

CONCUBINAGE AMONG THE CLERGY OF MALTA AND GOZO ca. 1420-1550*

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By the early fifteenth century Western Europe recognised that the Catholic Church did not permit priests to marry – that, in fact, they could not marry, such ‘marriages’ being regarded as null and void.¹ This did not prevent successive attempts at the later church councils, right down to and including the Council of Trent, to abrogate or, at least, to modify considerably the church requirement of strict clerical celibacy.² In any case, as is generally known, evasion was very common throughout later medieval times, most frequently by resort to concubinage.³ The literature of the time, and university textbooks and other reference works of the present day, all teem with references to the problem. One reads of an Icelandic bishop and great poet with his two *sons* becoming martyrs to the Catholic faith in 1551;⁴ in that island apparently it was usual for clergymen to marry.⁵ Elsewhere one reads of ‘too many of the country clergymen living in concubinage!’⁶ In 1429 a provincial synod at Paris declared among other matters that ‘Concubinage is so common among the clergy that it has given rise to the view that simple fornication is not a mortal sin.’⁷ In Catholic Westphalia priest dynasts held ecclesiastical livings generation after generation, long after the time of Luther, the ‘ancient custom’ of priests living in concubinage being so difficult to break.⁸ As late as 1600, in the inner Catholic cantons of Switzerland an episcopal visitation found over half of the priests were living in a married state.⁹

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS:

AAM Archiepiscopal Archives at Mdina, AIM Archives of the Inquisition of Malta, AO Acta Originalia, Cath.Mus.Md., Cathedral Museum at Mdina, CEM Curia Episcopalis, Melitensis, Libr. Library, NAV Notarial Archives at Valletta, Not. Notary, Quad.Div. Quademi Diversi, RA Registrum Actorum, RML Royal Malta Library, Univ. Università.

In Malta practically nothing has been published about the problem except for the recording by Dusina, the Apostolic visitor of 1575, that the parish priest of Birkirkara had two concubines and that at least another priest had in his youth frequented the company of prostitutes – a totally different matter.¹⁰ Back in the eighteenth century a local antiquary noted a couple of donations made by clergymen to their own children, information he obtained from the notarial records, but no one else continued his line of study.¹¹ Genealogists could not ignore the problem so easily, but they never wrote any history. G.F. Agius de Soldanis, the antiquarian and historian of the eighteenth century in his history of Gozo might have used the register containing some of the principal documentation on concubinage among the clergy of Gozo but he failed to allude to the matter.¹² In more recent times, one of the reasons for the lack of awareness that clerical concubinage was once one of the Church's most intractable problems in Malta must lie in the absolute or relative inaccessibility of the archives dealing with the period previous to ca. 1550, including such material as had been temporarily accessible in the eighteenth century. Only recently has it become relatively easy to carry out intensive research at the Notarial archives, while it was not before 1969 that the older parts of the Episcopal Archives at Mdina were opened to the historian. This fundamental improvement has coincided with an increasing seriousness and professionalization among historians. Important historical research has been carried out in the Faculty of Theology for quite some time now, and more recently the Department of History has been set up and taken the lead in research, at least on lay aspects of history, together with historians from several other faculties like those of Medicine, Law and Architecture as well as the Departments of Maltese and Economics, not to speak of foreign scholars. This near-explosion of historical knowledge ensures that sooner or later someone would tackle the problem of clerical concubinage. The present investigation is an independent effort made in the belief that it can only advance the date of the inevitable study by a few years at most.

Undoubtedly the richest source of information is that contained in the episcopal archives at Mdina (*Curia Episcopalis Melitensis*), now properly inventoried and open to investigation in Malta as well as in America, the latter by virtue of the microfilming carried out by the Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library at St. John's University, Minnesota.¹³ However, the notarial archives of Valletta themselves contain much vital evidence of unimpeachable authenticity, though the task of sifting it out from the other stuff is infinitely

more laborious. Secondary sources are scarce. Genealogical information obviously sheds some light on the problem of clerical concubinage, but its reliability is sometimes suspect. Throughout, the historian has to distinguish carefully between allegations of concubinage, particularly if they are made by private persons who might have an axe to grind, from admissions. On the other hand, admissions of paternity by priests can be taken as indirect admissions of concubinage and not of a merely transitory and mercenary relationship such as that involving prostitutes. Paternity attributions in notarial deeds or in official documents in the form of 'Margarita ... filia naturalis quondam Venerabilis donni Leonardi Pisano'¹⁴ can also be regarded as reliable evidence of concubinage; they could only have been made if the allegations were accepted by the priests concerned during their lifetime or at least generally admitted.

In spite of the scarcity of archival material for the pre-1500 period of Maltese history, such evidence as survives is enough to show that concubinate clergymen abounded in Malta and Gozo during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries at all levels of the hierarchy, as can be seen from an examination of paternity records involving priests (Table I).

Table I

OFFSPRING OF CLERGYMEN IN MALTA AND GOZO,
1420-1554

NAME OF PRIESTS	'FLORUIT'	OFFSPRING	SOURCE REFERENCE
<i>Diocesan vicars (i.e. vicarii generali and vicarii capitulari who were not of episcopal rank)</i>			
D. Cataldo Cusburella	1418-20	Antonio (s)	Genealogical table in RML, Adami Collection, v. 6, p. 223
D. Lanceas Desguanes	1445-89	Antonio (s)	RML, Libr. Ms. 695, f. 5v (18th cent. summary)
		Guagliarda (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 16A, f. 15v
		Violante (d)	NAV, R 494/1, f. 53

D. Enrico de Bordino	1487-1519	Nicolo (s)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, v, 6, f. 124v
D. Consalvo Canchur	1490-ob. 1531	Antonio (s) Andreas (s) Matheus (s) Joseph (s)	NAV, Ms. 779/1, f. 13 of 3rd quire Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 2, f. 20v, ib., RA, v. 2, f. 19v
		Leonora (d) Giovanna (d)	RML, Ad. 50, p. 521 RML, Ad. 50, p. 519
D. Amatore Zammit	1475-1534	one daughter	Ib., CEM, AO, v. 12, f. 136
D. Luca Bartholo	1519-55	Romana (d)	Ib., v. 25, f. 142
<i>Archdeacons</i>			
D. Lanceas Desguanes	(see under Diocesan vicars)		
D. Dominicus Dimech	1511-41	Margarita (d) Antonella (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 2, f. 16
<i>Dean</i>			
D. Gullielmus Tunne	1442-79	Nicolaus (s) Paulus (s)	Ib., AO, v. 1, f. 100
<i>Precentors</i>			
D. Philippo de Guevara	1503-ob. 1531	Ysabella (d)	Ib., v. 26B, f. 415
D. Enrico de Bordino	(see under Diocesan vicars)		
D. Antonio de Mangione	1511-55	Joseph (s) Margarita (d) Catherina (d)	NAV, R 206/11, f. 6v

