

THE WINE TRADE OF MALTA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN DEBONO

In the eighteenth century, as always, wine formed an integral part of the diet of the Maltese population.⁽¹⁾ Still Malta was never self sufficient in its production. Well back into the fifteenth century, much before the Order had come to Malta, to satisfy this need the island had depended for its supplies on the markets of Sicily rather than elsewhere.⁽²⁾ In the eighteenth century the Sicilian farmers cultivated the grape vine on a very wide scale.⁽³⁾ To their credit, though their country was still hamstrung by the burdens of baronial tithes, lack of capital and poor techniques, these farmers increased the areas under vine cultivation by 50%.⁽⁴⁾ The yield gave an increase of only 40% in the production of wine a discrepancy of 10% due to awkward and inadequate methods of grape pressing.

Wine Merchants in Malta

The strong demand for Sicilian wine by the local population caused Maltese merchants, singly or in small groups, to sail to Sicily to purchase whatever wines they found on the Sicilian markets. This system was rather wasteful, incurring overhead charges that could both be avoided and changed to a profit if a better one was introduced.

The need for improvement was actually expressed on 7 December 1697 by Joanne Baptista Saivaloco, a leading wine merchant, who wrote to the Municipal Authorities to complain about this wasteful practice.⁽⁵⁾ He explained how the Maltese merchants or their agents were vying with each other to bring whatever wines were available in Sicily; Sicilian vintners availed themselves of the situation by raising their prices and giving their wines to the highest bidders to the detriment of the Maltese consumer. Saivaloco suggested the formation of a company of wine merchants so that only one or two representatives would be sent there to make the necessary purchases. They would be able to visit other places besides Syracuse, Augusta and Vittoria, the places that normally supplied the wine consumed in Malta. From these points of supply they could derive the best bargains. Saivaloco argued that this system had other advantages: individual importation would cease; competition and the frequent fluctuation of prices would be eliminated. Only the best bargains for the mutual benefit of all members of the company and the consumers would be struck.

1. P(alace) A(rchives at) V(alletta), Miscellaneous Packet No. 1, no foliation, dated 1705.

2. A. Mifsud, 'L'Approvigionamento e l'Università di Malta', *Archivum Melitense*, Vol. III, No. 5, pp. 163-212; H. Bresc, 'The "Secrezie" and the Royal Patrimony', *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A.T. Luttrell, London 1975, pp. 126-136.

3. G. Giorgetti, *Contadini e Proprietari nell'Italia Moderna*, Turin 1974, pp. 206-209.

4. M. Aymard, 'Rendements et productivite agricole dans l'Italie Moderne', *Annales Economies Societes Civilisations*, 28 Annee No. 2 (Mars - Avril 1973) pp. 477-482.

5. N(ational) L(ibrary of) M(alta), Univ(ersità) 338, Suppliche 1686-1742, no foliation.

It is safe to assume that Salvaloco was not alone to harbour such a strategy. Several merchants signed a memorial pledging an amount of money for the success of the new venture. Below is a table giving the names of the merchants who could be approached to subscribe and their respective amounts for this venture.

Table I
Company of Wine Merchants – 1697

Name	Scudi
Carlo and Pasquale Salvaloco	3,000
Pasquale and Giovanni Bianco	3,000
Pietro Lombardo and Benedetto Casha	3,000
Gio Battista Salvaloco	3,000
Giovanni Xicluna	1,500
Filippo Galea	1,500
Domenico Salvaloco	1,500
Carmine Cimino	1,500
Francesco Cassia and Claudio Bennardi	1,500
Mastro Pietro Licata	1,000
Mastro Natale Mangano	1,000
Antonio A'tard	1,000
Raimundo Formosa	1,000
Michaele Delicata	1,000
Domenico Delicata	1,000
Flamino Galea	500
Michaele Damato	500
Vincenzo Aquilina	500
Francesco Bartolo	500
Aloisio Miraci	500
Gio Batta Zammit	500
Gaetano Gandolfo	500
Vincenzo Giannone	500
Lorenzo Borg	500
	<u>30,000</u>

This plan obviously had as its advantage the importation of wine in bulk, eliminating overhead charges and other expenses connected with the importation of wine in small quantities by different importers. It would stop as well the habit of Sicilian vintners to raise prices. But it also had its drawbacks. It would damp the competition existing among suppliers by creating a monopoly or a quasi-monopoly. Thus, private enterprise would be largely lost while the local wine consumers would be increasingly at the mercy of the monopolists.

The purpose of the company in promoting this idea was to provide the Maltese public and the Order with sufficient wine. The members agreed that shopkeepers and taverners who paid in ready cash for the wine they bought would be given a discount – 6 *tari* less than the official price per *barile*.⁶ Taverners and shopkeepers who bought on credit would be charged according to the official price. It was obviously the intention to lure shopkeepers and taverners to pay in ready cash so that the merchants could have enough liquidity in their hands to meet expenses incurred in the purchase of fresh loads of wine in Sicily. The company would also maintain the good standard of imported wine and claimed that, if wine was scarce in Sicily, they would import it from other markets. The merchants would not ask for any help from the Municipal Authorities, as long as they could make a profit of around 10 per cent on their operations.

In putting forward their proposals the merchants hoped to import some 20,000 *scudi* worth of wine within four years. This wine would be sold to the public at a stable price. The Government then had already assumed responsibility for the importation of wheat and oil, the merchants were thinking of establishing a similar monopoly for wine themselves. Wine was a popular drink and its sales and purchases deserved a better organisation in order to place internal commerce on a sounder footing.

Correspondence relating to Salvaloco's suggestion dragged on, but a positive outcome never materialized. Permission for a wine monopoly was unlikely to be granted as it would have challenged the prevailing system of the wine trade. It does not seem that the proposal ever came into operation. However, the wine trade continued to flourish as appears from the following longer list of merchants and owners of boats, who, in 1724, imported wine.⁷

The merchants were Mariuttio Cammilleri, Flamino Galea, Angelo Debrincat, Gio Batta Testaferrata, Gio Micallef, Natali Mangano, Gulielmo Fgo, Jacobo Mallia, Domenico Formosa, Filippo Galea, Andrea Salvaloco, Gregorio Xerri, Gaspari Dandalona, Pietro Delicata, Francesco La Rosa, Josepho Psayla, Gio Antonio Caruana, Joseph Abela, Gaspari Agius, Antonio Tramblett, Gio Antonio Burlo, Filippo Cornelio, Antonio Rè, Pietro Gufre, Jacobo Magro, Vincentio Aquilina, Joseph Attard and Francesco Mattei. The owners of boats were Pietro Cammilleri, Balthassare Cammilleri, Domenico Trivisan, Gaspari Signorello and Antonio Caruana.

