

# **Another “Loaf of Bread”**

## **Postal Marking**

by Mr. Anthony Fenech

Since the capture of the Maltese Islands by the French on 9 June 1798 until their surrender on 5 September 1800, only one type of postal marking has been recorded. The letters emanating from French occupied Malta have been very few indeed.

One has to bear in mind that the Maltese uprising against the French occupying forces occurred in September 1798. Mdina surrendered to the Maltese within the first 24 hours of the insurrection. The French locked themselves up in Valletta and the Cottonera, the siege lasted up to the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1800.

During this period the British fleet patrolled the sea lane between Malta and the continent, preventing any French ships from leaving Malta.

Consequently very little mail left Malta during the French presence, from June 1798 to September 1800.

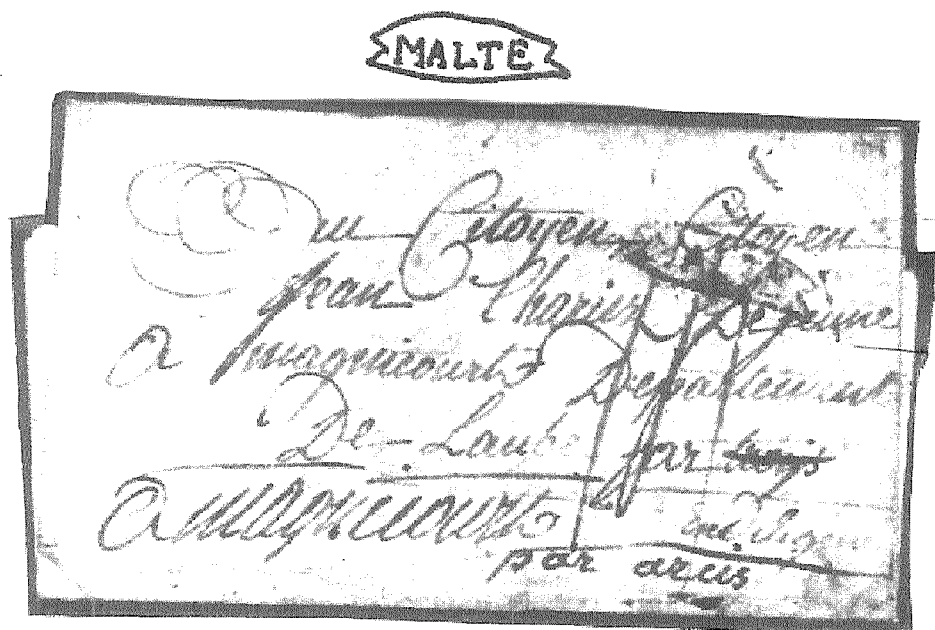
The only postal marking recorded during the span of these twenty-seven months is “the Loaf of Bread” applied on a few soldiers’ letters.<sup>1</sup> In a letter dated 24 June 1798 bearing “the Loaf of Bread” postal marking, Antoine Chariez, a French soldier in Napoleon’s invading army, writes to his Father, Mother and Sister about his ‘state of health’, about ‘the severe heat in Malta which is flattening us to the shape of our hats’ and about ‘capturing the Island of Malta with a loss of not even 30 men’.<sup>2</sup>

Another copy of a letter bearing the rare MALTA “Loaf of Bread” postal marking has recently been auctioned by BOULE of Monaco. The letter sent on the 8 July 1798 is addressed to Anselme Desinant Douairiere.<sup>3</sup>

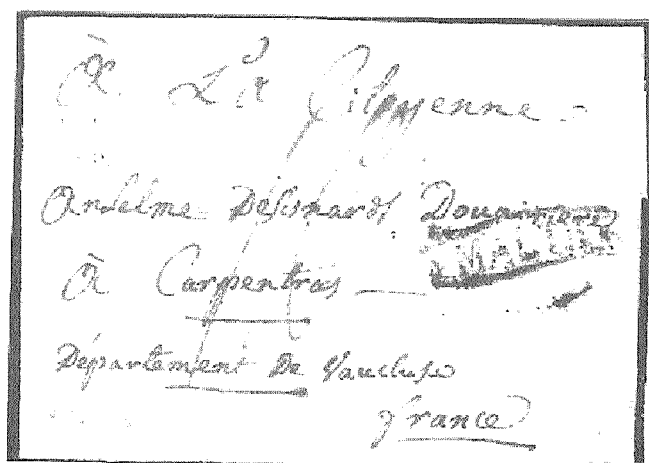
<sup>1</sup> MALTA — The Stamps and Postal History (1576—1960) Handbook compiled by The Malta Study Circle and edited by R.E.Martin.

<sup>2</sup> Heritage No 13 (pp 246—248) The History of the Postal Service in the Maltese Islands — N.A.Cutajar and Malta Study Circle Paper No.37 — MALTA (1530 – 1806)

<sup>3</sup> “Philately and Postal History of the World” — BOULE, Monaco Public Auction (December 4 to 8, 2004)



The French soldier's letter showing the "Loaf of Bread" 'MALTE' handstamp dated 24 June 1798



A letter dated 8 July 1798 also showing the rare "Loaf of Bread" postal marking dispatched from Malta during the French Occupation.