

ENCOUNTERS WITH
VALLETTA
A BAROQUE CITY
THROUGH THE AGES

EDITED BY

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The International Institute for Baroque Studies

Since its foundation in 1996, the International Institute for Baroque Studies at the University of Malta has been involved in a range of activities that support its mission to disseminate multidisciplinary knowledge about the Baroque heritage of mankind, and to promote its appreciation and conservation for posterity.

This objective has been taken forward through teaching activities at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as through extensive research work which has formed the basis of various publications and theses. The Institute has also performed consultancy services concerned with aspects of the Baroque heritage of the Maltese Islands which is linked to the Hospitaller Knights of the Order of St John in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On an international level, the Institute has enhanced its teaching activities by actively participating in academic conferences at universities overseas, and has also taken the initiative to organize international seminars in Malta. The Institute assumed a pioneering role in the foundation of the Baroque Route Network of the Council of Europe, on behalf of which the Institute still regularly publishes a newsletter. The Institute's publications as well as its courses offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, reflect the interests of the academic staff members in the political, military, religious, social, philosophical, scientific, literary, artistic and conservation aspects of the Baroque age.

The Baroque world is approached as a holistic cultural entity which embodies the two contradictions of the age: the abstract mathematical and methodical aspect on the one hand, and the rebellious, emotional and exuberant aspect on the other, which are both manifest in the architecture and art forms of the great Baroque capital cities of Europe. The enduring residues of this eminently European cultural expression bears witness to an age of learning, discovery, brilliance and splendour which continues to attract the attention of many scholars and poses a formidable challenge for them to provide answers to a host of yet unanswered questions, and to use archival research to identify and disseminate new knowledge about the Baroque achievement.

Opposite: Decision by the Order's Council to confer the title of 'Most Humble' on the city of Valletta on 14 February 1567 (NLM, AOM 91, f. 177)

Inside covers: Eighteenth-century paintings depicting Valletta from the Grand Harbour and from Marsamxett Harbour (Private collection)



THE OLD VALLETTA FOOD MARKET

Petra Caruana Dingli

The urbanization of Malta with the development and growth of the coastal city of Valletta established the harbour area as the mercantile centre of the island. Natural resources had always been scarce in the small, arid Maltese Islands. Most commodities, including staple foods such as grain, had to be imported. After the Order of St John settled in Malta in the sixteenth century, trading activity expanded with increasing supplies of goods shipped in from Sicily and elsewhere. Besides the Maltese, the cosmopolitan community of Valletta merchants, ship-owners, brokers, money-lenders and salesmen included many who came to Malta seeking work, especially Greeks, Sicilians, French and Italians. The Order encouraged the growth of an entrepreneurial class, some of whom were also appointed to administrative positions of prestige and responsibility by the knights.¹

Besides imported foods such as wine, pulses, cheese and oil, the cultivation of crops and animal husbandry in rural areas also supplied a steady stream of fresh produce which was brought into Valletta every morning to be sold in the market square. The main food market of Valletta was sited between St Paul Street and Merchants Street, directly behind the Grand Master's

Palace in the centre of the city. A 1602 map of the city already indicates an open square in this area behind the Palace.² An early seventeenth-century map annotated by military engineer Giovanni Battista Vertova also notes that the food market was located there.³

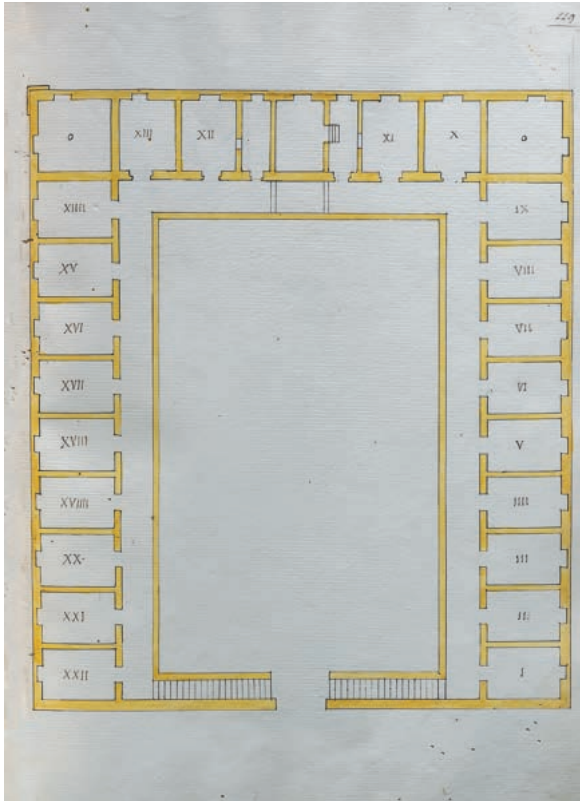
In his description of Malta of 1647, Giovanni Francesco Abela thought it remarkable that, while many cities in other countries held food markets once or twice a week, in Valletta there was a daily market selling meat, poultry, game, vegetables, fruit and other food items. These were brought into the city each morning on carts, or carried in by men on foot. Everything was sold within a few hours, and a second batch of fresh produce was delivered in the evening.⁴

The Order's Market

In 1643 the Council of the Order, presided over by Grand Master Jean Paul Lascaris Castellar (ruled 1636-57), agreed that Valletta's market facilities should be improved. They decided to build a

The interior of the covered market, rebuilt after major damage in the second world war, not long before its restoration and conversion in 2017

Upper storey of the market, administered by the *Fondazione Cotoner* until 1756 (NLM, Treas. B 300, *Cabreo Universale de' Beni Stabili della Fondazione Cotoner principiato l'anno 1737*)



