 A.P. Senglea *Liber Mortuorum*, Vol. IV, p. 200.

- 51 A.C.M. C.E.M. A.O. 811, *Status Liberi* 1767 . f 13r-19v. Mitrovich was born to Salvatore and Angelica around 1750. He left his island home for Venice in the company of Vincentius Alvich. Mitrovich would stay in Venice for about 13 years, travelling all along the Gulf of Venice on short distances, and would eventually meet up again with Alvich in Malta. In 1763, Mitrovich came to Malta where, for a period of two years and six months, he created his own garrison and then joined the squadron of the Order of Saint John working on the *galeotta* S. Orsula as ship lieutenant for five months. At the end of his engagement, he left on a French *Pollacca* for Marseilles whence he undertook a voyage to America in the company of at least two Frenchmen, Gullierlmus Rubert and Aloisio Reinard. They stayed in America for about 16 months after which they returned back to Marseilles and from there on to Malta.
- 52 A.C.M. C.E.M. A.O. 811, *Stati Liberi* 1767. f. 13r
- 53 A.C.M. C.E.M. A.O. 821 1773, f. 307.
- 54 A.C.M. C.E.M. A.O. 835, (1791-1793) f. 338.
- 55 It seems that Mitrovich's family took up residence in this Villa and he must have been a well-established figure in town because the examination of his Status Libero was undertaken by Bishop Rull in person and held at Villa Sirena. Normally, such an examination was conducted at the Bishop's Curia. CEM AO 811, Status Liberi 1767. f. 14r
- 56 A.A.M. *Status libero*, 1806, No. 95. Giorgio Mitrovich's daughter, Teresa requested to marry Joseph Romano, son of Dominus Antonino Romano and Sebastiana Perini from Messina.
- 57 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanonku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, p. 109.
- 58 Simon Mercieca, 'A Cose Nuove Uomini Nuovi': *The Scerberras Family and the Italian Risorgiment*, forthcoming.
- 59 A.A.M. *Status Animarum* Box 21 no. 58, St. Paul Parish Church, 1743. f. 1. The *Status Animarum* of Saint Paul in Valletta for the year 1743 attests the presence of a bishop by the surname Xiberas.
- 60 N(ational). L(ibrary). M(alta). Lib(rary Collection). *Adami Collection*, Vol. 69, p. 223.
- 61 Silvana Raffaele, 'Abile nella sua prediletta carriera artistica: Crescenzo Galatola (1813-1866) tipografo in Catania', *'Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale'*, 2008.
- 62 Prof. Silvana Raffaella states in her paper that 'L'arte del tipografo sembra diventare a Catania quasi un monopolio di Crescenzo Galatola'
- 63 Michele Galatola was the son of Crescenzo Galatola and Lucia Montefasco.
- 64 Maria Sciano was the daughter of Filippo Sciano and Maria Domenica Custa Liola.
- 65 A.P. Senglea, *Liber Matrimoniorum*, Vol. IV, 1803-1826, date of act 27.01.1810, p. 112.
- 66 This family had the following offspring in Senglea: Lucia Eugenia Theodora Galatola (19-12-1810), Filippo, Angelus Galatola (5.5.1815); Francesca Paola Anna Maria Galatola (10.02.1817).
- 67 The baptismal act of Crescenzo was not traced in the Senglea Parish records. However, he was born in 1813, the year when Malta suffered the last outbreak of the plague, which explains why his name fails to appear in the registers. Even if Senglea remained immune, during such circumstances there is a normal loss of registration of acts. Moreover, the Status Animarum are missing for Senglea for the period 1810-1826. These acts began to be compiled again by the parish priest Leopoldo Fiteni in 1827. (A.P. Senglea, FP. 37 *Status Animarum anno incarnationis Domini 1827 a me S.T.D. Leopoldo Fiteni Archipresbytero et Parocho descriptus*). By then, the family seems to have moved out of Senglea as it is not recorded in the Status Animarum compiled by Fiteni.