These merchants directed and financed their own enterprise in a way they thought most suitable to their own needs.

Maltese merchants imported red and white wines from Sicily. Wines were either strong or weak according to the types of vine from which they were produced. Some of the most important types of Sicilian wine imported were *Aglianico Nero*, *Alicante*, *Barbera*, *Calabrese Bianca* and *Frappato Nero di Vittoria*.⁸ It appears that the city to which merchants were mainly drawn for wine was Vittoria. Gaetano Azzopardi was one from a long list of merchants who hired the Xebec of Salvatore

6. 1 *scudo* was equivalent to 12 *tari* and 1 *tari* was equivalent to 20 *grani*. 1 *botte* contained 22 *barili* and 1 *barile* contained 2 *quartara*.

7. NLM, Libr(ary) M(anu) s(cript) 429 (1722 – 1736), f. 77v.

8. J. Borg, *The Grape Vine in the Maltese Islands*, Malta 1922, pp. 55 – 66.

Debarro to carry 30 *botti* of wine from Vittoria in 1788.⁽⁹⁾ In 1708 Vittoria wine was selling at 13 *tari* 10 *grani* per *salma* whilst that of Syracuse was selling at 22 *tari*.⁽¹⁰⁾ Vittoria wine was normally cheaper than that of other market towns due to lower over-heads and lower transport charges, Vittoria being relatively closer to Malta than the other supply sources.

Maltese wine dealers used to travel to fairs at Messina and Palermo where they signed their contracts with Sicilian vintners.⁽¹¹⁾ When wine was abundant,⁽¹²⁾ Sicilian vintners sent their representatives to Malta to effect immediate sales and expedite matters. For example, in 1705 Francesco Falcone, from Pantelleria, came to Malta to sign a contract about the sale of wine with Giovanni Micallef.⁽¹³⁾ It was stated in the contract of sale that the wine was to be wholesome, red and strong. The *fusti* in which it was to be transported were to be thoroughly clean and to be brought to Malta on the Martingale piloted by Michele Signorello. They cost a *zecchino Veneto* per *fusto*; 100 *scudi* worth of wine were sold in this transaction. Don Alessandro Barbagallo, a Sicilian, in 1758 contracted with Michele Portelli to supply him with wine to the value of 200 *onze* in Sicilian money.⁽¹⁴⁾ The quality of wine was not specified in the contract, but as much wine as possible had to be obtained at the current prices prevailing in Sicily. Don Barbagallo also acknowledged that he had received 120 *onze* in liquid cash and 80 *onze* in a sea-exchange which was to be delivered as soon as the wine reached port.⁽¹⁵⁾ On 3 December 1787, Francesco Spada from the city of Jaci agreed with Antonio Bezzina to transport 220 *salme* of wine from Mascari on his own feluka.⁽¹⁶⁾ Hiring for this wine amounted to 4 *tari* 10 *grani* Sicilian money per *salma*.

The Middlemen

It has already been hinted at above that it was customary for several Maltese wine merchants to send individual agents to Sicily to purchase wine.⁽¹⁷⁾ However, this was considered by the other merchants to be a sheer waste of energy, time and money. These realized that substantial savings could be made if they agreed as a whole body to send over four agents to act on behalf of all. Consequently, on 19 October 1723 no less than thirty-three wine merchants and owners of boats decided to work

9. PAV, C(onsolato) D(el) M(are), A(tti) O(riginali), Vol. 94 (1789), Pro Gaetano Azzopardi contra Salvatore Debarro, ff. 24 – 31v.
10. NLM, Univ. 338, no foliation.
11. NLM, Libr. Ms. 1020, no foliation.
12. G.A. Arnolfini, *Giornale di Viaggio e Quèstiti sull'Economia Siciliana (1768)*, Palermo 1962, pp. 117 and 131.
13. N(otarial) A(rchives) V(alletta), Not(ary). G.F. Dalbrazzo, R 199/3, ff. 311v – 312.
14. NAV, Not. F. Alessi, 35/525, ff. 55 – 55v. One Sicilian *onza* was equivalent to 5 *scudi* 4 *tari* 3 *grani* Maltese currency.
15. On 26 April 1765, Felice Spiteri was commissioned by Don Alessandro Barbagallo, who at the time was a well known Sicilian merchant, to carry wine at the price of 3 *scudi* for every 22 Maltese *barili*: NAV, Not. F. Alessi, 41/525, ff. 181 – 182.
16. NAV, Not. F.S. Zammit, 9/1134, ff. 260 – 260v and 337v.
17. See above p. 74.

together in their way.⁽¹⁸⁾ They were authorised by the Government to nominate four individuals – well known in the trade, honest and able – to proceed to Donna Vittoria and purchase wine on their behalf. Domenico Salvaloco, Domenico Barbara, Giuseppe Mattei and Petruzzo Saydun were chosen as the best middlemen of those years. They were to proceed forthwith to Sicily and effect the purchases of wine as ordered by the merchants who had appointed them. The decision concerning the appointment of these middlemen stipulated especially that, “they should be experienced persons so that they might readily know the date and the quality of the purchased wine and give it proper attention on board so that it would not get mixed or go stale.”⁽¹⁹⁾

The proclamation empowering these four middlemen to proceed abroad explained that as soon as the wine reached Malta, they had to report to the collector of the wine tax so that he could have the wine thoroughly examined under his supervision before being taxed.⁽²⁰⁾ Adulterated wine was to be confiscated, reported to the *Castellania* and watched over by another officer.⁽²¹⁾ The collector of the wine tax had authority to choose twelve suitable officers to help him in this work. They were paid 4 *tari* per day of work; the money was collected from a rate levied on each *botte* which was imported by the merchants. No fixed rate was imposed but every merchant paid his share until the 4 *tari* were collected.

The wine merchants conferred certain powers on the four nominated middlemen to aid them in their responsibilities. None of the middlemen could purchase any wine by himself or on his own behalf; they had to accompany each other when effecting purchases of wine.⁽²²⁾ It was stressed that all wines should be bought on account of the merchants who had employed them and the middlemen were to see that prices were reasonable. Meanwhile the merchants were to hire the necessary ships for the transport of casks both empty and full ones. While a common seal was to be made on the casks, the middlemen were to see as well that when a sufficient quantity of wine had been purchased it was laden on a ship and sent to Malta for eventual disposal. The number of full casks and the amount contained in each of them were to be given to the owner of the ship on a special invoice. The four middlemen had to sign the papers together to further restrict any possibilities for fraud.