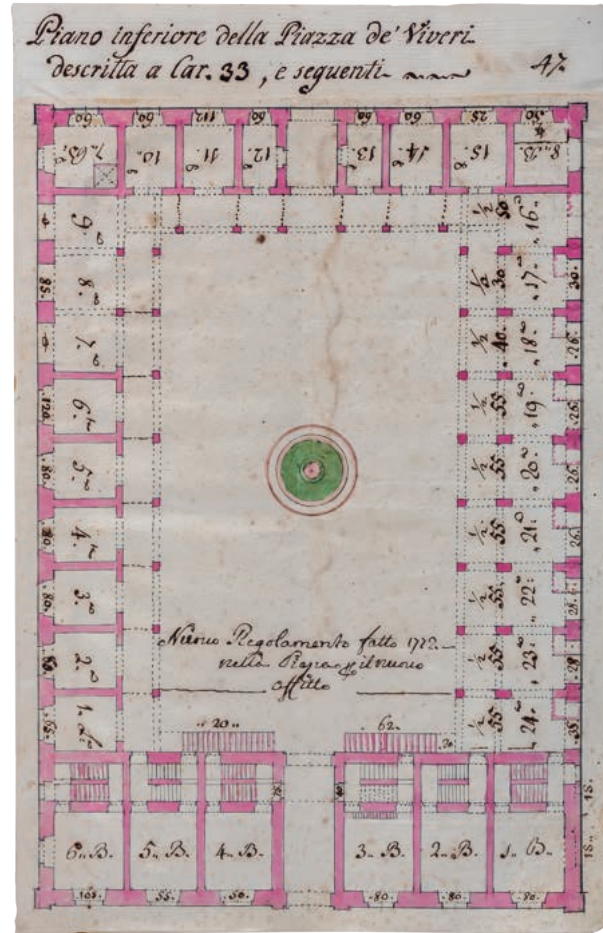
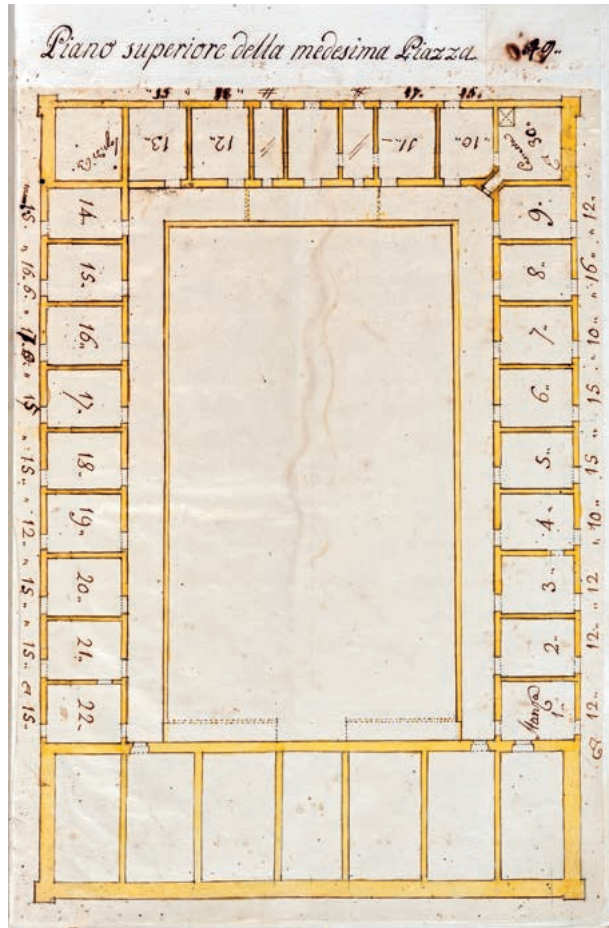
row of small shops (*botteghe*) in the market square to house the edible produce.⁵ The erection of a new market edifice in Valletta at this period was in line with similar civic initiatives in the urban centres of Europe.⁶ This new complex was a commercial venture as it provided a regular income to the Order. It was supported by the treasury, the *Comun Tesoro*, however the shops and rents were managed by the *Fondazione Lascaris* which the grand

master had set up. Each year the rental proceeds were used to maintain properties belonging to the Order.

From the sixteenth century onwards, educated European travellers often recorded their experiences in journals and letters, sometimes also publishing their travel notes to reach a wider audience. Travel descriptions are among the richest sources of information describing daily life in early Valletta. The French Albert Jouvin de Rochefort published a travelogue in six volumes in 1672, giving an account of his journey around Europe, including a trip to Malta.⁷ In his notes he records a visit in 1663 to Valletta's refurbished market square, close to the stable doors at the back of the Grand Master's Palace. It had a fountain in the centre which was, he writes, 'very convenient for thirsty people, horses and little dogs. A small obelisk stands on a basin. It has a little basket in which there are flowers and fruit sprayed by thin spouts of water which emerge from the foot of the obelisk. Underneath it there is another basin which serves as a drinking trough for horses and finally, further down, there is a small drinking trough high enough to enable a small dog to drink.'⁸ Rochefort appreciated the abundance of 'appetizing fruit' for sale 'all looking so fresh as if it were autumn even though we were there at the time of Christmas.'

Specialized items such as coffee and spices were purchased overseas by local entrepreneurs and shipped to Malta. In one example, the Maltese Lorenzo Ubaldesco de Piro imported a batch of coffee from Alexandria in Egypt in 1698. He also bought some American cocoa, fine white sugar from Lisbon, cinnamon and vanilla in 1716, and salted cheeses from Italy.⁹ Coffee and chocolate were increasingly popular but still relatively new commodities. In his 1672 travelogue, Rochefort still felt obliged to explain what they were to his readers. He wrote that in Valletta in 1663 he had encountered 'some Greeks who sell sorbet, coffee, and chocolate, which are sorts of liquors drunk hot or alternatively with ice, coming from the Levant and exported to all the big cities of the world because of their subtle and very delicious taste.'¹⁰

In around 1670 Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner (ruled 1663-80) expanded the Valletta market complex, building an



Upper (left) and lower (right) storeys of the market, administered by the Fondazione Lascaris (NLM, Treas. B 301, Vol. I, Cabreo dei Beni Spettanti alla Fondazione Lascaris, 1784)

Detail of market square in the map of Valletta based on Matteo Perez d'Aleccio (1582), described in the map legend as '42. Piazza del malcantone' (see page 40)