- 68 A.A.M. *Stato Libero*. 1809, No. 76.
- 69 Ryland, p. 264.
- 70 David Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, L-istorja ta' L'Ultimo Periodo' (1835)', *Il-Mument*, 20 ta' Gunju 2004, p. 16.
- 71 A.C.M./Pan./, Vol. 81. f. 30r. According to a genealogical study about this family to be found in this Fondo Panzavecchia, Gandolfo had 22 children and worked as 'contrattore' or 'provveditore di carne'. Gandolfo was Fortunato's Panzavecchia great grandfather. Fortunato Panzavecchia's father Giuliano was the son of Liborio who in turn was the son of Gandolfo Panzavecchia.
- 72 Ibid. f. 40r

- 73 A.A.M./*Canonici Della Senglea*/1786-1826, Vol. 3. f. 283r.
- 74 A.A.M. *Suppliche* 1813-35, Vol. 27, f.244r
- 75 Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, L-istorja ta' L'Ultimo Periodo' (1835)', p. 16. His aim was to record in writing facts concerning history and personalities that risked being forgotten unless no records were kept. He finished writing this fourth volume, entitled '*L'Ultimo Periodo*' in 1825, but only published the book 10 years later in 1835 at the Government press.
- 76 Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, L-istorja ta' L'Ultimo Periodo' (1835)', p. 16.
- 77 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanoniku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, p. 24.
- 78 Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, L-istorja ta' L'Ultimo Periodo', p. 16.
- 79 Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, Mi Faccio Turco', p. 16.
- 80 Agius Muscat, 'Panzavecchia u Vassalli, Mi Faccio Turco', p. 16.
- 81 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanoniku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, pp. 199-200.
- 82 Roper, *Arabic Press in Malta*, p. 233.
- 83 Ibid. p. 231.
- 84 A.C.M. Pan., p. 246.
- 85 Fortunato Panzavecchia, *L'Ultimo Periodo della Storia di Malta sotto il Governo dell'Ordine Frammento dell'Istoria di Malta* (Malta, 1835). p. 85. Arch. Cath. (Mdina) Pan. 121, pp. 254-5.
- 86 A.C.M. Pan., 101. f. 241, 1 Ottobre 1816, 'Andai in chiesa verso le nove ed ascoltai la messa di Musciau dicendo mattutino colle lodi poi andai a S. Filippo ove presa la chiave detta libreria ei stetti a leggere e cosi scesi verso le undici'.
- 87 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanoniku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, p. 30.
- 88 A.A.M./// *Canonici Della Senglea 1786-1826*,/Vol. 3. f. 365r.
- 89 A.A.M. *Patrimonio Sacro*. 1818, 82B, *Leopoldo Fiteni*, no. 46. Born in 1779, Leopoldo Fiteni was the son of Gio Maria Fiteni. To become a priest, he needed what was called a *patrimonio sacro*. This was created for him by his father, Gio Maria and his brother Giorgio Fiteni. Other members of the family were Michelangelo, Rosario and Francesco.
- 90 A.A.M./ *Canonici Della Senglea 1786-1826*,/ Vol. 3. f. 368. In 1818, he received the right from Santa Maria in Rome to be coadjutor of the incumbent parish priest, Vincenzo Cachia. In 1822, Cachia was promoted to Monsignor of the Cathedral. Immediately afterwards, by Apostolic brief, Fiteni was appointed both Canon and Archpriest of Senglea.
- 91 A.P. Senglea *Liber Baptizatorium*, date of act, 28-12-1787, f. 277.
- 92 A.A.M. *Libr. Canonici Della Senglea 1786-1826*, Vol. 3. f. 375.