Merchants were to supply the middlemen with sufficient capital for the total purchases of wine. Cash and bills were to be enclosed in a box that had four different keys so that each of the four middlemen could open one lock only.⁽²³⁾ Middlemen could carry sufficient money in their hands to pay for deposits on the purchases made, some 10 per cent of the total cost price. The merchants paid in wages to each of the four middlemen three *tari* per cask bought overseas.

18. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1722 – 1736), ff. 46 – 47.

19. “Una persona pratica, et idonea per sopracarico, per averne la cura ed attenzione in farle compre de vini, e per quanto si farà il loro carico, come anche nel viaggio, e per quando so dovranno scaricare, a fin di non poter restare viziato, ò mescolato tanto con acqua salata, come con altra qualità differente di vini cattivi”: *Ibid.*, ff. 224 – 224v. See also Libr. Ms. 429 (1744 – 1756), ff. 140 – 140v dated 17 April 1753.

20. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1722 – 1736), ff. 224 – 224v.

21. *Ibid.*, ff. 225 – 227.

22. *Ibid.*, ff. 46 – 47.

23. *Ibid.*, f. 46v.

Middlemen had to defray expenses for board and lodging out of their personal earnings. The four of them together were to fill in the necessary forms and bills. A copy of these forms was to be retained by them for eventual examination by merchants in Malta. Failure to abide by these conditions made them liable to proceedings for fraud before the law.

On its arrival in Malta wine was to be delivered to Gioacchino Gambin, a fifth middleman who stayed in Malta and supervised its actual importation and delivery to the respective merchants. Gambin had other obligations to carry out:⁽²⁴⁾

- I. to see that wine was unloaded smoothly and diligently;
- II. to receive all papers and check whether amount on papers corresponded with that arriving on board (He had to report accordingly to the merchants and to the Officer of the wine tax. In turn the collector of the wine tax was empowered to check whether the quantity of wine on wharf tallied with that stipulated on the invoice. This he did when he sent his men to seal the wines and check for their quality);⁽²⁵⁾
- III. to give each of the several merchants as much wine as was entered in the invoice of the middlemen who went to Sicily or pro rata according to the quantity that arrived from day to day;
- IV. to present papers at the office of the Jurats and pay the necessary tolls;⁽²⁶⁾
- V. to send a sample of the wine to the collector of the wine tax to see whether it was adulterated;⁽²⁷⁾
- VI. to hold the job of a middleman for two years and was allowed 32 *grani per barile*.⁽²⁸⁾

A proclamation in 1753 stressed even further the role of the middlemen in the purchase of wine.⁽²⁹⁾ The provisions of the proclamation can be grouped under four main points:

- A. The merchants were prohibited from contracting any sale or purchase of wine without the intervention of the middlemen.
- B. The middleman was bound to keep a record of transactions, including (i) the sum of money charged for hiring a ship, as expressed in the contract signed at the Notary's between merchants and shipowners, and (ii) the quantity of wine to be received from abroad, its prices and other dues on it.
- C. The middleman could not allow any retail merchant to buy wine at the wharf unless he had already checked that all points of law had been obeyed.
- D. The middleman had to be present when the collector of the wine tax checked about the quality of wine to seal it.

The regulations were enforced. Antonio Farrugia was empowered to act as a middleman to Michele Portelli and to Gio Carlo Cammilleri on 19 September 1756.⁽³⁰⁾

24. *Ibid.*, ff. 77-78.

25. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1744-1756), f. 141.

26. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1722-1736), f. 77.

27. *Ibid.*, ff. 224v-225.

28. *Ibid.*, f. 77.

29. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1744-1756), ff. 140v-144v.

30. N.A.V., Not. P. Caruana, 10/690. ff. 6-6v

While stressing the above measures, another order on 5 July 1760 prohibited middlemen from taking part in any transaction concerning the transport of wine and foodstuffs from Sicily to any other country except Malta.⁽³¹⁾ This was justified on the grounds that there was need to ensure that Malta remained neutral since the Seven Year's War (1756 – 1763) was being waged at that time.⁽³²⁾

The middlemen assumed even more responsibility later in the century. On 11 February 1777 a proclamation directed that all merchandise subjected to an official price – as wine then was – was to be handled through a middleman.⁽³³⁾ He could bring the two parties, buyer and seller, together; he could keep caution money and see that goods and their money value passed satisfactorily from one hand to the other. At the termination of a transaction he had to inform the offices of both the *Castellania* and the Jurats about the matter. For such a job he was paid one per cent – *mezzania* – one half to be borne by the buyer and the other by the seller. When the seller was a foreigner he was excused from paying his share of *mezzania*. The order further empowered the wine merchants to form an association or company of thirteen middlemen elected freely from amongst themselves to safeguard the interests of the wine trade.⁽³⁴⁾ The treasurer of this company was entrusted to receive all the money collected, to issue a receipt to it and then to share it equally among the middlemen. The treasurer's pay was one quarter as much again as that of the other middlemen.

The company had to rent a small house in the vicinity of the wharves where goods were unloaded so that arriving ships could easily get into contact with the middlemen. Six of the middlemen worked the first week, and the other six on the second week, and so on, alternately. The treasurer had no leave but the members of the company could take his place when they were not on roll as middlemen. To minimize abuse, Consuls checked upon the entries of the middlemen's books.⁽³⁵⁾ Middlemen could not allow transfer of goods to take place unless they had already received their dues for the transaction. Nor could they, as middlemen, do any similar work when on leave.⁽³⁶⁾ In case they were approached for work, they had to inform a fellow middleman who was on duty. Middlemen were prohibited from keeping storage room facilities for their own wares; nor could they keep a tavern. Defaulters could be summarily deprived of their jobs and prosecuted. On 24 October 1777 the thirteen afore mentioned middlemen advanced 500 *scudi* as security for their jobs.⁽³⁷⁾

31. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1756 – 1765), ff. 57 – 57v.

32. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1744 – 1756), ff. 172 – 174. For more details see J. Debono, *The Maltese Wine Trade during the Eighteenth Century*, (M.A. thesis: University of Malta, 1983), pp. 27 – 30.

33. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1772 – 1779), ff. 197 – 199v.

34. The thirteen middlemen were: Gaetano Spiteri, Carlo Falzon, Infantino Mirabella, Gaspare Savona, Francesco Roux, Filippo Pulis, Gio Battista Menville, Antonio Zammit, Feliciano Vidal, Giuseppe Gafà, Giuseppe Ciaia, Michele Ginies and Michel Angelo Borg. *Ibid.*, f. 199v.

35. *Ibid.*, f. 198.