Opposite:
Bando of 1722
regulating the
use of the market
fountain (NLM,
Libr. MS 429,
Vol. I)

internal loggia and an upper storey with 22 residential rooms. With more spaces available to be rented out, this increased the income gained from the market by the Order. While the ground floor continued to be managed by the Fondazione Lascaris, the new upper rooms were administered by the Fondazione Cotoner and in 1674 they were providing 232 *scudi* per year in rent from tenants.¹¹ These funds were used to maintain the garrison stationed at Fort Ricasoli, together with the rental income from a list of other properties, including stores (*magazzini*) around the Valletta harbours, also administered by the Fondazione Cotoner.¹²

As shown in a government regulation of 1717,¹³ the spaces in the piazza and market structure were subdivided, with more than one tenant within each loggia or shop. The different types of food were grouped into different areas. Fish was sold in the loggias on one side with back doors opening onto the side road known by the descriptive name 'Strada del Pesce', today Felix Street (Triq Felic). Most of the tenants at this period had quite typical Maltese surnames, implying that this was a culturally assimilated social group. Research by Giannantonio Scaglione has shown how some of these families rented market spaces over several generations, and the same families also inter-married. Some of the more astute vendors accumulated considerable wealth, with one Aloiseo Portelli leaving assets, credits and investments worth over 22,000 *scudi* on his death, which was a notable sum. He lived in one of the first-floor rooms of the market, comfortably equipped with furniture, paintings, clothes, and tableware.¹⁴

In 1756 the Fondazione Lascaris gave some properties elsewhere in Valletta to the Fondazione Cotoner, and in exchange took over the management of the rooms on the upper storey of the market in addition to the ground floor. As a result, the entire building was now in the hands of the Fondazione Lascaris. Plans of both floors of the market were included in the *Cabreo Lascaris* of 1784.¹⁵

The upper rooms opened onto a first-floor passage encircling the square inside, and also had balconies over the surrounding roads outside. There was a fresh-water fountain the middle of

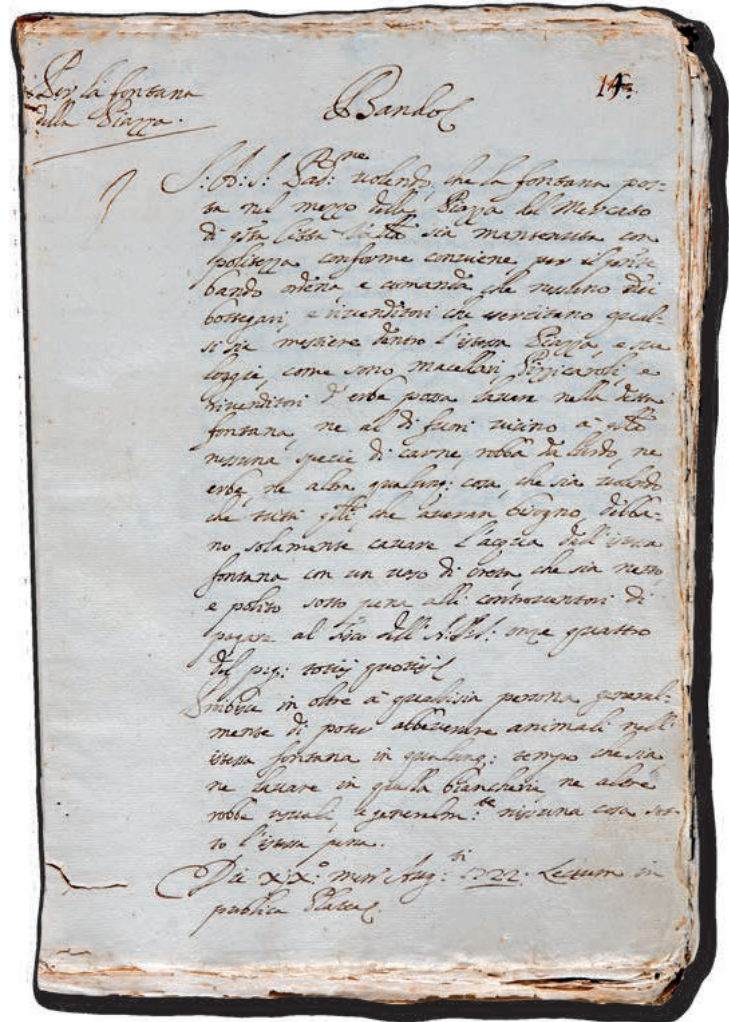
the square, which gave the authorities continual headaches about public hygiene.