- 93 In the ecclesiastical world, Fiteni was the least entitled to become parish priest in a parish that had a Collegiate Chapter. This ecclesiastical terminology is used to denote a college or association of priests. Each one of these priests is known as Canon and each Canon had to have an ecclesiastical benefice to support him. The fact that he was a former friar somewhat disqualified him. Appointments of parish priests had to be made from within the fold of secular priests and chosen from the ranks of canons. In fact, various canons in Senglea coveted this post and many frowned when they came to know that Cachia appointed Fiteni as his coadjutor with the automatic right of succession So serious was the opposition that Panzavecchia wrote a satirical poem about this situation and in support of Fiteni, as many of those who laid claim to the post (mentioned by name) were in his view less suitable to wearing the 'wig', which at this time was worn by the person who had the office of parish priest.
- 94 A.A.M. *Patrimonio Sacro*. 1818, 82B, *Leopoldo Fiteni*, no. 46.
- 95 Simon Mercieca, 'The Outcry of Music in the Configuration of International Events that Led to the Takeover of Malta by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798: a Largely Unknown Chapter in Maltese Music History', *Mediterrán Tanulmányok Études sur la Région Méditerranéenne*, Vol. XVII Université de Szeged Département d'Histoire Moderne et d'Études Méditerranéennes Szeged 2008, pp. 128-129.
- 96 Michael J. Schiavone, *Dictionary of Maltese Biographies*, Vol. I A-F, PIN, Malta, 2009, p. 820.
- 97 Saverio Adami's father was Gio Batta de Adamo from Senglea, (A.P. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium 1676-1715*, Vol. IB, date of act 08-02-1682). He was the son of Emanuele De Adamo and Marita Gambino. Emanuele's marriage, took place at the parish of Porto Salvo in 1649. His parents were the late Giovanni De Adami and Angelina. In fact, his father Giovanni

- de Adami was given as deceased at the time of Emanuele's marriage. In this act, Emanuele and his parents were described as parishioners of Porto Salvo. (A.P. Porto Salvo *Liber Matrimonium*, f. 202r, date of marriage act 07-06-1649). (Vide also NLM. Adami collection, Vol. 47, f. 79r.).
- 98 The first Adamo to settle in Senglea was Gio Batta Adamo who married Anna Maria di Candia on 9 February 1682.
 - 99 A.A.M. Canon Della Senglea 1881-1898, f. 285; A.P. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium*, Vol. IV, f.134, date of act 4th February 1812. Saverio Adami was the son of Giovanni Damo (sic.) and Maria Vella. His wife Maria Scicluna was the daughter of the physician Francesco Scicluna and Magdalena Gabaretta.
 - 100 Saverio was registered under the surname of Damo in Senglea's parish acts when he married Maria Scicluna in Senglea. A.P. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium 1803-1826*, Vol. IV, f.134, date of act 4.02.1812.
 - 101 P.A. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium 1773-1802*, Vol III, date of Act 13-06-1776, p. 57. Giovanni Damo is recorded marrying Maria Vella. He was the son of Saverio Damo and Teresa.
 - 102 P.A. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium 1715-1773*, Vol. II, date of act 12 July 1724, f. 181. Saverio Adamo was recorded marrying Teresa Grech. He was the son of Gio Batta Adamo and Anna. This was his second marriage. According to the Adami collection, Saverio Adamo was first married to Caterina Freri, daughter of Giorgio and Veronica as registered in the acts of Notary Gio Domenico Pace. (8 April 1720). N.L.M. Libr. *Adami Collection*, Vol. 47, f. 79r.
 - 103 According to the Adami Collection, the parish of Porto Salvo records the marriage of Giovanni Adamo Veneziano with Geronima widow of Arsio de Nicola on 2 March 1647. However this could not be Emanuele's father. According to the Status Liberi, this Giovanni Adamo, described as the son of Giuseppe from the city of Venice, was 24 years old at the time of his marriage to Geronima. (AAM, *Stati Liberi 1647-1648*, Box 37, date of act ?-02-1647, no. 32). Therefore, he was too young to be Emanuele's father who is marrying in Porto Salvo two years latter. Moreover, the parish records attests for the prescence of other Adami family in Malta prior to 1647. The parish acts of Senglea records the marriage in 1639 of Giovanni De Adamo with the widow Bernardina Ferranza. Giovanni was described as Greco. (P.A. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium*, Vol. 1a, date of act 06-03-1639).