36. *Ibid.*, f. 198v.

37. *Ibid.*, f. 200.

The office of the middlemen was not a permanent one, it was created or revoked as the government of the day thought it fit. Most especially all powers were withdrawn when the Maltese harbour became a free port.⁽³⁸⁾ Instead a *Scala Franca* was introduced. This meant that official prices for wine, bread and other victuals were not fixed. The government issued this new system when they thought that the association of middlemen inflated the prices of necessities and hampered free trade.⁽³⁹⁾

On 25 November 1800 a group of eight middlemen wrote to the Municipal Authorities for the reinstatement of their former *Società*.⁽⁴⁰⁾ They explained that since the days of Grandmasters De Vilhena, Despuig and Pinto, a company of middlemen had been erected to facilitate commerce and to see that Malta had been well provided with necessary foodstuffs, including wine. They detailed the duties of the treasurer and of the association in general and on the dissolution of this same association at the insistence of Grandmaster De Rohan, who preferred the *Scala Franca*. They maintained that Grandmaster De Rohan had listened to poor advice, for middlemen did not in any way add to the inflation of the day. They wrote that they were poorly paid and could hardly make both ends meet. Rather, it was Sicily that was selling goods at excessive prices to the detriment of the entire population. Removal of regulations and restrictions on trade and the re-establishment of the same company could add to competition which in turn could help reduce the price of goods. They explained that formerly they used to serve as middlemen but by then had become old or retired. The re-establishment of the association would prove beneficial to them as they would find employment rather than be a burden on their family. The letter was signed by Giuseppe Ciaia Feliciano Vidale Michele Angelo Borg, Gaetano Spiteri, Paolo Vidal, Antonio Zammit and Giovanni Dalfonzo.⁽⁴¹⁾

On the other hand not all middlemen were of the same opinion; in fact, on 30 December 1800 another group of six middlemen Giuseppe Mirabella, Filippo Pulis, Gio Batta Menville, Vincenzo Mirabella, Giovanni Parnis and Felice Mirabella, wrote to the Municipal Authorities deploring the attitude of those middlemen who wanted to reinstate the old association.⁽⁴²⁾ They reported that the middlemen of the seventies were all alive, doing brisk private business and enjoying a happy life. "Middlemen," they said, "add to inflationary prices because they hardly do any work, they rarely appear on the wharves and are fraudulent people who are happy with excessive prices to gain a higher commission."⁽⁴³⁾ In their opinion the greater bulk of the merchants suggested that the company should be abolished once and for all. They had no faith in the system which had prevailed for so many years in Malta. Lastly they criticised the clauses of the law that had led to the creation of this association, casting aspersions on the former middlemen and their role in the wine trade.

38. *Ibid.*, f. 56 and 299.

39. "Conoscendo Sua Altezza Seranissima, quanto sia pregiudizievole, e contraria alla libertà del commercio l'unione e compagnia tra li Mezzani . . . oggi è vietata, siccome l'abolisce, e vieta direttamente insieme coll'uso della cassa commune." *Ibid.*, f. 299.

40. NLM, Univ. 493, Suppliche 1788 - 1802, no foliation.

41. Giuseppe Ciaia had been a middleman since 1771: NAV, Not. F. Alessi, 47/525, f. 132.

42. NLM, Univ. 493, Suppliche 1788 - 1802, no foliation.

43. "I sensali sono deliquenti nel loro mestiere." *Ibid.* See also, P. Fava. 'A Reign of Austerity: Economic Difficulties during the rule of Grand Master Ximenes (1773 - 1775)', *Storja* 78, ed. H. Frendo, Malta 1978, pp. 42 - 55.

No sooner had Giuseppe Ciaia and his friends heard about this letter than they wrote another one to defend their rights.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In the letter they reaffirmed their determination to revive the company and added that middlemen barely earned the means of sustenance for they used to work only on alternate weeks. They could do no other job during the other week and that meant loss of work and loss of wages, an imposition which existed in no other country where the service of the middleman was always acceptable. Ciaia went on to suggest that the Authorities should call the *Assemblea dei Mercadanti* and ask for their advice. They were sure that this *Assemblea* would vote in favour of the association of middlemen for these services benefitted the general community through more abundant goods, more varied qualities and even cheaper brands. Ciaia explained as well how he and the other middlemen earned their share of profit; foreign merchants paid ~~and~~ one-fourth of every 10 *tari* on the amount of goods sold and local merchants paid them one-fourth of every 5 *tari* on the amount of goods sold. Middlemen would exert their utmost possibility so that trade would be left in the hands of the Maltese merchants and not in those of the foreigner.

Under British rule a system of free trade was introduced.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Consequently the role of the middlemen as directed by the several government orders of the earlier years waned in importance.

Partnerships

Partnerships frequently came into being when wine merchants were unable to raise enough money personally. It was not a system of partnership as we know it today but a sort of 'society' through which merchants could create a sea exchange. This partnership was a sort of private company between any two or more persons. Leonardo Brignone and Bartolomeo Parnis formed one such partnership or *compagnia* through a contract signed before notary Pietro Paolo Magri on 3 June 1753 each of them advancing 2,750 *scudi*.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Brignone was to go abroad as a representative of the partnership for the purchase of the wine. Parnis, who had a store in Valletta very close to the main door of the wharves, had to see to its eventual disposal. This partnership prospered for some time but wine, which had originally cost 2,673 *scudi* 8 *tari* 10 *grani* had to be sold eventually for 2,329 *scudi* 6 *tari*.⁽⁴⁷⁾ This unfortunate transaction led to the break up of the partnership.

On another occasion, the two brothers, Paolo and Pietro Ellul had entered into partnership with Vincenzo Buttigieg.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Buttigieg was given 34 *oncie* in Sicilian currency to proceed abroad for the purchase of wine which he could get at 1 *oncia* per *fusto* in Sicily. This partnership was dissolved when Buttigieg was taken to court by the brothers for alleged embezzlement. This partnership had already obtained some wine. In court it was alleged that 6 *salmi* less than the amount in the accounts

44. NLM, Univ. 493, Suppliche 1788 – 1802, letter dated 17 January 1801.

45. *Ibid.*, letter dated 23 November 1801

46. 'Contrattare una compagnia' are the actual words of the contract: PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 51 (1756), Pro Leonardo Brignone contra Bartolomeo Parnis, ff. 1 – 3v.

47. *Ibid.*, ff. 7 – 11.

48. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 51 (1756), Pro Paolo Ellul e Pietro Ellul contra Vincentio Buttigieg, ff. 1 – 4.

were actually received by the Ellul brothers here in Malta.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The court ordered Buttigieg to pay 177 *scudi* 8 *tari* 2 *grani* together with 6 per cent interest on them to his former partners.