NAXXAR

D. Dominicus (see under Archdeacons)
Dimech

QORMI

D. Juliano 1539-48 Caterina (d) NAV, R 175/12,
Borg ff. 24v-25v

SIGGIEWI

D. Amatore (see under Diocesan vicars)
Zammit

ZEBBUG

D. Johannes 1483-1503 Johanello (s) RML, Libr. Ms.
Vella 1365, f. 149

Other priests in Malta

D. Antonellus	1530-38	Gaddus (s)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 8B, f. 664
Cachi		Laurencius (s)	Ib., CEM, RA, v. 2, f. 206
D. Lanceas	1445-ob.	a son	Ib., CEM, AO,
Camilleri	ca. 1455	a daughter	v. 4, f. 84
D. Joannes	1516-35	Michael (s)	NAV, R175/1, f. 162v
Canchur			
D. Franquino	1508	Giorgio (s)	RML, Ad. 50,
Caruana		Matteo (s)	p. 623
		Garita (d)	
D. Brandano	b.ca.1508	Leonardo (s)	Genealogical
de Caxario	ob. 1565	Fr. Mariano (s)	table in G.
		Not. Antonio (s)	Wettinger and
		Cipriano (s)	M. Fsadni, O.P.,
		Vincenzo (s)	<i>Peter Caxaro's</i>
		Not. Giuseppe	<i>Cantilena in</i>
		(s)	<i>Medieval Mal-</i>
		Ruggier (s)	<i>tese, Malta 1968</i>
		Andreas (s)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 53, item 'Confirmatio- nes ...'

D. Laurentius de Caxaro	1504-46	Beatrice (d)	NAV, R 175/12, f. 218
		Agatha (d)	NAV, Ms 719,
		Francisca seu	21 Nov. 1543
		Chicca (d)	
		Lucrezia (d)	RML, Ad. 51
		Vincensica (d)	NAV, R 44/14,
		als. 'sor	ff. 34-35v, NAV,
		Francesca'	R 481/4, f. 334;
			M. Fsadni, <i>Id-Dur-</i>
			<i>nikani fil-Belt,</i>
			1569-1619, p.
			37, ftn. 101
D. Franciscus Cumbo		Salvus (s)	NAV, R 175/1, f. 142v
		Sebastianus (s)	RML, Ad. 51, p. 1462
D. Giorgio Cusino	1545-62	Ventura (d)	NAV, R 175/67,
		Vincenza (d)	f. 375
			RML, Ad. 51, p. 1553
D. Blasius Grima	1500-32	Johannes (s)	NAV, R 140/9,
		Catherina (d)	f. 118v
D. Antonius Micallef	15 - 58	Georgius (s)	NAV, R 175/56, f. 632
D. Leonardus Pisano	1486-1538	Margarita (d)	NAV, R 175/2,
		Don Joannes (s)	f. 215
			Cath.Mus.Md.,
			CEM, RA, v. 1, f.
D. Francesco Sillato	1543-90	Mariola (d)	NAV, R 175/10, f. 276v
D. Jacobus Vassallo	1486-ob. 1530	Salvus (s)	Cath.Mus.Md.,
			CEM, AO, v.
			8A, f. 2
D. Nardo Zammit	1544	a daughter	Ib., CEM, AO, v. 22, f. 140v

D. Pietro Zammit	1540-49	Isabella (d)	RML, Ad. 59
<i>Priests in Gozo</i>			
D. Matteo de Brunetto	1465-93	Antona (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 9, f. 25
D. Johannes Balistrera		Margarita (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 8A, f. 192rv
D. Francesco Barberi		Andreana (d)	RML, Adami Coll., v.
D. Alvarus Incastella		Jacoba (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 24A, f. 190
D. Antonello Lazu		Angela (d)	Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v.

It is not possible to give with precision the dates when these clergymen failed to practise the strict celibacy that was required of them by canon law. If they obtained their preferment after their lapses one could conclude that such behaviour was rather easily forgiven and forgotten; if afterwards, then one could say that even highly placed churchmen were prone to neglect church law.¹⁵ Both alternatives imply more than a little laxity on the part of the church authorities. Certainly, the practice of concubinage was no bar to high office, and priests like Brandano de Caxario, with his numerous progeny all children of his concubine Catherina Aczupardo, could live a tranquil life almost until old age, earning his living mainly by his work as a notary, accompanied and surrounded by his 'wife' and family as any other married man on the island.

Concubinage among the regular clergy had obviously to overcome the problem of their community way of life, and evidence of their resort, occasional or habitual, to concubinage is somewhat rare – partly, no doubt, because each religious house had its own internal disciplinary system which could normally be relied on to deal effectively with all but the most refractory members and which left no record of itself in the bishop's archives. By 1500 Malta had houses belonging to the Franciscans, Augustinians, Camelites, Dominicans and was about to have one belonging to the Observants, while Gozo had its Franciscans and Augustinians, but there is practically no secure information on concubinage among them

until that date. However, the list of Rabat households of 1483 has these suspicious entries:¹⁶

Agata de presti Johanni cum altri quatu buki, salmi iii
Chancha di frati Cola cum sou figlu, salmi ii

...

Frati Johanni Antoni cum altri tri buki, salmi iii

...

Dulga di don Angarau et di sou figlu, salmi ii

It is difficult to resist the temptation to regard these as references to concubines named Agata, Chancha and Dulga and to the household of a friar named Frati Johanni Antoni, Chancha herself being the concubine of a Frati Cola. The alternative explanation that these females were really daughters of the priests in question does not make matters any better. That they were mothers or sisters is unlikely if one compares their entries with that of others in the same source:

Presti Cathald Debonu et la sua nonna, salmi ii

where the relationship is clearly expressed and the priest's name takes precedence, and

Don Gullieltu Sillato cum altri quatu buki, salmi iii

...