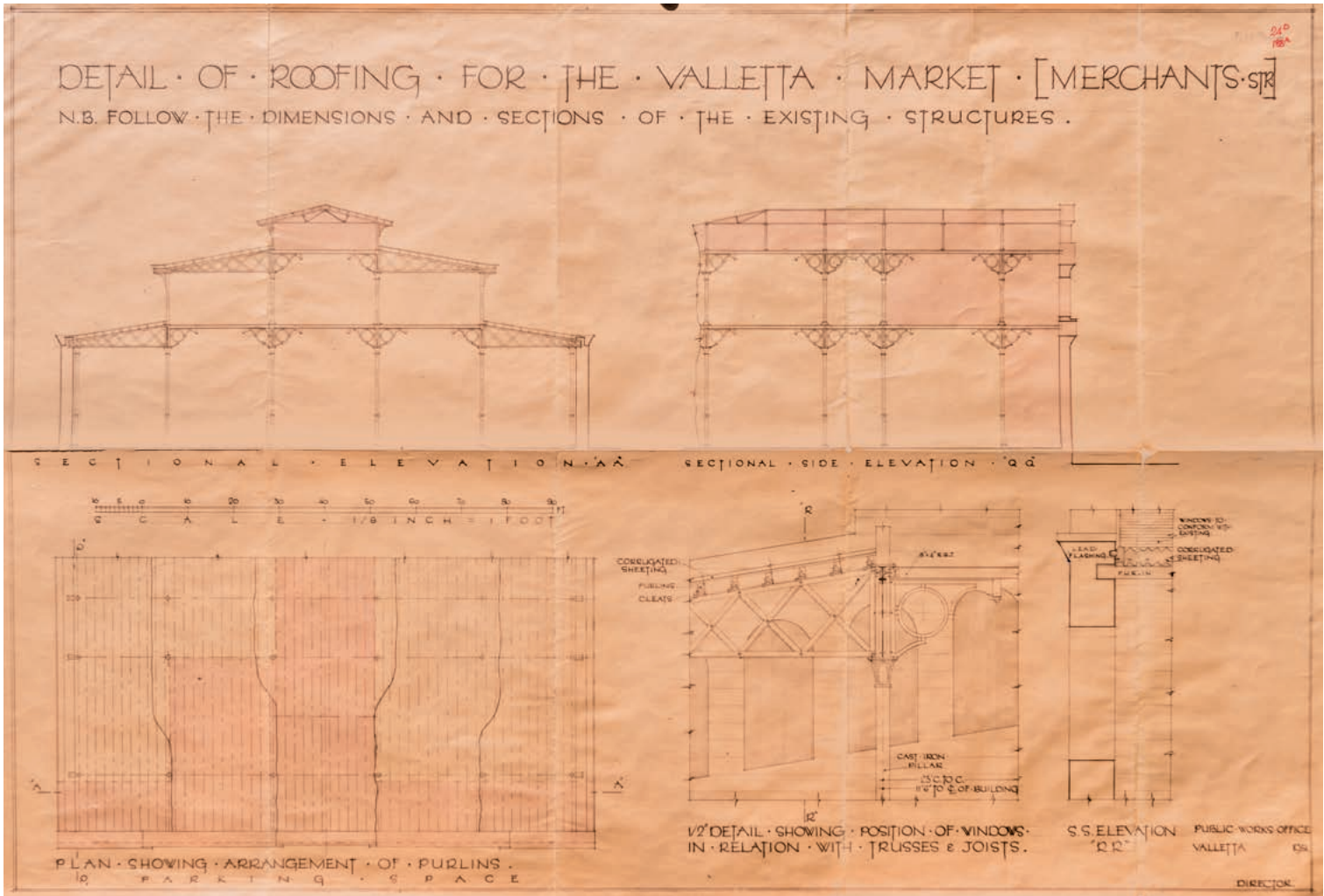
A public notice (*bando*) of 1722 ordered the market vendors not to wash their meat or vegetables in the fountain, or in any other public fountain nearby. They were instructed to take water from the basin with an empty, clean earthenware jug. Animals were not to drink from the fountain, neither was it to be used for washing laundry. These regulations must have been flaunted regularly and the authorities finally imposed self-regulation, giving out a roster of vendors who in turn had to supervise the fountain, as well as empty the water basin and scrub it clean. Besides fines, the potential penalties for neglecting this duty even included imprisonment.¹⁶

The German writer Albrecht Christoph Kayser in the 1780s noted that, 'every morning more than a hundred mules and donkeys transport vegetables, meat, fruits, cages with poultry, herbs. The farmers drive their goats, lambs and sheep through the streets to the market. In a few hours everything is sold and already the same evening some more provisions are carried into the city to be sold the next morning.'¹⁷ This market pattern of two deliveries each day seems very similar to Abela's description of it a century earlier, as cited above.

During the British blockade of Valletta, now in the hands of French troops, the food supplies to the city were severely limited. The last French vessel which managed to deliver supplies had brought in barrels of wine and aquavit as well as some food including meat, salted cheese and pulses, which were sold at exorbitant prices. According to the Neapolitan Consul Vincenzo Micallef, the French officers and soldiers 'kept in their homes large quantities of rabbits, pigeons and hens, whose eggs were sold at the market', together with the vegetables they desperately attempted to grow in all corners of the city once supplies from outside had been cut off.¹⁸

The market eventually stopped functioning during the blockade, with the French troops besieged and starving, but it re-opened in September 1800 once the French surrendered and people moved back into the city. Shortly after the British took charge, an English traveller was pleased with the variety of





‘delicious fruits, oranges, lemons, olives and peas, beans, pulses, roots, herbs and other garden produce’ available for sale.¹⁹ The busy market swiftly went back to its normal business. Beside the food stalls it also contained wine-shops, while cooks dressed and prepared meat, fish and vegetables, usually by frying them in oil. A police officer acted as superintendent, and supervised prices, weights and measures, and quality, settling disputes or punishing offenders.²⁰

In 1800 another visitor noted that the market had outgrown its facilities: ‘The public market, which is in a line with this street, is an exact quadrangle, and refreshed by a central fountain. Whether it was sufficiently large for the accommodation of the inhabitants previous to the capture of Malta by the French, I cannot pretend to determine; but when the British troops were in possession of the island, it was not only crowded with shops and stalls of every kind and in every corner, but every avenue became part of it.’ He regretted that due to overcrowding the market was not very clean.²¹

The British administration took initiatives to improve the existing market facilities in urban areas all around the Valletta harbour throughout the nineteenth century. A small market in Floriana was designed by government architect Antonio Cachia (1739-1813) in the earliest period of British rule in Malta.²² A new market was built in Cospicua in 1804 and that year Civil Commissioner Alexander Ball also constructed a fish market at the cost of £200.²³

In 1810 the medical doctor William Domeier described the Valletta food market as being ‘in a large square, in the middle of town, perfectly well provided with all kinds of animal and vegetable food, fish, fruit, eggs & c., all of which, for the convenience of buyers, are sold at the same place.’ He noted that mutton and veal were scarce at the market, and that the pork was of better quality and more readily available. The fresh fish market was ‘in a separate place, near the sea’.²⁴ Vegetables and fruit were also sold at shops and stalls throughout Valletta.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the market sold smoked hams and other meats, some imported from England or Italy, including sausages from Calabria or odd delicacies

like camel tongue from Egypt. A variety of fowl were also on offer, including turkeys, ducks, hens, capons, chickens, guinea hens, geese and pigeons. Vegetables included turnips, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, artichokes and pumpkins.²⁵ In 1843 the naturalist George Waring thought that the Valletta market was very well supplied with all kinds of fruit, vegetables and meat.²⁶ Boys with baskets hung around the market and earned their living carrying groceries home for customers.²⁷

In his guide book of 1839, Thomas MacGill said that the food market was ‘abundantly supplied’, but he complained that while it had formerly been ‘finely arranged, and the venders [sic], kept in good order and civil’, since 1816 the market had become ‘filthy, and everything in disorder; the venders saucy and over-reaching; the bridle which kept the market people in order, was broken and under a false liberty to trade, they were allowed to become forstalers, of the first necessities of life; to the serious injury of the inhabitants.’²⁸

The idea of constructing a new market building in Valletta was put forward in 1845 during the administration of Governor Patrick Stuart. Plans and estimates were submitted by the superintendent of public works William Lamb Arrowsmith, however the project was not taken forward due to lack of funds.²⁹ The so-called Auberge d’Angleterre³⁰ in Republic Street and the old prison near the Lower Barrakka Gardens in Valletta were identified as potential sites and the idea of redesigning the market resurfaced in 1848.