Sales of wine, as of all products which involved a fairly large amount of capital, depended on the bringing together of investors, middlemen and merchants. For this purpose the formation of a 'society' – *contrattare una società* – was drawn up by means of an appropriate deed to avoid any subsequent litigation in court.

Merchants who entered into such wine partnerships often traded in other kinds of foodstuffs besides wine; oil, meat and other imported products. On 12 August 1795 Giorgio Borg for 10,000 *scudi*, Salvatore Astor for 5,000 *scudi* and Giuseppe Borg for 5,000 *scudi* signed a contract for the formation of a 'society' with the expressed intention of importing wine and foodstuffs from Sicily.⁽⁵⁰⁾ It was stressed that in all transactions each of them had to present receipts for purchases, payment of dues and tolls and other expenses so that a correct balance could be struck at the end of the business period. Also on 19 November 1761 Giovanni Maria Gatt, Francesco Ciantar and Gio Paul Camilleri formed a 'society' to import wines, tobacco and spirits to last for one year only.⁽⁵¹⁾

Another form of partnership was the *Commenda*.⁽⁵²⁾ This had its own features for, although it might be called a partnership deed, it was closer to ordinary loans than to a formal partnership in a venture. Profits and risks were shared by the parties, as per agreement; but, otherwise, the relation between the parties resembled that of lender and borrower, both of whom were intent on profits and money obtained from ventures. Pasquale Bianco and Michele Delicata formed a company, the former subscribing capital while the latter forwarding his best attention to their mutual benefit.⁽⁵³⁾ This case reveals the special feature of the *Commenda*. Both partners had been working assiduously for 3 years; then they quarrelled but soon came to terms again for, on 26 October 1705 they signed another contract to eliminate all differences between them.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In 1768 a private agreement was signed between Joseph Cini and Giacinto de Pino; the latter borrowed money from the former to be able to purchase 1,000 *barili* of wine at 21 *tari* 10 *grani* per *barile*.⁽⁵⁵⁾ He was bound to effect the purchase of wine in Sicily in two days' time only. Cini who was also interested in the success of this venture despatched a ship to load the wine. Two days were not enough for the purpose and Cini found himself without a sufficient quantity of wine. He claimed some more interest than that agreed upon and matters ended in a law suit. The court ruled that the terms of the contract had to be observed.⁽⁵⁶⁾

49. *Ibid.*, ff. 15 – 15v

50. NAV, Not A. P. Spiteri, 11/1074, no foundation.

51. NAV, Not. S. S. Buttigieg, 2/634, ff. 24 – 25.

52. R. Lopez and I. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*, Oxford 1955, pp. 174 – 176.

53. "Fu contratta compagnia, tra Pasquale Bianco d'una parte e Michele Delicata dall'altra in vigor di questo publico Instrumento . . . e detto Pasquale deve comprare detto vino e mercantie cosi in Sicilia come in Malta e consignarle a detto Michele per venderli . . .": NAV, Not. G.F. Dalbrazzo, R 199/23, ff. 312 – 313 (Contract dated 30 October 1702).

54. "Quindi oggi il suddetto Pasquale Bianco e Michele Delicata spontaneamente hanno cesso e cedono la lite tra di loro precipitate": NAV, Not. G.F. Dalbrazzo, R 199/31, ff. 294v – 295.

55. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 75 (1769), Pro Josepho Cini contra Giacinto de Pino, ff. 1 – 7v.

56. *Ibid.*, ff. 12 – 12v.

New partners could be associated with an already existing company, provided they were shown the original deed of partnership. On 2 May 1782 Andrea Schembri and Stefano Zammit signed a contract of partnership, each advancing 500 *scudi*.⁽⁵⁷⁾ They were illiterate and it was tacitly agreed upon that Gaetano Schembri, Andrea's son, would become a partner, to serve as an administrator and to receive a wage. The partnership was dissolved when Andrea became ill. Zammit asked for Gaetano to pay the share of the duty on the wine still unsold. Gaetano refused, denying that he was a partner and that he had never advanced any money. The court upheld his argument and Zammit had to bear all the duty due.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Partners had to abide by the terms of the original deed of association unless they agreed in writing to make appropriate changes.⁽⁵⁹⁾

However, in a partnership deed, not all partners undertook to advance money; a person could become a partner on the strength of his experience, his skill and his willingness to go overseas. Joseph Letard and Vincenzo Buttigieg contracted such a *commenda*; Buttigieg did not participate financially but offered only his work and his time for the business.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Not all partners were equally active in a company. Ludovico di Martino, Michele Dibiasi and Gio Baptista Portelli entered into a partnership agreement with each of the two first mentioned advancing 18,000 *scudi*.⁽⁶¹⁾ Portelli conducted the business, the administration and the keeping of overseas bills. The venture lasted only three months from January 1774 to March because while he was abroad Portelli got homesick and returned to Malta. He sent his son Giuseppe on his behalf. In a letter written to Giuseppe, however, the two other merchants warned him that they were not happy with the situation because, as it appeared to them, he seemed uninterested in securing the best bargains for the company.⁽⁶²⁾

In another deed of partnership Giuseppe Bonello, Lorenzo Lanzarotta and Mattia Pace were more specific in their terms.⁽⁶³⁾ On 7 November 1758 they signed a contract, saying that out of their own free will, Giuseppe, Lorenzo and Mattia had decided to form a company, with each of them paying a third of the capital and receiving a third of the profits. They had borrowed a fairly large amount of capital and ensured that there would be no fraud. Bonello was to handle the money and go to Scogletti to purchase wine, Lanzarotta was to accompany him on the voyage and Pace was to stay here and retail the wine. Also, in a contract signed by Gioacchino Farrugia,

57. PAV, CDM, AO, vol. 90 (1784), Pro Stephano Zammit contra Andrea Schembri e Gaetanum Schembri, ff. 1 – 4v.

58. *Ibid.*, ff. 9 – 13v.

59. NLM, Libr. Ms. 1023, Miscellanea, no foliation.

60. "Non sborsare veruna somma di denaro, ma la sua sola industria": PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 51 (1756), Pro Josepho Letard contra Vincenzo Buttigieg, ff. 9v – 10.

61. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 81 (1774), Pro Ludovico di Martino et Michele Dibiasi contra Gio Baptista Portelli, ff. 1 – 5v.

62. *Ibid.*, ff. 11 – 17v.