Presti Gullieltu Zammit cum altri dui buki, salmi iii

where the relationship is unspecified but the priest's name still takes precedence. It is true that the last two references resemble that to Frati Johanni Antoni, but Frati Johanni Antoni had no business to have a household of his own if he belonged to a religious order. It is just possible that both Frati Johanni Antoni and Frati Cola had obtained permission to reside outside the communities to which they belonged, and that Frati Cola's Chancha was his servant – who had a son of her own. Possibly Frati Johanni Antoni was merely a lay brother living with his family, but it is more likely that he was 'Venerabilis frater Johannes Antoni la Pucella ordinis Carmelitarum',¹⁷ who is frequently mentioned in the records of the bishop's court around 1504 for the debts and other scrapes into which he got himself, as when he was accused of knocking down the rubble wall of the field belonging to Lucas Borg, or when, more significantly, he was for some time accused of heresy.¹⁸ He is recorded to have taken on long lease on 31 January 1500 lodgings from the Augustinian friars next to their convent at Rabat on its eastern side.¹⁹ He is frequently referred to as a 'painter' of holy objects and icons. In 1524 a marginal entry in the records of the bishop's court refers to 'Catherina daughter of the late friar

Johannis Antoni la Pucella'.²⁰

There is no doubt that members of religious houses occasionally obtained permission either to leave their order permanently or to reside outside for some time. Thus in the first half of the sixteenth century (and even later) several had leave of absence enabling them to administer parishes as vice-curates.²¹ Thus in January 1536 Don Johannes Pisano, parish priest of Birkirkara, farmed out his parish to the Augustinian Friar Andreas Catania,²² who was found in August 1540 to have been living with a *daughter*.²³ Fr. Catania also had an illegitimate son named Salvatore.²⁴ On the other hand, Fr. Laurencius Burg, who was accused of living publicly with a female in 1526, had actually received a dispensation to leave the Dominican Order as early as 1523, and his case is therefore no different from that of the secular concubinate priests.²⁵ Father Petrus Bonellus of the Augustinians, who is known to have had at least one son named Petrus like himself,²⁶ had much difficulty in convincing Mgr. Dusina in 1575 that he had obtained in a proper manner a dispensation to relinquish the Augustinian Order and become a secular priest.²⁷ He was still referred to as a friar four years later.²⁸

A few other paternity admissions among the regular clergy during the sixteenth century have been found. In 1534 the Franciscan Fr. Paulus Zichendo was able to legitimize the birth to Magdalena, his concubine, of a son named Pascuallius and three daughters named Beatrice, Catherina and Margarita.²⁹ In 1541 Don Guglielmo Saliba made a donation to Joanne Batista, his nephew, who was the son of his own brother, 'Fr. Joannes Saliba ordinis minorum'.³⁰ And in 1560 Berto Calleja, the illegitimate son of Fr. Francesco Calleja, almost certainly of the Augustinians, was married to Vincenzo Casha, the illegitimate daughter of Ambrogio Casha.³¹ Although reliable and clear evidence for the extensive and regular practice of concubinage is less abundant for the regular than the secular clergy, there is no doubt that concubinage among the former was a problem that needed constant care.

Passing on from records of 'parentage' among clergymen to direct records of concubinage, one cannot do any better than give a list of concubinate clergymen based on the official proceedings of 1543:³²

Table II

CONCUBINATE CLERGYMEN OF MALTA, 1543

PRIEST'S NAME AND OFFICE	CONCUBINE'S NAME AND PARENTAGE
D. Johannes Dimech, Treasurer	Paula, d. of Agata Kibeylet and Andreas
D. Francesco Sillato	Imperia, d. of Johannes Gandolf
D. Nicolao Zammit	Dominica, d. of Salvus Burg
D. Gullielmus Saliba	Imperia, d. of Periusi (?)
D. Johannes Xebirras	Agata, d. of the late Leonardus Caruana
D. Leonardus de Cachi	Perna Gozitana
D. Andreas Axac	Johannella la Panhormitana
D. Josephus Ingomes	Bartholomea Curuel
D. Luca Bartolo	Helena, ex-slave of Honorabilis Johannelli Cassar
D. Matheo Zamit	Rayni, illegitimate daughter of the late Antonius Cassar
D. Consalvus Bonichi	Concubine not mentioned
D. Antonius Vitali	Juliana, d. of Zimirid

Almost two years later it becomes possible to draw up an even longer list and supplement it with another one covering the Gozitan clergy, enabling an estimate to be made of the rate of concubinage among the secular clergy of the two islands. The first list contains a total of nineteen priests who were officially believed to have concubines:³³

Table III

CONCUBINATE CLERGYMEN OF MALTA, 1545

PRIEST'S NAME AND OFFICE	CONCUBINE'S NAME AND PARENTAGE
D. Antonius de Manione, precentor	Juliana, ex-slave of Laurentius Baglio
D. Joannes Dimech, trea- surer	Paula, d. of Agata di Cubeibet
D. Luca Bartholo	Elena, ex-slave of Joannelli Cassar

D. Franciscus Sillato	Imperia, d. of Joannes Gandolf
D. Guglielmo Salibe	Imperia, d. of Corrias
D. Andreas Axac, curato dilo Sigeui	Joanne Panormitane
D. Leonardo de Cachi	Perna Gaultitana, d. of Antoninus de Lucia
D. Nicolaus Zammit	Dominica Burg
D. Brandano Caxaro	Catherina, d. of Inguterra Aczupparado of Tarxien
D. Georgio Butigeg	Margarita
D. Nicolao Darmania	Catherina, d. of Laurentius
D. Paulus Cumbo	Margarita, d. of Albertus Cadus
D. Antonius Vitali	Joanne di Zimech
D. Joannes Xiberras	Agata, d. of Leonardus Caruana
D. Bartholomeus Saliba	—
D. Georgius Cuzin	Antonina Michallef
D. Franciscus Darmania	Ysolda, d. of Simonis Skembri
D. Angelus Gauchi	Paula, d. of Thomasius Cumbo
D. Laurentius Burg	Agnete, d. of Benedictus Cachi

The priests D. Josephus Ingomes and D. Matteus Zammit, who appear in the first list are absent from the second. Presumably they had made their peace with the Church. Although no complete list of the total number of clergymen on the island exists, a careful examination of the names of priests in one volume of 'Registrum Actorum' of the bishop's curia for the years 1540 reveals a total of some 67 priests, showing that Malta could not then have had much fewer priests, if so at all, than it was to have in 1575.³⁴ In this very rough and ready fashion, one can calculate that between one-fourth and one-third of Malta's secular clergymen had concubines in 1545. The probability that a few priests' names have failed to be recorded in this register is counter-balanced by the possibility that other priests appearing in the early part of the register had died by the date of the records on which the list of concubinate clergymen is based and that others in the later part of the register had not been ordained yet at that time.