 - 104 The first Adamo surname to be encountered in the parish acts is at Birgu. The marriage records of Birgu records the marriage of Filippo De Adamo De tufa with Caterina. They married on 9 April 1575. A.P. Birgu, *Liber 1 Baptizatorum Matrimoniorum Mortuorumque ab anno 1556 usque ad annum 1626*, Vol. 1 f. 279v. As indicated In footnote 105, the parish acts of Senglea records the marriage in 1639 of Giovanni De Adamo to the widow Bernardina. Giovanni was described as Greco whilst Bernardina was described as the widow of the painter Gio Cristoforo Tedesco. (P.A. Senglea, *Liber Matrimonium*, Vol. 1a, p. 330. date of act 06-03-1639).
 - 105 The Curia *Stati Liberi* records the presence of other Adamis in Malta prior to 1647. The first one is the case of Adamo Paro. (A.A.M. *Stati Liberi*, 1633, Box 23, date of case 14-05-1633, no. 71); Adamo Paro hailed from Destirin (that is Dresden) in Germany. Incidentally, Adamo was his name. However, sometimes names were adopted as surnames by the children of those, concerned adding the preposition de or di in front of it. The second case was that of Demetrius Adami. He was of Greek origins (coming from territories in the Levant that were under Venetian control) and lived in Bormla at around 1608. He appeared as witness in a *Stato Libero* case of Giovanni De Pasquale from Ragusa (Dubrovnik). (A.A.M. *Stati Liberi* Box 6, No. 28, date of case of 04-06-1608). The third possibility of derivation of the Adami family is from France. Goffredo Adami records the marriage of Giacomo Adam at Porto Salvo to Laurica Cincio. He was from France but is directly related to Emanuele Adam. (N.L.M. Adami Collection, Vol. 47, f. 79r).
 - 106 There is also the remote possibility that the Adami line of the Fenech Adami family points to Flemish origins. This involves the marriage of Giovanni D' Auschi from Flanders. (AAM *Stati Liberi*, Box 9 1612/1613, no. 10, date of act, 19-05-1612). He married Angelica Russo in 1612. (A.P. Porto Salvo, Vol. 1. f. 56r. date of act 03-06-1612). Incidentally, this is the sole couple

- which I found in Porto Salvo and all over the harbour area which has the names of the parents matching with those of Emanuele De Adamo. Was this a case where the parish priest mixed the surname De Auschi with De Adami? In other words, the letters 'usch' ended up transposed into 'dam', thus making their surname equivalent to that of the Adami, which was well known at the harbour area during this period. This can explain why this surname took over two centuries to establish itself in a permanent format of Adami and until this happened, it ended up being written in different manners and form.
- 107 A.P. Liber Baptizorum, vol. viii 1815-1827, Senglea Georgius, Joachim, Vincenzo, Josephus, Franciscus, Salvatore, (19-01-1818); Magdalena Baptistina Teresia, Victoria, Vincenzia, (14-03-1820); Joannes Maria, Pasquale Fortunato (18-02-1824); Thomasina, Theresia, Silvestra, Fortunata (13-01-1830).
 - 108 A.P. Senglea *Liber Matrimonium 1842-1861*, Vol. VI, date of act 12.2.1854, p. 315.
 - 109 A.A.M. *Canon. Della Senglea* 1881 al 1898, Vol. 6, f.282. Canon Giorgio Adami took up residence at Tarxien with his sister Teresa Adami, where he died on 1 January 1898.
 - 110 I would like to thank Magistrate Joseph Cassar for this information.
 - 111 A.A.M. *Canonici della Senglea Dal 1833 al 1856*, Vol. 4. p.145.
 - 112 *Ibid.* p. 144.
 - 113 A.A.M. *Canon Della Senglea* 1881 al 1898, Vol. 6, f. 283.