Governor Richard More O’Ferrall was keen to provide better facilities and thought it ‘desirable that the whole market yard should be covered and lighted from top as the new market in Covent Garden’.³¹ But the project was again not taken forward, until it was revived in 1858 by Governor John Gaspard le Marchant (1803-74).³²

Besides Covent Garden market in London, the model for the new Valletta market was Les Halles Centrales in Paris, a modern food market housed in iron and glass structures designed by Victor Baltard (1805-74) from 1854 onwards. This reflected the drive to modernize Paris under the direction of Georges Eugène Haussman (1809-91) during that period. The next

*Opposite:
Plans for the new
covered market in
the 1850s (WDRA)*

superintendent of public works in Malta, Hector Zimelli, was sent by the government on a trip to France and England in the summer of 1858, to learn about 'all the modern improvements' being used in the construction of markets.³³ The assistance of Baltard, who visited Malta, was sought while the eminent British architect Sir Charles Fox (1810-74) of Fox, Henderson & Co also provided his 'assistance and opinion'.³⁴ Adrian Dingli, the crown advocate of Malta, acted as intermediary with the architects.³⁵

Fox had been involved in the construction of the Crystal Palace exhibition halls which opened in 1851 in Hyde Park in London. This was an impressive large structure built with iron and glass. It was designed by Joseph Paxton (1803-65), however the calculations and drawings were the work of Fox.³⁶ Before being appointed Governor of Malta, Sir William Reid (1791-1858) of the Royal Engineers had chaired the executive committee which planned the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace.³⁷ Reid left Malta in April 1858 and died in October that year.

On 15 June 1858, the *Malta Times* reported that the new Governor of Malta, Le Marchant, had revived the scheme of rebuilding the Valletta market. Besides being 'ugly and inconvenient in structure', the existing market house was too small with stalls spilling out onto the surrounding streets, St Paul Street, Merchants Street and Old Theatre Street. The newspaper described the existing old building as having been erected during the time of the Order of St John, having stalls and a yard downstairs, and with rooms above inhabited by working class families. The dirt, overflowing drainage and lack of cleanliness of the area was in urgent need of attention. The market was supplied with vegetables and foodstuffs from around Malta, with carts arriving noisily at three o'clock in the morning to the annoyance of residents nearby, whose sleep was disturbed by the incessant 'braying of asses, the neighing of horses, and the barking of dogs' and 'shrieks, yells, foul language, sufficient to rouse the dead'.³⁸

A pressing reason for redesigning the market was the lack of space. The *Malta Times* described the current cramped situation as a 'lurking and powerful evil', with the existing '*pottecali*' or market vendors oppressing the wholesalers and maintaining

THE DEVELOPMENT OF VALLETTA'S BAROQUE MARKET

Christian Mifsud

It is not clear whether the square at the back of the Grand Master's Palace, located close to the stables, was meant to serve as Valletta's market square. Early references to this space refer to it simply as an open square and cartographic sources are consistent in representing this square as devoid of any construction.

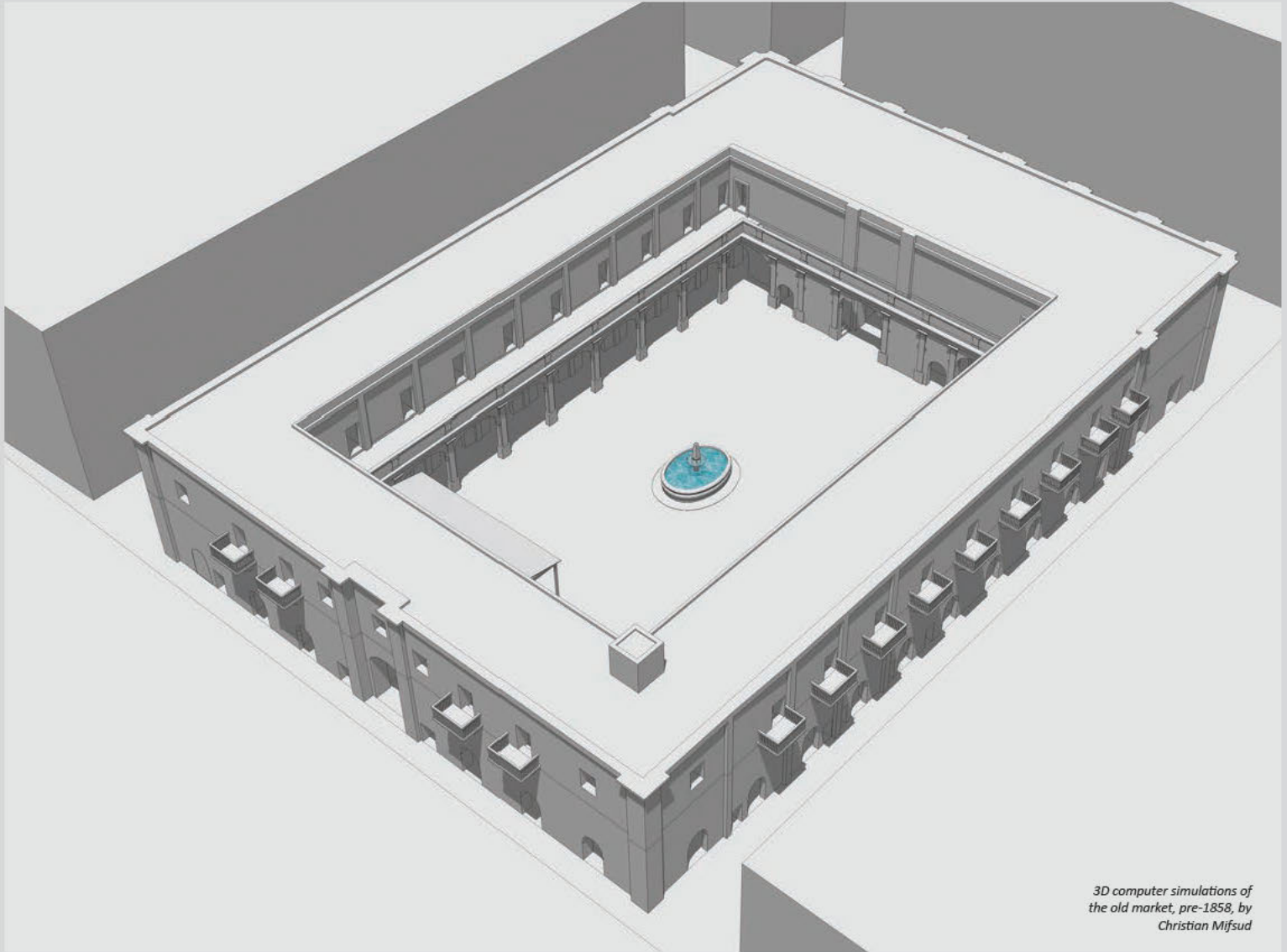
Marked as 'Piazza del malcantone' in Matteo Perez d'Aleccio's map of 1582, the square seems to have served initially as a slave market as well as the city's market square. Late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century travelogues make little mention of the square except to define social characters, products sold or to list economic transactions.