The inquiry made in 1545 into the incidence of concubinage among laymen as well as among clergymen in Gozo provides the information on which Table IV is based:³⁵

Table IV

THE CONCUBINATE CLERGYMEN OF GOZO, 1545

PRIEST'S NAME	CONCUBINE'S NAME
D. Cerbonio Platamone, a cleric	Brandana, ex-slave of Johannes Antonii Sansone
D. Rodri go de Miglares	Margarita, d. of Franciscus de Federico
D. Julliano Farrugia	Isabella, d. of Andreote Cauallinu
D. Andrea Chetut	Salvata, ex-slave of the Platamone family
D. Franciscus de Vetero	Zaida, his slave
D. Paulinus Garraffa	Imperia de Amphasino
D. Antoninus Mannara	Antonina, widow of Federicus Xeibe
D. Johannes Chappara	Sirena de Albano
D. Federicus Florentina	Imperia, d. of Johannes Sardaina
D. Jacobus de Auola	Johanna, d. of Zagade
D. Antonius Sanctoro senior	Catherina, ex-slave of Franciscus de Manuele
D. Franciscus Cauallino	Imperia, d. of Perius Saliba
D. Johannes de Theobaldo, a cleric	Imperia dila Terranova (Gela)
D. Johannes de Naso	Catherina Xama

These fourteen names of priests (which include two clerics in minor orders) should be compared with a total number of 46 priests on the island of Gozo whose names appear in one place or another in the same register covering the years 1545-46 when a thorough investigation into the way of life of the Gozitan clergy was carried out. Once more, the concubinate clergy amounts almost to one-third of the total number of secular priests in the same district.³⁶

Most of the women who were prepared to accept the status of a priest's concubine in Malta seem to have belonged to the island's peasantry: Margarita Cadus, Imperia Gandolf, Antonina Michallef, Joanna Zimech and Catherina Aczuppardo have typical peasant surnames. Paula Cumbo, Ysolda Skembri and Agnete Cachi might have belonged to families owning a few fields, but their status could not have been appreciably higher because, after all, even

peasants frequently owned a field or two in late medieval or early modern Malta.³⁷ In Gozo, surnames like de Federico, de Albano and de Amphasino might indicate a middle class origin, but others like 'the daughter of Zagade' and Catherina Xama, more probably show a peasant origin. Three nicknames reveal that the women had left their own country or town of origin: in Malta, one finds Perna Gaultitana, i.e. the Gozitan, who was the concubine of Don Leonardo de Cachi, and Joanna Panormitana, i.e. the Palermitan, who was the concubine of Don Andrea Axac, the grammar schoolmaster and Lutheranising priest; in Gozo, one meets with Imperia di la Terranova (of Terranova or Gela in Sicily). Several of the women had once been slaves in the possession of middle class families in Malta or even upper class ones in Gozo or had belonged to some prominent ecclesiastic like Don Matteo de Brunetto.³⁸ Don Francisco de Vetero made a concubine of his own slave, Zaida. At least two concubines had illegitimate births: Rayni, the concubine of D. Matheo Zammit, and Paula, the concubine of Don Johannes Dimech.³⁹ It would seem that none of the women were otherwise married at the time of their concubinage, and hence they were free to marry the priests with whom they lived if the Church did not forbid it. In any case, their status of common-law wives was far from ephemeral or unstable. Eight of the priests who had concubines in 1543 kept the same ones two years later.⁴⁰ Four of them kept them still even as late as 1554.⁴¹ These were D. Guglielmus Saliba, D. Leonardus de Cace or Cachi, D. Nicolaus Zammit and D. Andreas Axac, while D. Antoninus Manjuni himself kept the same concubine he had been ordered to abandon in 1545. In the previous generation, Don Jacobu Vassallo's Catherina was associated with him both in 1504 and in 1512, and it is not before 1522 that he seems to have had another concubine: Vennera, daughter of the late Johannes Bugeya.⁴² Perhaps Catherina had died by then. Catherina Aczupardo seems to have been the mother of all Brandano Caxaro's children, and Julliana, a freed slave of the Baglio family, seems to have been the mother of all three children of Don Antonio de Mangione. Don Joseph Bellia's alleged crime of having had two concubines in 1575 at one and the same time is still just about unique in the island's records.

The fortunes of the priests' children varied, in the normal way, according to the status and wealth of their parents. Thus Antoni, son of Archdeacon Lancia Desguanes, seems to have inherited most of his father's money and property. He married Margarita Vaccaro, a member of one of the foremost families on the island, and founded an independent branch of the Desguanes or Inguanes

family from which persons still proudly claim descent if only through the female line.⁴³ His sister Guaglarida married Manfridus Caxaro, a member of another prominent family of the time,⁴⁴ while a second sister, Violante, still a minor on her father's death, married Nicolaus Saguna, a prominent man-about-town of the 1490s.⁴⁵ Don Brandano Caxario, Manfrido's nephew, served as a notary for thirty-two years, and it is therefore no surprise to find at least two of his eight sons becoming notaries – Antonio and Giuseppe – while another became a lawyer – Cipriano.⁴⁶ Yet another son, Mariano, became a Friar Minor, while Leonardo, apparently the eldest of the eight, is commonly referred to in the records as 'Magnificus', a title usually reserved to the leading citizens of Mdina.⁴⁷ Mariano himself was not the first or last priest's son to enter the ranks of the clergy. It is known, for example, that Nicolaus, the son of Don Gullielmus Tunne, had by 1479 reached the rank of subdeacon.⁴⁸ Don Matheo Canchur, the son of Don Consalvo, became a prominent clergyman and master notary or registrar of the bishop's court:⁴⁹ his father was a most active public notary working mainly in the district of Birmiftuh. Both Don Henericus Bordino and Don Leonardus Pisano had sons who became priests, namely Don Nicolaus Bordino and Don Joannes Pisano, the latter of whom eventually became parish priest of Birkirkara, while Don Amatore Zammit's grandson, Marcus Vella, became a Dominican friar.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Don Jacobus Vassallo's first idea for settling the future of his son Salvo seems to have been to apprentice him to a tailor, to follow the same craft to which his own father had belonged.⁵¹