63. "Giuseppe Bonello per una terza parte, Lorenzo Lanzarotta per un'altra terza porzione e Mattia Pace per l'altra terza porzione da loro libera e spontanea volonta hanno contrattato e contrattano tra di loro una societ  duratura durante questo viaggio da quest' Isola di Malta per lo Scaro delli Scogletti e Agosta": NAV, Not. F. Alessi, 5/325, ff. 19 – 19v.

Giuseppe Borg, Salvatore Astor and Giuseppe Mifsud the amount subscribed for the formation of a company was expressed in shares; they subscribed eight, nine, four and three shares respectively.⁽⁶⁴⁾

On the dissolution of a company by court decree, remaining stocks of wine would be sold by auction. The proceeds and any money remaining in the hands of the partners would be left at court to pay back the creditors who had participated in the original sea-exchange agreement. However, rents, wages and other court expenses received priority over other liabilities. Assets left over were then distributed among the merchants according to their share of the invested capital. Gio Batta Salvaloco and Salvatore di Campo had formed a *commenda* for the purchase of wine.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Twelve years later Campo became ill and wanted to wind up the business. They could not agree on the fairest way of distribution and the matter was taken to court. The books of the partnership revealed that some wine was still unsold, viz. Fifteen *botte* of wine at 16 *scudi 9 tari* each, 9 *barili* of wine at 14 *scudi 3 tari per botte*, while a sum of 200 *scudi* was in the coffers of the merchants.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The court declared that the wine should be auctioned. It was bought by Filippo Cornelio who delivered the proceeds to the court. The money was used to pay back the borrowed capital and for the rent due for the tavern and storage rooms and the wages of a labourer.

In partnership deeds it was always implicitly expected that partners should act fairly towards each other for once a partner lost credit with one merchant, it was difficult for him to find another person to trust him. In a 1772 contract it was expressly stated that the partners had to be "faithful to each other and sell to the best advantage".⁽⁶⁷⁾ This contract concerned a vessel flying the French colours, commanded by captain Pietro Daniel, who had to sail to Genoa and Livorno laden with different goods. The proceeds had to be spent on the purchase of wine from Mascari to be sold on behalf of the partners Michel Angelo Sacco and Giuseppe Grech who had advanced two-fifths and three-fifths of the capital respectively, that is 1,700 *scudi* in all for the venture.

Though some partnerships failed, the quantities of imported wine never diminished. On the contrary they tended to increase in quantity according to the size of the population. More capital was invested by other entrepreneurs for the purpose.

Transport Expenses and Tolls

The price paid to the foreign vintners for their wines depended naturally on costs of production, quality and market vagaries. However, the price for the wine actually retailed to the consumers was actually fixed after taking into account a number of other additional expenses, including, tolls and taxes. On the receipt of an order for wine at a Sicilian dealer's establishment, steps were taken to pour it into casks and send it to Malta. This had to be done promptly for ordinary table wine could not be kept for more than a few months exposed, otherwise it would deteriorate. Rain, the state of the wharves and other handicaps would retard the delivery of the casks. The

64. Contract dated 25 November 1787. NAV, Not. G. C. Arpa, 7/535, no foliation.

65. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 5 (1708), Pro Gio Batta Salvaloco contra Salvatorem Campo, ff. 1-10.

66. *Ibid.*, ff. 32-43.

67. "... per conto della presente società saranno con tutta fedeltà ed esattezza conforme richiede il dovere di uomini d'onore e fedeli compagni e terminato questo viaggio rendere un real e fedel conto di loro rispettiva amministrazione...": NAV, Not. F. Alessi, 48/525, ff. 178-179.

necessary piping, cones and filtering material had to be prepared as was specified in the contract of sale; by the Sicilian dealers or by the Maltese traders or by the captains of boats. On 1 February 1772 Gioacchino Arena had stipulated to Lorenzo Stafrage, captain of a pink, that they were jointly responsible to provide the necessary cones and filters.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Then the Maltese wine dealers had to pay a variety of tolls and petty expenses before wine could be despatched from Sicilian ports (Augusta, Scoglietti, Mascari and Syracuse) to Malta. The regular petty expenses included that amount paid to the representatives on every *salma* of wine that was bought, insurance fees and, amongst others, transport fees.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Some petty expenses and tolls mentioned in bills are self explanatory; others are hard to understand. Wine at times had to be carried from caves to wharves, at others it was just emptied from the owners' casks into those of the Maltese merchants. Benigno Cassia had bought 589 *salme* of wine from nine different dealers whose casks were available at the Mascari wharf.⁽⁷⁰⁾ There were no extra expenses here for carrying the wine from caves to the vessels. On the other hand, Giuseppe Busietta had to hire two men for eight days paying them two *tari* per day to carry the wine from the caves where it was kept.⁽⁷¹⁾ Both wine dealers had to pay these expenses: port fees, customs duty, middlemen fees, sealing of casks, animal transport, washing of casks, freight charges, fee for custom guards, licence for exportation and insurance premiums.

Giovanni Schembri, in company with Michele Portelli and Joseph Portelli, had to pay the following expenses in 1755 in order to buy 589 *salme* of wine.⁽⁷²⁾ See Table II.

68. "tinelli, lembuti, maniche di seta per filtrare i vini": *Ibid.*, ff. 122 – 124.

69. Litigants had to present in court the list of expenses and consignments of wine for a final assessment to be made.

70. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 85 (1780), Pro Magdalena Portelli contra Josephum Portelli, ff. 7 – 10.

71. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 87 (1782), Pro Giuseppe Busietta contra Santo Lanzon, f. 7.

72. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 85 (1780), Pro Magdalena Portelli contra Josephum Portelli, ff. 32v – 33.

Money is expressed in Sicilian currency.

Table II
List of Expenses incurred in buying
589 salme of wine

	onze	tarì	grani
Licence for exportation of wine	39	9	0
Special Tax (Cassa)	4	19	9
Licence for the ship	4	18	0
Customs Duty	4	17	0
Documents		24	0
Helpers		7	0
Men who filled the casks	1	9	0
Supervisor of the casks		10	0
Sealing of casks		8	0
Middlemen fees	3	18	0
To fill and wash 20 <i>botti</i> with sea water		5	0
Storage facilities	4	1	0
For bad debts	2	23	0
Hiring of boat	3	21	0
Pay cash to Benigno Cassia	10	0	0
Purchase of wine	229	1	2
Food expenses and maintenance	6	5	12
	315	16	9

Roughly the value of the wine amounted to seven-tenths of the whole sum paid for the consignment. The other three-tenths were involved in expenses of which about 50 per cent went to the licensing fee for the exportation of wine from Sicily.