 - 114 A.A.M. *Canonici della Senglea Dal 1833 al 1856*, Vol. 4, p.153v.
 - 115 *Ibid.* f. 143
 - 116 A.P. Porto Salvo, *Liber Matrimoni 1837-59*, p. 660, date of act 12-07- 1859. Vide also A.A.M *Publicationes*, Vol. M. 14, Febraio 1859 - Dicembre 1867, date of banns 25-07-1859.
 - 117 A.P. *Senglea, Liber Baptizorum Senglea*, vol. xii, xiii , Glorinda Francesca Maddalena, 07-10-1860; Goffredus, Francesco Xaverius, Renaldus 01-09-1863; Saveria, Maria Sabina, 30-01-1865; Josephus, Francesco Paulus, 07-05-1868; Maria, Carmela, Alfonsa 14-09-1870; Maddelan Philippa, 02-02-1873; Salvatore 31-07-1876; Giorgina, 16-01-1881; Giovanni, 25-01-1884.
 - 118 A.A.M. *Canonicati Senglea* 1906-1928, Vol. 7. Not.paged. In 1906, Salvatore became subdeacon and took the solemn oath as canon of Senglea.
 - 119 For more information, vide Raymond Mangion's paper: Dr Goffredo Adami LL.D./ a radical politician worthy of remembrance, p. 371.
 - 120 Michael J. Schiavone, *Dictionary of Maltese Biographies*, Vol. I A-F, PIN, Malta, 2009, p. 23.
 - 121 Arch. Cath. (Mdina) Pan. 81, f. 36r. Reference to the common ancestry shared by the Panzavecchia and the Adami families was explicitly indicated by Fortunato Panzavecchia in his papers. Eventually these papers became the property of Ignazio Panzavecchia.
 - 122 A.A.M. *Canonicati Vittoriosa, Senglea e Cospiqua 1895 al 1906*, p. 264r-v.
 - 123 Bonnici, Vol. 3, 197.
 - 124 *The Bonham Carter Diaries 1936-1940*, edited and with an Introduction by John Manduca, P.E.G. Ltd, 2004, p. 112.
 - 125 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanonku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, p. 46.
 - 126 A.A.M. *Canonici della Senglea Dal 1833 al 1856*, Vol. 4. f. 143. The canonicate claimed by Giorgio Adami was established through a foundation set up by Donna Theresa widow of the Late Giorgio Ciantar on 8 March 1815.
 - 127 N.L.M. Libr. *Adami Collection*, Vol. 69. p.1.
 - 128 *Ibid.* p. 2, 38.
 - 129 *Ibid.* Vol. 67.
 - 130 It was through his mother's side, Maria Cremona's, that Fortunato Panzavecchia claimed a kinship relationship with the Adami. The common ancestor was Fortunato's great-grandfather, Antonio Cremona.
 - 131 A.A.M. *Canonic(ati) Della Senglea* 1786-1826, Vol. 3. f. 282r. Fortunato Panzavecchia was born at Senglea on 22 August 1797.
 - 132 A.A.M. *Canonic(ati) della Senglea*, Vol. 5, f. 173r.
 - 133 *Ibid.* f.175v.
 - 134 *Ibid.* f. 177v.

- 135 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanonku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, pp. 18-19.
- 136 For example, Dott. Francesco Fenech's mother was Emmanuela Federici.
- 137 Bonham Carter, p. 18.
- 138 Agius Muscat, *Il-Kanonku Fortunato Panzavecchia*, p. 127
- 139 Bonham Carter, pp. 271.
- 140 Ibid, p. 363.
- 141 Ibid, p. 81.
- 142 Ibid, p. 18.
- 143 Ibid, p. 139.
- 144 Filippo Sciberras was the son of Goffredo who in turn was the son of Camillo Sciberras.
Herbert Ganado, *My Century [Rajt Malta Tinbidel]* translated and adapted by Michael Refalo,
Vol. 1 (Gutenberg Press Limited, 2004), p. 29.