The church authorities in Malta or Gozo cannot be accused of accepting concubinage as a way of evading the church laws of celibacy, however common a phenomenon it was both in the islands and abroad. Bishop Johannes de Paternione (1478-89) had himself already issued a decree at Catania, signing and sealing it as bishop of Malta, in which he declared that no cleric, priest or canon, of whatever grade, whether high or low, should dare to keep a lover or concubine, under express penalties. The document was affixed to the door of the cathedral of Malta for the information of the clergy.⁵² Then on 26 October 1500 the Viceroy of Sicily wrote to the town officials of Malta and presumably to those of other towns under his jurisdiction, stating that he had received a letter from the King himself, dated Madrid, 15 May 1500, informing him that the King had been told by some God fearing persons that in the kingdom of Sicily there were several ecclesiastics who kept concubines publicly as if they were married to them, to the great

scandal of the Christian people and the damnation of their souls.⁵³ The Viceroy had therefore to require each and every prelate and their vicars and other officials to see to the matter without delay, imposing spiritual penalties on the clerics and ecclesiastics who kept concubines publicly so that this public sin might be totally extirpated. A proclamation should promise an immediate whipping to such women and their further incarceration until the Viceroy himself decided what further penalty to impose. The viceroy's letter reached Malta on 30 November. These church authorities reacted on 9 December, when they issued their proclamation containing the addition that further punishment could also be imposed at the discretion of the bishop.⁵⁴ Laymen were also forbidden to keep concubines on penalty of a whipping and punishment at the bishop's discretion but not that of the Viceroy, who was not mentioned in this regard and had not himself referred to them in his letter.

It is abundantly clear that these warnings had little or no visible effect on the incidence of clerical concubinage in the Maltese islands. In 1512 Don Jacobus Vassallo had to be expressly ordered to stop seeing his concubine, Catherina,⁵⁵ and in 1519 the Dean of the cathedral Don Bartholomeus Bonavia, the vicar general at the time, reminded clerics that they had to live a celibate life.⁵⁶ He therefore ordered the priests, deacons, subdeacons and other clerics under his jurisdiction to put away any concubines they might have and to maintain no further contact with them nor support them any more directly or indirectly. The penalties were a fine of ten uncie on transgressing priests and a whipping for the women. On 8 October 1522 the bishop himself issued a set of comprehensive regulations affecting the clergy of Malta.⁵⁷ After some directions on the wearing of the clerical habit, priests were told to live 'honestly in accordance with canon law without the concubinage of suspect females or of concubines – whom they had to dismiss under the penalty of a fine of fifty uncie'. In 1535 Don Lucas Barthalu, the vicar general, started off his own set of regulations or 'capitula' for the clergy by requiring them to live chastely in the face of God with a pure and clean heart.⁵⁸ They were therefore ordered to live without any concubine in accordance with canon law and to dismiss within nine days any whom they might have under a penalty of ten uncie as well as a month's imprisonment in a place to be established by him. A copy seems to have been affixed also to the door of the mother church of Gozo where it still lay more than a year later.⁵⁹

The biggest effort to stamp out concubinage seems, however, to

have occurred during the 1540s. On 26 February 1542 Don Pancratius Michallef, acting as vicar general for bishop Dominicus Cubelles, again reminded everyone, lay or ecclesiastic, that they had to live chastely and he imposed a penalty of twenty uncie on those who kept concubines after that date, especially if they had received holy ordination, whether they were their old concubines or new ones.⁶⁰ A few months later, archdeacon Josephus Manduca made a surprise raid on Don Johannes Pisano, parish priest of Birkirkara, to obtain proof that he was staying in his concubine's house for days together with a couple of male friends and their female lovers.⁶¹ Shortly afterwards he was charged with keeping a concubine.⁶² On 16 June 1543 twelve other priests were ordered to dismiss their concubines.⁶³ They included Don Lucas Bartholo who had himself tried to put an end to concubinage in 1535 when he was vicar general. On 7 April 1545 a new 'Tabula concubiorum' was drawn up consisting of nineteen priests' names and those of their concubines in Malta and they were also ordered to break up their relationship.⁶⁴ Finally, in the same year, some fourteen clergymen in Gozo and their concubines were also similarly but individually ordered to stop seeing each other on a fine of twenty uncie and other punishment at the bishop's discretion for the priest and a fine of five uncie and a whipping for the woman.⁶⁵

Even then, clerical concubinage was far from abolished. In later years, priest after priest whose name appears in the list of 1545 received repeated warnings to amend his life.⁶⁶ The birth of children to their concubines and their acceptance of paternity reveals that concubinage was still in full vigour at least in so far as it affected the older members of the clergy. In 1574 one learns of the conferment of the sacrament of confirmation on 'Andreas Caxaro filius donni Brandani et Caterinae Jugalium'.⁶⁷ Don Brandano Caxaro had died in 1565 and his son Andreas must have been born to his concubine when the couple were no longer young some fifteen or more years after they had been warned to stop their relationship. One also notes how the priest who made the record referred, loosely and no doubt incorrectly, to Don Brandano and Caterina as 'Jugalium', married persons, and that Don Brandano's concubine remained the same woman he had had in 1545. In fact, in 1563 it was stated in court that he had kept her as his concubine for the previous twenty years.⁶⁸

There is no doubt that a serious effort, the most serious so far, was made in 1545 to enforce the sanctions of the Church on the concubinate section of its clergy. On 14 March 1545 Don Giorgio Cusin was not only ordered to stop seeing his concubine 'Antonina

dicta Nina' but was suspended from at least some of his sacerdotal duties.⁶⁹ On 5 December 1545 Don Joannes Dimech was found guilty of keeping a woman named Paula as his concubine. He was therefore sentenced to be deprived of his dignity of treasurer of the cathedral and fined the sum of twenty-five uncie, while Paula herself was sentenced to be led on an ass through the public thoroughfares of Mdina and Rabat, with bare shoulders and wearing a mitre on her head, and to be whipped and fined ten uncie.⁷⁰ Two years later, the archdeacon insisted on a sentence being pronounced without further delay by the bishop's court on the priest Georgius Farruge, accused of concubinage and other faults.⁷¹