When a wine merchant was illiterate it served him well to hire a clerk to draw up the lists and bills, incurring even more expenses. Giuseppe Cini paid 1 *onza* 6 *tarì* as dues to a clerk in March 1772.⁽⁷³⁾ Bartolomeo Poverel paid 6 *tarì* for three days to another clerk.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The clerk of the company of Giuseppe Cornelio, Felice Cutajar and Giuseppe Briganti received 28 *tarì* for his work.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Some of the expenses can be better understood if one reads the bill presented, for not all merchants included the same sorts of toll. The captain hired by Don Angelo di Girolamo for the shipment of wine had not yet arrived with his ship on 24 April 1786 so he added 10 *tarì* in expenses for storage facilities for 34 *botti* in his presented bill.⁽⁷⁶⁾ He also included 10 *tarì* 7 *grani* for the washing of casks and 1 *onza* 5 *tarì* 3 *grani* for their transport from the winery to the wharf.

73. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 81 (1774), Pro Giuseppe Cini contra Giliberti et Societa, f. 11.

74. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 44 (1752), Pro Bartholomeo Poverel et Felice Cutajar contra Josephum Lubrano, f. 6v.

75. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 58 (1761), Pro Giuseppe Cornelio, Felice Cutajar et Società contra Josephum Briganti f. 3.

76. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 91 (1785–86), Pro Don Angelo di Girolamo, ff. 3–3v.

All merchants mentioned a licence fee for the importation of wine. This was the *tratta*, usually 2 *tari* per *salma* – Sicilian currency and measure. In 1752 Bartholomeo Poverel paid a licence fee of 50 *onze* 24 *tari* on 762 *barili*.⁽⁷⁷⁾ In 1756 Paolo Ellul paid 3 *onze* 8 *tari* on 49 *salme* of must and also 3 *onze* 18 *tari* on 54 *salme* of wine.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In 1710 Lorenzo Attard had to defray 21 *tari* per *botte* of wine on 11½ *botte*, totalling 20 *scudi* 1 *tari* 10 *grani*.⁽⁷⁹⁾

When dealers of wine were in partnership they hired a man to keep watch over the laden casks of wine during its voyage to Malta. An expense of 7 *onze* 9 *tari* 11 *grani* was borne on 728 *barili* in April 1786.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Giuseppe Abela paid 2 *onze* in September 1760 to such a watchman.⁽⁸¹⁾

As wine dealers became more organised the variety of expenses increased too. To present bills at court they used to hire a clerk so that he could keep accounts in a proper way. On one occasion a wine merchant who did not employ a clerk was admonished in court for the careless way he kept his accounts roughly written on loose sheets of paper stuck together by pins and needles.⁽⁸²⁾ The merchant, Saverio Attard, had to present readable copies so that a fair judgement could be given. The following bill is one compiled by a clerk. It shows a variety of expenses and more diligent work of responsibility.⁽⁸³⁾ Items in the bill that deserve attention include: the care taken to check upon the quality of wine in the casks, the payment of tolls on arrival at port, the sealing of two casks previously left unsealed and other expenses paid to the clerk in charge of the deal. See Table III,

77. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 44 (1752), Pro Bartholomeo Poverel e Felice Cutajar contra Josephum Lubrano, f. 16.

78. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 51 (1756), Pro Paolo Ellul e Pietro Cammilleri contra Vincentio Buttigieg, f. 8.

79. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 8 (1710), Pro Leonardo Guiciardi contra Laurentium Attard, f. 4.

80. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 91 (1785 – 86), Pro Don Angelo di Girolamo, f. 3.

81. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 58 (1761), Pro Giuseppe Cornelio, Felice Cutajar et Società contra Josephum Briganti, f. 39v.

82. In 1710 Saverio Attard presented a bill containing the following items of vague meaning; *Per uomo che ando al palamento* – perhaps a man who helped in the transport of wine; *per maneria del patrone* – perhaps for food consumed by vessel owner: PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 8 (1710), Pro Leonardo Guiciardi contra Laurentium Attard, ff. 4v – 5.

83. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 58 (1761), Pro Giuseppe Cornelio, Felice Cutajar et Società contra Josephum Briganti, ff. 3 – 3v. Money is expressed in Sicilian currency.

Table III
Bill of Expenses of the partnership of Giuseppe
Cornelio, Felice Cutajar and others in the purchase
of 1,225 salme of wine in 1760

	onze	tari	grani
<i>Salme</i> 1,225 at 10 <i>tari</i> per <i>salma</i>	408	10	0
Carriage fees at 1 <i>tari</i> 5 <i>grani</i> per <i>salma</i>	51	1	5
Exporting Licence	80	20	0
Toll of 11 <i>tari</i> per <i>salma</i>	15	8	9
Ship Licence		8	5
Watchman over the casks	2	0	0
Provisions of bread and meat	1	20	0
Clerk commissioned for the deal		28	0
Sealing of casks		17	10
To check quality of wine		7	0
To present licence to Port Authorities		1	0
Food for the watchman		3	10
Hiring of horses for the journey		6	0
For the sealing of two other casks before the Authorities		4	0

The way the bill was presented infers that a better administration prevailed when literate people took charge of business. With regard to the carriage paid it is difficult to assess rates for the distance travelled and the weight borne are not mentioned. Ignatio Cammilleri paid 30 *grani* per *salma* of carriage in 1791.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Ignatio Catanzaro paid 25 *grani* per *salma* of carriage in 1767.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Perhaps wages were higher in 1791 because of inflation.

In Malta wine was sold at an official price which varied according to the fluctuations of the market. Naturally, it included the original purchase price of wine, the overhead charges, as well as the profit margin allowed to the merchant. At times the official price did not meet the wishes of the wine dealers, who had been forced to undergo extra expenses which had not been taken into account. Protests regarding the matter were addressed to the Municipal Authorities who were responsible for the official price list.⁽⁸⁶⁾ However the Authorities often ignored them. Prices of wine were only revised when the Authorities were satisfied that the ventures in wine merited an increase because of poor supply and extra tolls.

84. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 97 (1791), Pro Ignatio Cammilleri contra Joseph Zammit, f. 24.