Of particular note are the entries in the travelling diary of Count George Albert of Erbach dating to 1616 referring to the slave market being located 'close to the Palace, below the armoury'.¹ In 1632, another visitor, Johann Friedrich Breithaupt also mentions the 'open piazza where the captives are sold' next to the Palace stables.

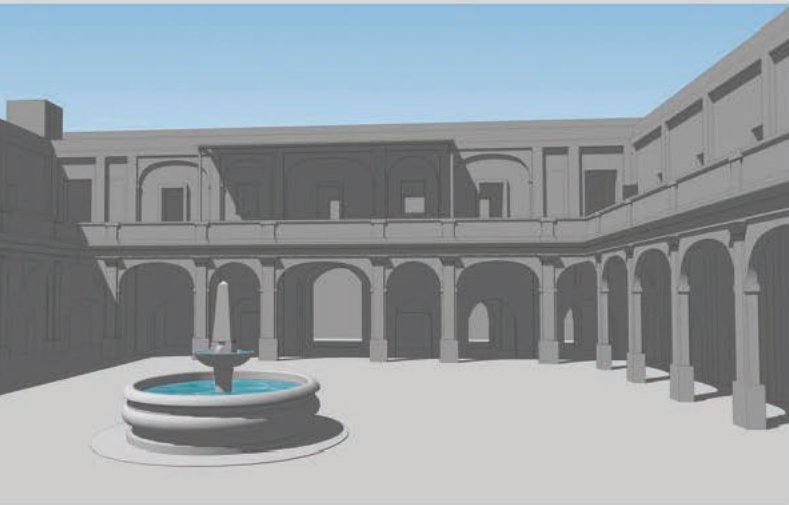
By the early seventeenth century a round fountain decorated the square.² An accurate description of the fountain is known from the mid-seventeenth-century diary entry of Albert Jouvin de Rochefort, a French traveller who happened to be in Malta in 1663. The fountain was most likely built after the arrival of water in the city after 1614.³ During this period it is likely that the market stalls were temporary, most likely of perishable materials, regularly set up around the fountain.

The first permanent construction dates to 1643 and was built during the reign of Grand Master Jean Paul Lascaris Castellar. The ensemble consisted of six simple arched *botteghe* forming a row with a loggia in the middle.⁴ In all, the building ran from St Paul Street to Merchants Street, then called Strada San Giacomo. This first property was owned by the Fondazione Lascaris.

An extension soon followed, transforming the building from a row of *botteghe* into a rectangular courtyard, but the exact date and ownership of the extended property is still unknown. During



*3D computer simulations of
the old market, pre-1858, by
Christian Mifsud*



the reign of Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner (1663-80), a first floor extended the building further⁵, this time owned by the Fondazione Cotoner.

The building was divided between the two foundations for over 80 years. It is likely that during this period, a new part of the building was added on Merchants Street. The full extent of these works is yet not fully comprehended. An analysis of the architectural elements and construction techniques shown on the original plans of the building however indicate that the stores with the façade overlooking Merchants Street are likely to be an early eighteenth-century addition.

In 1756, the two foundations exchanged properties through a deed registered by a notary, with the Fondazione Lascaris becoming the sole owner of the complex.⁶ The Piazza de Viveri, as it became known, was divided mainly between fishmongers, butchers, grocery sellers and *salumieri*. These all paid regular rents to the Fondazione Lascaris.

During the late eighteenth century, the market building had reached its full construction potential and new works carried out saw the addition of temporary structures including rafts and the division of the shops into smaller units in order to maximize the existing space. The result was that by the turn of the nineteenth century the market was 'not only crowded with shops and stalls of every kind and in every corner, but every avenue became a part of it'.⁷

The market building survived until 1858, when the British Governor John Gaspard le Marchand deemed the site as inappropriate in terms of sanitary standards. This led to the eventual demolition of the Baroque market building between 1858 and 1861, its popularity being the reason for its own demise. A new structure replaced the old market building, built with a different ethos in mind and in the process eradicating the community networks defined by the previous courtyard space. The communal value of this site was changed forever and with it, a chapter of Valletta's social history was closed.

unfairly high prices, 'in other words, under the protection of the law and Government, it encourages monopoly'.³⁹ The estate of Aloiseo Portelli of 1784 may have been an individual case, but it appears that other Valletta market vendors in the nineteenth century also made good profits.

The *Malta Times* was generally supportive of the government and actively promoted British interests in Malta, however it remonstrated strongly against plans to site the new market in the same place as the old, while conceding that this was probably the only market site that had existed in the city since its foundation. Another major concern expressed in the same newspaper was the plan to construct the market using iron. It referred to the opinion of Baltard, who discouraged the use of this material in warm climates, and asked why the Maltese government should resort to England for the materials to construct a market when the local stone is ideal for keeping out the heat as well as being 'cheap, manageable, adaptable, envied and admired by surrounding countries, and constantly being transported from this at great cost to other parts of the world'.