The heresy scare of 1546 provides the first substantial information on the attitude taken by the priests accused of concubinage towards the institution of clerical celibacy. We do not know precisely what were the heretical opinions of Don Franciscus Jesuald (alias Gesualdo), a French chaplain or priest of the Order of St. John, but it is recorded by the only historian who seems to have had access to first hand material, perhaps to the actual inquisitorial proceedings,⁷² that on his way to execution in that year he began to exclaim 'What are the priests waiting for to take wives, once this is permitted to them?' He was then gagged by order of Bishop Cubelles lest 'he proceeded any further in his scandalous railing against sacerdotal celibacy and any other article of faith.' In the end he was burnt alive impenitently giving up his unhappy soul to the devil. At least three other unnamed priests prosecuted in 1546 also believed that priests could or should marry, but recanted and were given lesser punishments.⁷³ Their San Benito garb remained on show in the cathedral at Mdina until the early nineteenth century.⁷⁴ It is possible that Don Andreas Axac was one of them, the cooperator of Jesuald. In his recantation among other counts he stated:⁷⁵

And furthermore I abjure and anathemize that heresy which says that it is licit for the priests to take a wife, and I am sorry and sad to have thought that it would be much better for priests to have a wife as do the Greeks, and I say and protest that I want to believe and to be observed whatever the said Holy Roman Church had ordained and commanded – that is, that priests and ordained men and the religious should not take a wife.

.....

And I am sorry and sad to have had a concubine for more than ten years past, whom I have kept with carnal effect as no other than a wife, and I am sorry and sad that in the said time of concubinage I have occasionally celebrated mass.

Many years later, Don Gregorius Mamo testified how, as a pupil in the town grammar school kept by Don Andreas Axac, he used to bring meat for his master's Friday and Saturday meals from 'the house of his woman whom he kept as his wife, and that he (i.e. Don Andreas) used to say that one could keep a woman and that it was not a sin for a priest to keep a woman for himself, and that he kept that woman as my father kept my mother.'⁷⁶ The two priests whose names are unknown (possibly including Don Andreas) believed that priests could marry and they actually took their concubines to the little church of Our Lady della Rocca of Mdina and married them there [*per verba*] *de presenti* in accordance with ecclesiastical rites.⁷⁷

Additional information is available from the heresy prosecutions of 1563. Don Johannes Xeberras believed that priests could marry, 'that it was permissible and licit for a priest to have a wife', and 'that if a priest took a concubine for a wife and in place of a wife, it was not a sin to do so.'⁷⁸ The layman Antonius Cassar believed that it was lawful for a priest to marry.⁷⁹ The Franciscan friar Antonius Haius thought that it was lawful (licit) for regular and secular priests to have a wife and that they did not sin when they had one.⁸⁰ The lawyer and judge Augustinus Cumbu thought that priests and clerics could have a wife.⁸¹ It will not occasion any surprise to find Don Brandano Caxaro on 18 July 1563 at the age of fifty five declaring that priests could contract marriage without any dispensation from the Pope.⁸² Even as late as 1575 Don Gregorius Mamo of Siggiewi, the worthy pupil of Don Andrea Axac, had solemnly to renounce before the Inquisitor his belief that 'it would be better for a Latin priest to have a wife as is the custom with Greek priests.'⁸³ Apparently Don Andrea's teaching had a very convincing and long-lasting quality about it.

However, it is a fact that concubinage among the clergy in Malta as elsewhere was a much older phenomenon than Lutheranism.⁸⁴ Its existence must have strongly assisted in the spreading of something like Lutheranism in the island in the decade preceding 1546, but was not itself caused by it. In Malta as elsewhere there seems to have survived a strong conservative largely passive opposition to the Church's teaching on celibacy with an unbroken tradition going back to the High Middle Ages, when it was still possible for some to think that Church Councils might reverse the trend towards celibacy.

Clerical concubinage survived for so long very largely because its pervasiveness made it extremely difficult for the Church to marshal the full force of its sanctions against it. Thus in June

1524 the bishop's court consisted of Don Consalvus Canchur, who was the Vicar General, of Don Laurencius Caxaro, the judge and assessor, and of Don Matheus Canchur, the court notary, the registrar or recorder of the proceedings.⁸⁵ Consalvus Canchur and Laurencius Caxaro were two of the principal concubinate clergymen with large families of children; Matheus Canchur was Consalvus's own son.⁸⁶ It could not be expected that such a court would exert itself too much in the suppression of concubinage. Again one notes that the court which vexed the archdeacon so much in 1546-47 for delaying its sentence on Don Georgius Farruge who was being prosecuted for concubinage consisted of Don Franciscus Sillato as judge and Augustinus Cumbu and Gregorius Xerri as his assessors.⁸⁷ Now Sillato figured among the concubinate clergymen as recently as 1545,⁸⁸ and Cumbu was to be attacked in 1563 for thinking that priests could marry.⁸⁹

The evidence indicates strongly that several Maltese priests and laymen in the middle years of the sixteenth century actually still believed that the Church was wrong in insisting on strict clerical celibacy, but it is difficult to be sure of the strength of this belief. Certainly only a minority of those prosecuted for heresy at the time confessed, or were made to confess, to such a belief. By then the pressures to conform were becoming far too strong for the further survival of any unorthodox belief or practice. The prosecution of reputed Lutherans could not have failed to intimidate would-be concubinisers. In 1575, Don Pietro Dusina, the Apostolic Delegate, received only one report of concubinage among the local clergymen.⁹⁰ Whatever one thinks of the efficiency of his investigations in this respect, there is no doubt that it was the generation falling within 1545-75 that witnessed the definite eclipse of clerical concubinage from the Maltese Islands.

NOTES:

¹ E. Jombart, 'Celibat des clercs, i. en droit occidental', *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, III, col. 136.

² *Ibid.* H.C. Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, London, 1932, pp. 343-45. G.G. Coulton, 'Celibacy', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., vol. 5, p. 96.

³ 'Au XIVE et au XVE siècles, la loi de celibat fut mal observée. A défaut de mariages, le concubinage des clercs s'étalait au grand jour': E. Jombart, *loc. cit.*

⁴Jon Arason, last Catholic bishop of Holar, and his two sons were captured and executed by the protestants in 1551: art. 'Arason, Jon' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., v. 1; 'Bishop Lawrence's son Arni (c. 1330)', art. 'Icelandic Literature' in *ibid.*, v. 12, p. 54; 'Odd Gottskalkssib, son of the bishop of Holar': *ibid.*

⁵N.K. Andersen, 'The Reformation in Scandinavia and the Baltic', *The New Cambridge Modern History*, II, 144.