85. PAV, CDM, AO, Vol. 66 (1764), Pro Ignatio Catanzaro contra Felicem Cutajar, f. 33.

86. NLM, Univ. 338, Suppliche 1686–1742, no foliation, dated 2 January 1710.

The amount of taxes paid by dealers who imported their wines from Sicily gives an indication of the size of imports of those days. It is difficult to evaluate their numerical amount but the gradual increase in population had a parallel increase in wine supply. The Municipal Authorities, cognisant of the fact that wine had constituted an integral part of the diet of the Maltese family, had at least since 1507, levied a tax equivalent to three *quartucci* on every *quartara* of wine.⁽⁸⁷⁾ In 1636 the Order assumed the responsibility for the collection of this tax, allowing a fixed sum of 625 *scudi* to the Municipal Authorities to defray their ordinary expenses; repairs and maintenance to the fortifications of St. Angelo and Notabile and salaries paid to the members of the body itself.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The Order continued to pay this sum to the Municipal Authorities till 1797.⁽⁸⁹⁾ The collection of this wine-tax, then known as *Scisa dei Vini*, was granted to the highest bidder in a public auction.⁽⁹⁰⁾ On 15 February 1753 Emanuele Fenech was granted this lease for his offer of 11,410 *scudi* to be paid yearly for four consecutive years.⁽⁹¹⁾ The contract stipulated these conditions:

- I. The collector of the wine-tax, then known as the *Collettore ai Scisa* or *Appaltatore* could not ask for a reduction of this fixed rent during these four years nor could he relase the tenure of this wine-tax to anybody else.
- II. He was authorised to collect 72 *grani per barile* of imported wine.
- III. The rent was paid monthly and if the collector failed in any payment, he could forfeit the tenure without any recompense. Moreover he could be charged for any losses suffered by the Order.
- IV. The *Appaltatore* could inspect the people connected with the wine trade to check for defaults. These included *Capi di Posta*, *tramazzatori* and *Bordonari*.
- V. The official price of the wine was to be issued on November 11 of every year.
- VI. Licences issued by the *Gran Corte* of the *Castellania* to shops that retailed wine were to be approved by the *Appaltatore*.

87. NLM, Univ. 192, Chirografi dal 1799–1810, no foliation. NLM, Treasury Series 'B' 303, f. 2. NLM, Univ. 186, Chirografi 'B' Lettere 1676–1717, f. 27. See also G. Wettinger, "Early Maltese Popular Attitudes to the Government of the Order of St. John", *Melita Historica*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (1974) pp. 264–270.

88. NLM, Univ. 192, Chirografi dal 1799–1810, no foliation, dated 20 April 1802. NLM, Treasury Series 'B' 303, ff. 2–3v. For more details see J. Debono, *The Maltese Wine Trade during the Eighteenth Century*, (M.A. thesis: University of Malta, 1983), pp. 170–186.

89. For amounts paid see under the heading 'Città Notabile': NLM, Arch(ives of the Order of St. John), 1069 to 1088.

90. "... come ultimo oblature e piu offereme nel pubblico incanto...": NAV, B.M. Callus, R 124/52, f. 211.

91. *Ibid.*, ff. 210v–212v.

All collectors who held these tenures in subsequent years were to abide by all these conditions. However, clause V was repealed giving the *Appaltatore* the right to check and inspect the quantities of wine delivered to the local shops in order to minimize tax evasions.⁽⁹²⁾ *The Bordonari, Capi di posta* and other people connected with the local wine trade could not hinder him from doing his duties. In the 1780's there arose some friction between the collector of the wine-tax and the wine dealers. The authorities issued directives for the better regulation of the local wine trade.⁽⁹³⁾ All previous orders were enforced, and moreover under no circumstances could the *Collettore* charge more than 72 *grani* per *barile*. He had to serve all dealers at all times and on all days of business irrespective of the quantity of wine to be delivered.

Table IV shows the amounts of money paid yearly into the Grand Master's Privy Purse by the collector of the wine-tax between 1753 and 1800. It must be assumed that the collector himself received more in taxation than he actually paid to the Order. Column four gives minimum figures for the number of *barili* of imported wine, calculated by dividing the total amount by 72 *grani*.

Table IV
Money Tax Paid to the Grand Master's Privy Purse

Name of Collector/s of wine-tax	Years of Tenure	Annual Amounts in <i>Scudi</i> paid by the Collector/s	Number of Imported <i>Barili</i>
Emanuele Fenech ⁽¹⁾	1753 – 1757	11,410	38,033
Emanuele Fenech ⁽²⁾	1757 – 1761	12,360	41,200
Francesco Agius ⁽³⁾	1761 – 1765	12,202	40,673
Giuseppe Cassar Baldassare Camilleri Carlo Cutajar			
Mattia Naudi ⁽⁴⁾	1765 – 1769	13,000	43,333
Giuseppe Naudi Felice Cutajar Francesco Fabri			
Giorgio Borg ⁽⁵⁾	1769 – 1773	14,900	49,666
Giovanni Schembri ⁽⁶⁾	1773 – 1777	14,020	46,733
Matteo Bezzina ⁽⁷⁾	1777 – 1781	16,100	53,666
Giorgio Borg ⁽⁸⁾	1781 – 1787	20,005	66,683
Giocchino Farrugia ⁽⁹⁾	1787 – 1793	20,005	66,683
Andres Schembri ⁽¹⁰⁾	1793 – 1801	25,000	83,333

92. NAV, Not. F. Camenzuli, 16/656, ff. 201v – 202.

93. On this occasion 14 January 1785, Dr. Lorenzo Cassar, fiscal attorney, read these regulations to Giorgio Borg, the *Collettore* of the times. NLM, Libr. Ms. 429 (1784 – 1794), ff. 19 – 20.

In the eighteenth century commerce in wine flourished and provided employment for many categories of people; merchants, middlemen, captains and owners of boats, taverners and labourers. The expansion in the wine trade also devolved upon those people who were ready to finance it by purchasing the necessary wine and insuring it against any possible losses and risks.

Sources for the table:

1. NAV, Not. B.M. Callus, R 124/5, ff. 210v – 212v.
2. NAV, Not. B.M. Callus, R 124/8, ff. 334 – 336.
3. NAV, Not. B.M. Callus, R 124/10, ff. 257 – 259v.
4. NAV, Not. B.M. Callus, R 124/11, ff. 130v – 133.
5. NAV, Not. F. Camenzuli, 11/656, ff. 75 – 76.
6. NAV, Not. F. Camenzuli, 13/656, ff. 105 – 106.
7. NAV, Not. F. Camenzuli, 15/656, ff. 7 – 8.
8. NAV, Not. F. Camenzuli, 16/656, ff. 201 – 202.
9. NAV, Not. G. Vella, 11/1107, Act No. 68, no foliation.
10. *Ibid.*, Act No. 212, no foliation. See also NLM, Arch. 1069 to Arch. 1088 for figures from November 1776 to June 1797 and NLM, Libr. Ms. 453, Original Accounts of Grand Master's Hompesch, for figures from July 1797 to October 1797 and for May 1798. I am grateful to Dr. G. Wettinger for drawing my attention to this manuscript.