Iron, the newspaper argued, retains heat and is therefore unsuitable for Malta, and while it might 'save a few inches from every wall by having iron instead of stone divisions' there was no need for the 'contrivances of modern science' and 'exotic ideas' to build a new market.⁴⁰ It would be better to convert the Auberge d'Italie in Merchants Street into a market, the newspaper continued, as this would reduce the noise of carts entering Valletta and be within easier reach of the residents of Floriana.⁴¹ At the time this auberge housed the offices of the public works department, which was in charge of the new market plans and could hardly have been delighted by this proposal. The government took note of the budding controversy and promised to build a model of the proposed design of the market and put it on public display.⁴²

The tenants of the existing market house began their relocation to temporary stalls at the Lower Barrakka Gardens in December 1858. Works commenced in January and the old building was demolished.⁴³ When Hector Zimelli was appointed superintendent of police in 1859, he was replaced by architect



Vegetable vendor at the Valletta market in the 1990s, before its conversion

Opposite: The Valletta market after its conversion in 2017



Previous page: Top – the covered market in the late 19th century
Below – war damage to the market in the 1940s. The ironwork is clearly visible

Emmanuele Luigi Galizia (1830-1906) who oversaw the construction works. By the 1830s, Britain was the leading nation in iron and engineering. The new technology of the steam engine drove the industrial age. Iron was mined in the north of England and was soon being tried and used widely, including for the construction of bridges and buildings. Building methods using a

combination of masonry with iron pillars and beams were first used in Malta in the construction of the naval bakery along the Birgu waterfront in 1841-48, designed by naval architect William Scamp (1801-72). Some pre-fabricated ironwork was also used at the new prisons at Corradino. The Valletta covered market was, however, the first building in Malta to have an entire lightweight roof supported by iron pillars and trusses. The design of the Valletta market was inspired by Baltard's Halles Centrales in Paris,⁴⁴ but while the latter used zinc as roof cladding, timber⁴⁵ covered with *torba* and *deffun* were used in Valletta.⁴⁶

Together with Lieutenant Colonel Ellis of the Royal Engineers, Galizia assessed the tender for the iron to be used in the market structure, and the company Emmerson and Murgatroyd of Stockport in England were chosen as manufacturers and suppliers.⁴⁷ The same company had provided the ironwork for the new lunatic asylum at Wied Incita in Attard in the 1850s, today Mount Carmel Hospital, and also won the tender for ironwork for the new Valletta opera house in 1861.⁴⁸ Emmerson and Murgatroyd also manufactured the iron railings for St Paul's Anglican church in Valletta, and provided lamp posts, pillar boxes and public fountain pumps used throughout Malta.⁴⁹ William Scamp visited Stockport to supervise the manufacture of the ironwork for the new market and asylum.⁵⁰ A British visitor, William Tallack, visited the new market in 1861 and wrote that the 'busiest time of the market is daily before breakfast, when it is interesting to ramble about amongst the noisy vendors and their different kinds of wares. Messmen, from the officers' quarters and from the ships of war in harbour, muster in numbers, as well as caterers from the various hotels and private families. Little boys pertinaciously follow visitors about to carry for them whatever they may purchase.'⁵¹

The Valletta covered market was damaged during the second world war and some of the masonry was rebuilt, although a considerable part of the original ironwork survived. It continued to be used as a food market but its occupancy and popularity dwindled heavily over the years. It was scheduled as a Grade One national monument in 2008, and has now been restored and converted into an upmarket food hall.





The Old Valletta Food Market

Petra Caruana Dingli

1. See Carmel Cassar, *Society, Culture and Identity in Early Modern Malta* (Malta: Mireva, 2000), pp. 63-94.
2. Map by Francesco Villamena based on Francesco dell'Antella, published in Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'istoria della sacra religione et ill.^{mo} militia di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano*, vol. 3 (Rome: Facciotto, 1602). See Albert Ganado, *Valletta Città Nuova: A Map History 1566-1600* (Malta: PEG, 2003), p. 557.
3. Denis De Lucca, *A Description of Baroque Malta by Albert Jouvin de Rochefort* (Malta: Heritage Books, 2004), p. 14.
4. *In diversi Regni, e Città sappiamo esservi le fiere, ò mercati di grascie per il vitto, una, ò due volte la settimana, ma in Malta (è cosa degna veramente da vedersi) ogni mattina; calando dalla campagna nella Valletta bastantissime, e più che sufficienti provisioni di carne, pollami, caccia, fogliami, frutta, ed altri viveri, essendovi sovente tal giorno, che si veggono entrare in detta Città più di cento carichi, ò some di robba, oltre gl'houmini à piedi, che medisamente portano essi ancora, diverse cose per venderle, & in poche ore non si trova di quelle ne pur un minimo avanzo, comprandosi il tutto da gl'habitatori in breve tempo, e torna poi la sera di bel nuovo à riempirsi la piazza con abbondanza, massimamente di fogliami, e d'altre frutta*, in Giovanni Francesco Abela, *Della descrizione di Malta isola nel Mare Siciliano: con le sue antichità, ed altre notitie*, vol. 1 (Malta: Bonacota, 1647), pp. 137-38.
5. *... abellir la Piazza dell'erbe, con circondarla di botteghe, per tenere le cose commestibili, che giornalmente si vendono*. See NLM, AOM 257, *Liber Conciliorum Status* (1638-1645), 17 July 1643, f. 142v.
6. See Giannantonio Scaglione, *Spazio abitato ed economie urbane nel quartiere/mercato della "Piazza dei Viveri" de la Valletta nella seconda metà del settecento*, in *Storia Urbana*, 148.3 (2015), p. 6. Thanks are due to Dr William Zammit for this reference.
7. Albert Jouvin de Rochefort, *Le voyageur d'Europe, ou sont le voyage de France et le voyage d'Italie de Malthe* (Paris, 1672). Also see De Lucca (2004).
8. Translation from French in De Lucca (2004), p. 18.
9. Archivum de Piro at Casa Rocca Piccola. Thanks are due to Nicholas de Piro for

access to the archive.