⁶R. Aubenas, 'The Papacy and the Catholic Church', *The New Cambridge Modern History*, i 91.

⁷D. Hay, *A General History of Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century*, London, 1966, p. 54; Cf. H.C. Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 333, for the admission in 1428 by the bishop of Angers that concubinage was public and undisguised.

⁸H.G. Koenigsberger and George L. Mosse, *A General History of Europe in the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1969, p. 170.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Dusina's Diocesan Visitation, 1575; R(oyal) M(alta) L(ibrary), Libr. Ms. 643, pp. 90, 359.

¹¹'Ivi (atti di Not. Giuseppe Guevara) li 12 ottobre 1546 donazione di D. Luca Bartolo Canonico della Cattedrale à favor di una sua figlia naturale': RML, Libr. Ms. 704A, p. 405; 'Li 23 Agosto 1547 (atti di Bonetiis) il Canonico Cantore D. Antonio de Mangione fà donazione irrevocabile à tre figli naturali avuti da Giugliana ... (illegible)': *ibid.*, p. 402.

¹²His Visitation by Bishop Cubelles, 1545, must refer to Cath. Mus. Md., CEM, RA, v. 36: Cf. G.F. Agius de Soldanis, *Għawdex bil-Graġja Tiegħu miġjub bil-Malti minn Mons. Dun Ġużepp Farrugia*, II, 45.

¹³J. Azzopardi, *Handlist of the Episcopal and Pro-Vicarial Archives* (Curia Episcopalis Melitensis or CEM Archives) at the Malta Cathedral Museum for the Malta Study Centre of the Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA, 1975.

¹⁴NAV, R 175/2, f. 215.

¹⁵Lanceas Desguanes was already archdeacon of the cathedral in 1445, having obtained that dignity probably as early as 1434. When he died in 1489, his daughter Violante was still a minor: NAV, R494/1, deed dated 7 May 1496.

¹⁶Cath. Mus. Md., Cath. Arch., Quademi Diversi, n. 7 (unpaginated).

¹⁷Cath. Mus. Md., CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 96.

¹⁸For debts, *ib.*, ff. 76v, 77v and 86; for knocking down the wall: *ib.*, f. 104; for accusation of heresy: *ib.*, ff. 30v, 33r-v, 34v, 65, etc.

¹⁹Deed dated 31 January 1500: NAV, R 494/2, foliation undecipherable.

²⁰For his artistic prowess see G. Wettinger, 'Artistic Patronage in Malta, 1418-1538', in *Hal Millieri*, ed. A.T. Luttrell, in the press; for his daughter Catherina see Cath. Mus. Md., CEM, AO, v. 7A, f. 234, where the text has been damaged by water so that it is hardly legible but the marginal entry has withstood the water much better.

²¹For the Dominicans, see M. Fsadni, O.P., *Id-Dumn ikani fir-Rabat u fil-*

Birgu sa l-1620, especially pp. 190-91.

²² *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, AO, v. 17A, f. 232.

²³ *Ib.*, RA, v. 2, ff. 278, 281v.

²⁴ RML, Ad. 51, p. 951.

²⁵ 'sta ingarzato puplicamenti', accusation before the bishop's court by Michael Bonnich, 21 November 1526: *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 196. For Borg's dispensation: *ib.*, *Cath.Arch.*, Parchments, n. 6, dated Rome, 10 September 1523.

²⁶ NAV, R 111/16, f. 220v.

²⁷ RML, *Libr. Ms.* 643, p. 518.

²⁸ NAV, R 111/16, f. 220v; reference to 'frater' was however subsequently obliterated.

²⁹ *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, RA, v. 2, f. 119.

³⁰ NAV, R 175/8, f. 74.

³¹ RML, Ad. 50, p. 710. The Augustinians had a Fr. Franciscus Calleya on 31 August 1549: NAV, R 105/17, f. 13.

³² *Ibid.*, RA, v. 3, ff. 146-149v.

³³ *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, *Registrum Litterarum Monitorialium*, v. 4, ff. 22v-24.

³⁴ The volume examined for drawing up a list of the clergymen of Malta is *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, RA, v. 3, containing accusations against clergymen, the collation of clergymen to benefices, complaints, etc., by laymen supported by statements made by clergymen and other business frequently witnessed by clergymen. On the whole it would seem few clergymen of the time could have avoided having their name entered at least once in the register. In 1575 the diocesan visitor Dusina examined the following number of clergymen: on education, 9 canons, 11 presbiters, 7 parochi and 12 others; on benefices: 1 vicar, 12 canons, 13 presbiters, 8 parochi and 14 others, most of those in the former being also to be found among the latter.

³⁵ *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, RA, v. 36 (1545-46) ff. 211-218.

³⁶ Exactly 14 cases of concubinage among Gozitan laymen were dealt with on the same occasion. It is probable that these prosecutions were intended merely as a camouflage for the action taken against the clergy, and it is therefore unlikely that precisely that number of concubinate laymen existed in Gozo. However, concubinage must have been relatively much stronger among the clergy than among laymen, for whom in most cases the option of a regular marriage always lay open.

³⁷ Cf. G. Wettinger, 'The Village of Hal Millieri, 1419-1530', in *Hal Millieri*, ed. A.T. Luttrell, in the press.

³⁸ Don Paulo Juributino of Gozo was alleged to have kept Laurencia, the freed woman of Don Matheo de Brunetto, as his concubine for some time: *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, AO, v. 9, f. 29.

³⁹ *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, AO, v. 22, f. 3v.

⁴⁰ Only D. Antonius Vitali seems to have replaced Julliana, daughter of Zimirid, by Joanne de Zimech, and it is possible that the record here is defective.

⁴¹ *Cath.Mus.Md.*, CEM, RA, v.

⁴² *Ib.*, v. 1, ff. 86, 132, 166v et seq.

- ⁴³ Cf. summary of his will, 26 October 1512, in RML, Libr.Ms. 695, f. 5v.
- ⁴⁴ Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 16A, f. 15v.
- ⁴⁵ NAV, R 494/1, ff. 53-54v of the 6th quire, entry dated 7 May 1496.
- ⁴⁶ Notes to genealogical table in G. Wettinger and M. Fsadni, O.P., *Peter Caxaro's Cantilena: a Poem in Medieval Maltese*, Malta, 1968.
- ⁴⁷ *Ib.*
- ⁴⁸ Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 1, f. 100.
- ⁴⁹ *Ib.*, CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 186.
- ⁵⁰ 'Dompnus Nicolaus de Bordino filius dicti dompni Henerici', 13 October 1511: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v.6, f. 124v; 'clericum Johannem Pisano filium dompni Leonardi Pisano', 11 April 1512: *ib.*, CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 29v of quire belonging to 1511; 'Venerabilis Fr. Marcus de Vella ordinis sancti dominici ... dicto Reverendo Donno Amatore Zamit avo materno dicti conventi', 29 January 1533: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 12, f. 136.
- ⁵¹ Salvo was certainly the son of Catherina and much later Don Jacobo Vassallo had a son named Salvo; on being accused of having withdrawn her son from the craftsman to whom she had apprenticed him, Catherina said that for the past two years Salvo had served Don Jacobo 'non comu garczu ma comu servirrichi senza nullo pictato (i.e. without any pittance, without pay) et ad laude de dio et per guadagnari et campari cum dicto Don Jacobo de servicio': Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 86.
- ⁵² Statement made by Don Michael de Falczono, 1 May 1496: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 3, f. 71.
- ⁵³ Eighteenth century copy in Cath.Mus.Md., Cath.Arch., Ms. 28, ff. 105v-106v.
- ⁵⁴ Bandu et comandamentu, 9 December 1500: *Ib.*, CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 3A.
- ⁵⁵ *Ib.*, f. 132.
- ⁵⁶ *Ib.*, f. 153.
- ⁵⁷ *Ib.*, v. 3, f. 216-216v.
- ⁵⁸ *Ib.*, v. 2, f. 139, dated 21 July 1535.
- ⁵⁹ Evidence given in the church court of Gozo, 7 August 1536: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, vol. 15, f. 302v.
- ⁶⁰ *Ib.*, CEM, RA, v. 3, 58v-59v.
- ⁶¹ *Ib.*, CEM, AO, v. 22, proceedings n.9.
- ⁶² *Ib.*, CEM, RA, v. 3, f. 146.
- ⁶³ *Ib.*, ff. 146-149v.
- ⁶⁴ *Ib.*, *Registrum Litterarum Monitorialium*, v. 1, 22v-24; see Table III.
- ⁶⁵ Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 36 (1545-46), ff. 211-218; see Table IV.
- ⁶⁶ On 11 May 1554 Don Luca Bartholo was ordered again to stop seeing Helena the manumitted slave of the late Joannelli Cassar: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 33, f. 89 of section for 1548-54. Cf. also *IB.*, f. 89v against D. Antonino Manjuni, precentor of the cathedral, and his concubine Juliana.
- ⁶⁷ Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, AO, v. 53, item 'Confirmationes factae in Ecclesia parrochiali huius Victoriasae civitatis ...'.
- ⁶⁸ Evidence of Don Laurencius Falsone, 1 July 1563: AIM, Processi, v. 2 'Contra Donnum Brandanum de Caxario', f. 2v.
- ⁶⁹ 'Non debeat legere librum sacerdotalem nec psalmos necque quasquamque alias orationes super infirmos nec non et quod de cetero non audeat con-

versari nec non praticare cum Antonina dicta Nina eius consobrina': rescriptum, 1 March 1545, Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, Monitoria, v. 1, f. 13.

⁷⁰ Sentence, 5 December 1545: Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 3, ff. 255-256v; *ibid.*, AO, v. 26A, f. 11. However Dimech had apparently already died on 8 November 1545, probably at Agrigento, where he was reported to be at the time of the sentence: *ibid.*, Cath. Arch., Ms. 165, f. 295v.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Ms. 4, ff. 5v-6v (olim pp. 4-6).

⁷² S. Sebastiano Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis seu de Regulis Multiplicibus pro formando quovis eorum Ministro*, Rome, 1651, v. 1, p. 47. Salelles, a Spanish Jesuit who spent most of his adult life in Malta, was consultor to the Inquisitor.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 'Cooperator vero eius sic expeditus de haeresibus formalibus convictus, poenitentia ductus misericordiam petens reconciliatus in forma etc. condemnatus prout de iure & constrictus ferre habitum poenitentia Hispanice San Benito sicuti pari modo fuerunt constricti, & similiter expediti alii duo Sacerdotes, non solum quod credidissent sibi licere uxorem ducere, sed facto etiam ipso concubinas suas sibi de praesenti desponsassent, servato ritu Ecclesiastico in sacello Sanctae Mariae in Rocca Civitatis Notabilis. Atque istorum sunt habitus poenitentiae qui usque ad praesens in eminenti loco Ecclesiae Cathedralis ad memoriam rei & maiorem . . . liorem reconciliatorum appensi manet.' Most of this passage was inserted in an Italian version by S. Imbroll or, rather, his continuator C. Michallef, in his unpublished *Annali Istorici della Sacra Religione Gierosolimitana*, tomo II, f. 56 of RML, Ms. 24', but G.A. Vassallo, *Storia di Malta raccontata in Compendio*, 185, p. , bowdlerized Imbroll's words by omitting the phrase 'con le loro concubine', making it merely seem that the two priests thought that they could marry, which in fact they did. More recent writers leave out the incident completely.

⁷⁴ G.A. Vassallo, *Storia di Malta raccontata in Compendio*, p. 395.

⁷⁵ AIM, Processi, vol. 4, ff. 205, 206; cf. text in A.P. Vella, *The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta*, Malta, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁶ AIM, Processi, v. 3, f. 223v. D. Andrea Axac also was accused of eating on days of abstinence.

⁷⁷ See above, fn. 73.

⁷⁸ AIM, Processi, v. 1A, f. 13v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 15v.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, f. 28v.

⁸² AIM, processi, v. 2, 'Contra donnum Brandanum de Caxario', ff. 3, 4.

⁸³ AIM, Processi, v. 3, f. 236.

⁸⁴ See the earlier examples in Table I, above.

⁸⁵ Cath.Mus.Md., CEM, RA, v. 1, f. 186.

⁸⁶ Table I.

⁸⁷ Cath.Mus.Md., Cath. Arch., Ms. 4, ff. 5v-6v.

⁸⁸ Table III.

⁸⁹ AIM, Processi, v. 1A, f. 28v.

⁹⁰ Dusina's Diocesan Visitation, 1575: RML, Libr. Ms. 643, p. 90.