10. De Lucca (2004), pp. 16-17. Only five years earlier, in 1658 the Maltese scientist and writer Gio. Francesco Buonamico had published an intriguing treatise on chocolate, explaining what it was and how to use it. See Giovanni Bonello, *Histories of Malta: Deceptions and Perceptions*, vol. 1 (Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2000), pp. 79-84.
11. NLM, AOM 261, *Liber Conciliorum Status* (1664-1672), 15 June 1670, f. 165.
12. For a list of the properties, see NAV, Notary Aloiseo dello Re, R227/18, 27 February 1674, ff. 132-136. Also see Scaglione, p. 7.
13. NLM, Lib. MS 429 I/9, *Bandi e Prammatiche della Gran Corte della Castellania*, 31 May 1717, ff. 1-3. Cited in Scaglione, p. 11.
14. See Scaglione, pp. 12 & 15-16; and, NAV, Notary Fortunato Tramblett, R457/11, 16 March 1784, ff. 272v-278.
15. NLM, AOM, Treasury Series B, 302, *Cabreo de' Beni Urbani e Rustici spettanti all Fondazione dell' E.^{mo} Sig. Gran. M.^o della S.R.G. Fra Gio Paolo Lascaris Castellar di fel. mem. formato l'anno 1784*, ff. 47-49.
16. NLM, Lib. MS 429 I/9, *Bandi e Prammatiche della Gran Corte della Castellania*, 3 October 1729, f.220; NLM, Lib. MS 29 VII/9, *Bandi e Prammatiche della Gran Corte della Castellania*, 25 May 1784, ff. 269-270v. Cited in Scaglione, pp. 17-18.
17. Albrecht Christoph Kayser, *Neuestes Gemälde von dem Johanniter oder Malteserritterorden und Seinen Besitzungen Malta Gozo und Comino* (Leipzig: Schumann, 1799). Cited in Thomas Freller, *Malta and the Grand Tour* (Malta: Midsea Books, 2009), p. 492.
18. Cited in *Feasting and Fasting at the Time of the Knights*, in Bonello (2000), pp. 118-44.
19. Francis Collins, *Voyage to Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Malta, Asia Minor, Egypt & c from 1796 to 1801: With an Historical Sketch and Occasional Reflections* (London: Whitmore, 1813).
20. Aeneas Anderson, *A Journal of the Forces Which Sailed from the Downs in April 1800 on a Secret Expedition ... to the Surrender of Egypt With a Particular Account of Malta* (London: Debrett, 1802), pp. 140-41.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
22. Michael Ellul, *Art and Architecture in Malta in the Early Nineteenth Century*, in *Proceedings of History Week 1982*, ed. by Mario Buhagiar (Malta: Malta Historical Society, 1983), p. 7.
23. Malcolm Borg, *British Colonial Architecture: Malta 1800-1900* (Malta: PEG, 2001), p. 52.
24. William Domeier, *An Account of Malta. Observations on the Climate, Manners and Amusements of Malta, Principally Intended for the Information of Invalids Repairing to that Island for the Recovery of Health* (London: Callow, 1810), pp. 22-23.
25. *Ibid.*, *passim*.
26. George Waring, *Letters from Malta and Sicily Addressed to a Young Naturalist* (London: Harvey Darton, 1843), p. 87.
27. George French Angas, *A Ramble in Malta and Sicily in the Autumn of 1841* (London: Smith Elder, 1842), p. 69.
28. Thomas MacGill, *A Hand Book, or Guide, for Strangers Visiting Malta* (Malta: Tonna, 1839), p. 66.
29. Borg (2001), p. 63.
30. This was the site of the Casa alla Giornata, occasionally referred to during the 19th century as the Auberge d'Angleterre, as it was once the residence of a Prior of

England of the Order of St John. See Victor F. Denaro, Houses in Kingsway and Old Bakery Street, Valletta, in *Melita Historica*, 2.4 (1959) p. 201. The Casa alla Giornata was demolished in 1860 for the building of a new opera house on the site. NAM, Public Works (PW), 5 March 1861, refers to tenders for the construction of the opera house on the site of the Auberge d'Angleterre in Strada Reale.

31. NAM, PW 226, 8 October 1848; NAM, CSG 03, 847, 24 September 1859.

32. Borg (2001), p. 63.

33. NAM, Dispatches to Secretary of State (Nov 1855 - Dec 1860), 30 August 1858. Also see *Malta Times*, 3 August 1858, p. 2.

34. Joseph Degaetano, *Overview of the History and Development of the Public Works Department in the Maltese Islands* (Malta: Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, 2006), p. 32.

35. Joseph Bonnici and Michael Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta* (Malta: 1990), p. 11.

36. L.T.C. Rolt, *Victorian Engineering*, 2nd edn (Stroud: History Press, 2010), pp. 115-17.

37. Albert V. Laferla, *British Malta 1800-1872*, vol. 1 (Malta: Aquilina, 1976), p. 188.

38. *Malta Times*, 20 July 1858, p. 1.

39. *Malta Times*, 24 August 1858, pp. 1-2.

40. *Malta Times*, 3 August 1858, p. 2.

41. *Malta Times*, 24 August 1858, pp. 1-2.

42. *Malta Times*, 10 August 1858, p. 2.

43. NAM, PW 67, 1286, October-November 1858.

44. David Drago & Guillaume Dreyfuss, An Innovation for Malta: The Valletta Covered Market, in *Treasures of Malta*, 20.2 (2014), pp. 32-35.

45. NAM, PW 264, 5 April 1861.

46. Degaetano (2006), p. 35. Also see Leonard Mahoney, *5000 Years of Architecture in Malta* (Malta: Valletta Publishing, 1996), p. 238.

47. NAM, PW 264, 2 Nov 1859; and NAR, PW 264, 16 April 1861.

48. NAM, PW 264, 18 March 1861.

49. Bonnici and Cassar (1990), p. 15.

50. Borg (2001), p. 67.

51. William Tallack, *Malta under the Phenicians, Knights and English* (London: Bennett, 1861), pp. 101-102.

